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Women's career in Vietnamese academia:

An analysis from multiple lenses

A thesis

submitted **in fulfilment**

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by

THI THU THAO TRAN



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ABSTRACT

Despite scholars and governments' efforts to eliminate obstacles to women's career progress, the global labour market is characterised by gender inequality. Women are more likely than men to be employed in vulnerable jobs and support roles and underrepresented in senior management levels across all sectors (ILO, 2020). Like the global picture, Vietnamese women tend to work in positions which do not usually have formal work arrangement or provide social security and safety nets against economic shock (WB, 2020b). In terms of the quality of women's jobs, only 27.7% of leader, manager and administrator positions nationwide are occupied by women (GSO of Vietnam, 2018) although Vietnamese women in the early history held powerful position in history.

The employment experiences and outcomes of Vietnamese women have become the focus of a small number of studies. For example, the experiences of rural-to-urban migrant women workers (Agergaard & Vu, 2011; H. N. Nguyen, Hardesty, & Khuat, 2011), women's location within the informal economy (Jensen & Peppard, 2003; Turner & Schoenberger, 2012), and women's leadership and media practices (H. T. Vu, Barnett, Duong, & Lee, 2019) have been examined. A few studies have explored women's experiences in academia, including the exploratory studies into barriers and facilitators experienced by female deans (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012) and experiences of female university rectors in Vietnam (Funnell & Dao, 2013). Alongside these studies, Do and Brennan (2015) examined the complexities of Vietnamese femininities with a focus on the informal power of Vietnamese women in both spheres of home and work.

Although all these studies have confirmed the link between cultural and historical factors and women's experiences and gender practices in Vietnam, none have examined how the different waves of foreign influences affect labour market outcomes for Vietnamese women. Therefore, my research interest is to critically examine how waves of colonisation and foreign influence throughout Vietnamese history have impacted on Vietnamese women's choices and positions on the labour market. Vietnam as a research context can offer an opportunity to articulate gendered segregation from a distinctive position, a country in the wake of multiple colonisation and wars, an emerging economy in transition from a planned to socialist-oriented market economy and a society in the crossroads of diverse influences including Chinese Confucian ideas and ideologies, French colonialism, Soviet communism, United States of America colonialism, and contemporary global influences.

I chose the Vietnamese academia as the site of my research because Vietnam has developed a unique hybrid approach to higher education that has been informed by its former colonisers. For example, there are elements of the elite cultural attachment to the occupation, which is related to the Confucian traditions as a result of the lengthy Chinese colonisation. Furthermore, the current Vietnamese university model inherits the former models from France's administrative centralisation policy, the Soviet Union's model of small and specialised colleges and institutes, and the US and European models of curricula and the emphasis on research. Therefore, the exploration of how Vietnamese academic women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes in Vietnamese higher education sector in which all the imprints of the colonial powers have left can contribute to a more complex understanding of women employment and the impacts of social, political and economic structures on the production and reproduction of gender inequalities from the standpoint of the 'other'.

To explore the Vietnamese academic women's experience, I adopted a feminist methodology from the standpoint of a non-Western feminist through the lenses of liberal and postcolonial feminism. My starting point was informed by liberal feminist sentiments, in particular, I agree that women and men have the similar capacity to reason. Furthermore, as a Vietnamese woman, I have experienced and observed gender inequalities in various aspects of life. Therefore, the goal of my research was to advocate for equality of opportunities, equal treatment and freedom of choices for women and men. Furthermore, equality of opportunities and gender equality, have also been reflected in the efforts of the Vietnamese government to dismantle gender discrimination. However, while liberal feminism allowed me to focus on gender inequalities at an individual and organisational level, it has not fully explained the cause as well as the persistence of gender inequalities or considered Vietnam's historical, cultural and social factors. Hence, I employed the postcolonial lens to observe the relationship between waves of changes in Vietnam's social, cultural, and economic background and gender issues. Drawing on multiple feminist lenses will help to identify and critically analyse the historic processes, economic practices and social structures that maintain gender inequalities in Vietnam, with the view of considering ways to enact change for Vietnamese women.

Based on my feminist standpoint, liberal and postcolonial feminist lenses were used to analyse twenty-eight in-depth interviews with female academic staff from universities in Vietnam. From the liberal feminist lens, participants identified a number of personal and organisational barriers and facilitators to career progression. Personal facilitators included egalitarian attitude that women and men had equal abilities and skills to engage in managerial roles. Personal

barriers included the construction of managerial and leadership positions as undesirable and unfit for women. In the organisational context, effective mentoring facilitated career, while a lack of mentoring and non-transparent appraisal and promotion criteria were viewed as harmful to women's career.

Data analysis from postcolonial feminist lens revealed the profound influence of Confucian values on academic women's construction of roles in the domestic and public spheres. In the domestic sphere, my participants constructed themselves as Vietnamese filial daughters, dutiful wives and nurturing mothers while at work they constructed themselves as the virtuous women who adhered to the Confucian's essentialisation of women's gender roles. Meanwhile, like Western academia, work was structured around an uninterrupted career, which benefited men more than women. There was an increasing demand for publishing which added more workload to women, but the pay was insufficient to maintain household expenses.

The examination of women's career through both lenses demonstrated that the process of performing gender in Vietnam involved multiple forms of postcolonial femininities which were consistent with Connell's (1987) description of emphasised femininities and Schippers' (2007) notion of pariah femininities. There was also performance of alternative femininities, which showed signs of resistance. A notable example was the resistance of my participant against a powerful patriarchal structure to make her own choice for her future. Although these acts of resistance might not result in an immediate large-scale change in material conditions (Murphy, 1998), the multiplicity and inconsistency of their performances of postcolonial femininities gave me hope for potential changes (Butler, 1990).

The findings from this study make several contributions to the current literature. First, this study is one of the first to thoroughly examine the gendering process in Vietnam in general, and in Vietnamese academia specifically. The new insights about the gendering process help to pave the way for the development of gender studies in Vietnam, (de)construction women's careers in Vietnam, and to integrate a minority perspective into mainstream scholarly works. Moreover, my study explores the construction of gender and its impact on women's experience in the labour market in relation to the imposition of eastern and western knowledge in a developing country whose colonial history is shaped by both eastern and western colonisation. This study will be of interest to any colonial discourse scholars who attempt to challenge the view of the relations between (and among) Western and Eastern countries as binary, fixed and categorial with the West as the colonisers and the East as the colonised.

One major limitation of the study is that although the study focuses on the ‘other’ perspective, the Vietnamese academia is treated as homogenous and some factors such as ethnicities or regional culture have not been paid adequate attention. In addition, my study focuses solely on academic women in heterosexual relationships and therefore might overlook the subordination of people with non-heteronormative forms of sexuality.

ABBREVIATIONS

A. D	Anno Domini
B.C	Before Christ
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPV	The Communist Party of Vietnam
EC	European Commission
EU	European Unions
GSO	General Statistics Office of Vietnam
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institutions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the research problem

“Tôi muốn cưỡi cơn gió mạnh, đạp đường sóng dữ, chém cá tròng kình ở bể Đông, quét sạch bờ cõi, để cứu dân ra khỏi nơi đắm đuối, chứ không thèm bắt chước người đời y đầu cong lưng làm tì thiếp người ta”

I want to ride the strong wind, tread fierce waves, kill sharks in the East Sea, clean up the frontier, drive out greedy and cruel aggressors to save people from drowning; I will not imitate the ordinary others – bowing and kneeling, serving as a concubine to anyone”.

(T. K. Tran, 2016, p. 51)

Vietnamese women have traditionally held powerful positions in society. The quote above by Lady Triệu Thị Trinh (Bà Triệu Thị Trinh), a female warrior in the third century, shows a free-spirited Vietnamese heroine who took control of her own fate. Lady Triệu was not a sole example. Vietnam’s history is filled with stories of female warriors and leaders including the Trưng sisters (Hai Bà Trưng), General Lê Chân, General Bùi Thị Xuân (T. K. Tran, 2016).

Despite the strong matriarchal heritage and the progress that Vietnam has made in recent years, including a comparatively high level of female education (9.5 percent of women in the labour force in 2018 attained a university degree compared with 9.1 percent of men) and a high participation in the workforce (women account for 47.7 percent of the total labour force) (GSO of Vietnam, 2018), an unequal labour market outcome is a serious problem in Vietnam today. Vietnamese women are overrepresented in occupations that are considered vulnerable like family workers or own-account workers (self-employed without hired employees). World Bank (WB) estimates that 60 percent of women in Vietnam in 2020 are employed in vulnerable jobs which do not usually have formal work arrangement, provide social security and safety nets against economic shock (WB, 2020b).

Vietnamese women are also underrepresented in senior and high-ranking management positions in comparison with men. Only 27.7 percent of leader, manager and administrator positions nationwide are occupied by women (GSO of Vietnam, 2018). Another notable example is the low ratio of women in politics. The Global Gender Gap Report 2020 reveals that women in Vietnam represent one-quarter of the parliament, but there is only one woman in the cabinet of 25 ministers, one of the world’s lowest ratios (World Economic Forum, 2019).

Vietnamese women's experience in today's labour market is consistent with the global picture. Similarly to Vietnamese women, women across the world, particularly in low and middle-income countries, are more likely to be employed in the informal sector which is not regulated or protected by the state (ILO, 2019). In terms of the quality of women's jobs, global data show that most women worked as clerical, service and sales workers (25 percent of women's employment) and fewer women were engaged in the jobs, such as managers, which required more complex skills (ILO, 2019).

Against this backdrop, the Vietnamese government has signalled its concern about the unequal outcomes. One indication is the government's effort to prevent the discrimination against women at work and place the rights of women on a par with those of men. This is reflected through the enforcement of the 2006 Law No. 73/2006/QH11 on Gender Equality. Article 4 states that

The gender equality goals are to eliminate gender discrimination, to create equal opportunities for men and women in socio-economic development and human resources development in order to reach substantial equality between man and woman, and to establish and enhance cooperation and mutual assistance between man and woman in all fields of social and family life (Law No. 73/2006/QH11 on Gender Equality, 2006, p. 2).

In addition, the 1994 Labour Code of Vietnam dedicates section 111 to the prohibition of discrimination against women, particularly in employment.

All acts by employers to discriminate against female workers or offend their dignity and honour shall be strictly prohibited. The employer must implement the principle of equality between men and women in respect of recruitment, employment, advancement in wage increments and remuneration (Labour Code of Vietnam, 1994).

Both 2006 Law No. 73/2006/QH11 and the 1994 Labour Code of Vietnam uphold the goals of international institutions like the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals to empower women and girls or principles of international treaties and conventions like United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the legal instrument to protect women's rights, which Vietnam ratified in 1982 (United Nations Human Rights, n.d.). Investing in Women, an initiative of the Australian Government, whose goal is to foster economic growth through women's economic empowerment in South East Asia, remarks that Vietnamese government has been reasonably consistent over time in responding

to the need to establish adequate rights and protection for women (Investing in Women - University of Sydney, 2017).

The mismatch between the Vietnamese government's efforts to promote gender equality and the inequalities in the Vietnamese labour market outcomes can be attributed to a number of factors. First, the Vietnamese government's goals which aim to support personal autonomy and achieve equal opportunities for women have echoes of liberal feminism. Liberal feminists advocate for the rights of women to education (Mill & Mill, 2009) and ask for women to be treated like men and do what men do (Zalewski, 2000). However, a critique of liberal feminism is that even when everyone is provided with education and equal opportunities to get ahead, a person's success is dependent on not only each one's own merits but also the non-merit factors (McNamee & Miller, 2013). Sometimes the non-merit factors have more effects than the merit factors (McNamee & Miller, 2013). The chief non-merit factor is inheritance, that is "the effect of where one starts on where one finishes in the race to get ahead" (McNamee & Miller, 2013, p. 199). Vietnamese women and men, due to the widespread gender inequalities, start at different points in their career path; consequently, even when employers are compliant with the 2006 Law 2006 Law No. 73/2006/QH11 and the 1994 Labour Code of Vietnam and provide women with similar treatment and chances, the possibility of women reaching the same goal as men is still lower.

Also, Vietnamese government's agendas pay more attention to gender inequality in paid employment but tend to overlook gender inequality in unpaid care work. Vietnamese women, regardless of education levels and occupations, are mainly responsible for unpaid care (direct care of children, the elders, and people with disabilities) and domestic work (cooking, cleaning, and laundry). The amount of time Vietnamese women contribute to unpaid care and domestic work per day, on average, is almost double that of men (314 minutes and 190 minutes respectively) (UN Women, 2016). UN Women (2016) notes that unpaid work has an opportunity cost. The time women spend on doing unpaid work prevents them from continuing further or higher education, participating in the labour market or engaging in leadership roles. The failure to address the inequality in unpaid work between men and women is considered the missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014).

In addition, scholarly work with policy implications has not paid adequate attention to the relationship between the inequalities in labour market outcomes and social, cultural and

historical factors, which has been widely acknowledged across contexts including African countries (Arbache, Kolev, & Filipiak, 2010), United States (Ridgeway, 2011), Portugal (Tavora & Rubery, 2013), United Kingdom (Kan & Laurie, 2018; S. Wang, 2018), and Indonesia (Toyibah, 2020). In the Vietnam context, studies on inequalities in labour market outcomes are scarce. The primary research interest in Vietnam in the twentieth century was on the Indochina War against French colonisation or the Vietnam War against American domination (D. L. Anderson, 2011; Edwards, 2014; Claire Hall, 2014; G. C. Ward, Burns, & Novick, 2017) or the consequences of the wars (Holmboe, Wang, & Brass, 2002; Levy & Sidel, 2015; Wright, 1995) while the literature in the first decades of the twenty-first century has focused on the economic success story (Fforde, 2009; Glewwe, Gagnolati, & Zaman, 2002; Justino, 2012; C. V. Nguyen & Chen, 2016).

Female employment in Vietnam has started to gain interest from researchers recently but the existing studies have focused on a specific type of labour like migrant workers from rural to urban areas (Agergaard & Vu, 2011; H. N. Nguyen, Hardesty, & Khuat, 2011) or women as a part of the informal economy (Jensen & Peppard, 2003; S. Turner & Schoenberger, 2012). A few studies have explored unequal labour market outcomes along gender lines with a focus on female leadership including the exploratory study into barriers to and facilitators of female deans (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012), the exploration of experiences of female university rectors in Vietnam (Funnell & Dao, 2013), the examination of the complexities of Vietnamese femininities (Do & Brennan, 2015), and the analysis of women's leadership and media practices (H. T. Vu, Barnett, Duong, & Lee, 2019).

Although all these studies have confirmed the link between cultural and historical factors and women's experiences and gender practices in Vietnam, none have particularly examined how the different waves of foreign influences affect the different labour market outcomes on genders. Therefore, my research interest is to critically examine how waves of colonisation and foreign influences throughout Vietnamese history have impacted on Vietnamese women's choices and positions on the labour market. Such examination can contribute to a more complex understanding of women employment in Vietnam and how they experience unequal outcomes at work. My expected research contribution is in the field of gender studies, feminist theories, organisational studies, and human resources management. The expected audience of the reports and presentations derived from my thesis include academics, researchers, and policy makers. Moreover, I intend this thesis to be helpful to women (and men) who struggle to juggle multiple

roles in their lives, who experience inequalities in both domestic and public spheres, who are interested in eliminating inequalities for a just society and advocating for freedom of choice.

The next section will introduce Vietnam as a backdrop to the research. I will briefly describe Vietnamese colonisation history from the China colonisation in 111 BC, through the French colonial period (1885-1954), the South-North Vietnam separation period with the American involvement in the South and the Soviet Union in the North (1954-1975), to Vietnam in the present day.

1.2 Waves of colonisation as a backdrop to the research

Vietnam, a Southeast Asian country, lies on the eastern edge of the Indochina Peninsula and borders China to the north, Laos to the northwest, Cambodia to the southwest by land and Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand by sea. This strategic geographical location has benefited Vietnam in several ways including making Vietnam an option for investors who plan to diversify their supply chains from China (PwC, 2019) or enhancing Vietnam's interconnectivity with world economies in North America (DHL, 2019). The country's location and resources have attracted colonial intervention from other nations in the past centuries so that Vietnam has been characterised by wars and uprisings against foreign influences (Tucker, 1999). This section will discuss the formation of Vietnam in early history and then waves of colonisation in Vietnam history in brief as "thousands of years are not easily confined to a limited space" (W. N. Duong, 2001, p. 196).

1.2.1 Chinese colonisation

The famous Vietnamese historian Dao Duy Anh wrote that Vietnam was founded in 2879 BC under the name Van Lang and ruled by the King Hung (Dao, 2016). However, Vietnam was invaded by the Han dynasty in China in 208 B.C during Thuc dynasty, the successor of King Hungs. Many attempts to liberalise the country such as the well-known riots led by the Trung sisters (Trung Trac and Trung Nhi) in around 40 A.D¹ or Lady Trieu Thi Trinh in 248. However, all the revolts lasted for only a short period of time due to strong attack from Chinese aggressors. In the end, China still managed to colonise Vietnam for almost a thousand years (T. K. Tran, 2016). Under China's lengthy colonisation, Vietnamse were deeply affected in terms of philosophy, most predominantly Confucianism, and governance. Finally, Ngo Quyen, a nobleman from Duong Lam ended the Chinese rule in Vietnam in 938 A.D (Dao, 2016). The

¹ All the years appear after this period follow the Anno Domini (AD) system; and AD will not appear after the year number.

Chinese have made many efforts to gain the control over Vietnam between the eleventh and the eighteenth century during the Dinh dynasty (968 – 980), Ly dynasty (1010-1225), Tran dynasty (1225-1400) and Le dynasty (1428-1788), but have never succeeded (T. K. Tran, 2016).

1.2.2 French colonisation

Vietnam became a French colony in the nineteenth century when the French empire was at its greatest extent (Clayton, 1994). Although the French colonial period lasted only about a decade, the French regime brought changes to many aspects of the Vietnam society: the Romanised writing system, Catholicism (Tucker, 1999) and the concepts of liberalism which were illustrated in a new movement in poetry and literature in the 1930s (Phu Van, 2012). However, during the colonial era, the so-called civilisation and economic progress that the French brought only benefited the French and a small class of wealthy Vietnamese while the Vietnamese peasants lived in poverty under the extensive tax regime, and Vietnam labourers had to suffer from horrible working conditions (Tucker, 1999). One of the key events leading to the Vietnamese people's resentment of French colonisation was the 1944-1945 famine which claimed the lives of millions of Vietnamese people (Huff, 2019), although the French colonial regime was not the only contributor. When the Japanese started to occupy Vietnam due to France's surrender to Nazi Germany in the 1940s (G. C. Ward et al., 2017), the French administration's policies failed to avoid the famine. The famine's traumatic impact brought Viet Minh (the League for the Independence of Vietnam) and the communist revolution, led by Ho Chi Minh, a well-known nationalist and communist, to power (Huff, 2019). The Dien Bien Phu triumph in 1954 ended the French colonial period in Vietnam and the whole Indochina region (Clayton, 1994).

1.2.3 American and Russian influences

The United States began to be deeply involved in Vietnam in the 1960s with the aim to stop the spread of communist takeover in Vietnam. Vietnam was divided into two independent regions with different governments: South Vietnam, supported by the Americans and North Vietnam, supported by the communist nations like Soviet Union (G. C. Ward et al., 2017). Although the North-South separation period was relatively brief compared to that of Chinese and French colonisation, it has left noticeable traces in regional differences between the North and the South Vietnam which can be found today. When Ralston, Nguyen, and Napier (1999) conducted a study to compare the work values of the North and South Vietnamese managers,

they observe that the North had the cultural characteristics of an Asian communist while the South had the cultural characteristics of a Western capitalist society.

The Tet Offensive in 1968, then the Fall of Saigon in 1975 officially marked the collapse the Americans in Vietnam; American troops left South Vietnam (G. C. Ward et al., 2017). North and the South Vietnam were unified under the same government led by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) as it is known today (The Socialist Republic of Vietnam Government portal, n.d.).

1.2.4 Vietnam in the present day

After the destroying effects of the wars against France and America on the human lives and infrastructure, the newly unified Vietnam was in economic crisis; therefore, the government introduced Doi Moi Policy (Reform or Renovation Policy) with a focus on economic development (The Socialist Republic of Vietnam Government portal, n.d.). The transformation from a centrally planned to a market economy under the Doi Moi Policy enabled Vietnam to achieve strong growth, advancing from a poor nation to a lower middle-income country. Vietnam has now become one of the most dynamic economies in the East Asia region with averaged 6.6 per cent Gross Domestic Products (GDP) growth rate annually during the 2014–18 period and reaching a 10-year high of 7.1 per cent in 2018 (IMF, 2019). WB (2019) estimated Vietnam's GDP would grow at 6.7 per cent in 2020 and 2021. The number of people living under the national poverty line reduced significantly while citizens' access to basic services and infrastructure improved dramatically (WB, 2020a). Vietnam has also actively participated in global integration. For example, Vietnam became the official member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – a regional intergovernmental organisation comprising ten Southeast Asian states in 1995 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007.

In short, the complexities in colonial history make Vietnam an interesting research context, a country in the wake of multiple colonisation and wars, an emerging economy in transition from a planned to socialist-oriented market economy and a society at the crossroads of diverse influences: Chinese ideologies, French colonialism, Soviet communism, United States of America (US) and contemporary global influences. Yet, within this broad context of Vietnam, the higher education (HE) sector, also referred to as Vietnamese academia in this research, carries the imprints of the foreign influences as education has always been employed by the colonial rulers to impose their ideologies on the colonised. Examples of the influences of

colonial power on education, especially higher education can be found in many countries with colonial history (Altbach, 1989; Shizha & Kariwo, 2011). The next section provides detailed justification for the choice of Vietnamese academia to be a particular sector to explore the central research question.

How have waves of colonisation influenced how Vietnamese academic women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes at work?

1.3 Academia as a site for exploring gender at work in Vietnam

Women's employment worldwide has significantly increased in the last twenty years (Ostry, Alvarez, Espinoza, & Papageorgiou, 2018) owing to technological developments in the household sector (Fernandez, Fogli, & Olivetti, 2004; Greenwood, Guner, Kocharkov, & Santos, 2016), structural changes in the economy (Fernandez et al., 2004), childcare friendly policies (Haan & Wrohlich, 2011; Lovász & Szabó-Morvai, 2018), and changes in attitudes towards maternal employment (Boeckmann, Misra, & Budig, 2014). However, inequality in the labour market outcomes in the form of gendered occupational segregation still prevails. Gendered occupational segregation has both horizontal (different distribution of men and women across certain professions) and vertical dimensions (different distribution of men and women within professions) (Blau & Hendricks, 1979; Charles, 2003; Gedikli, 2019; Watts, 2005).

In the context of Vietnam, the backdrop of the study, horizontal and vertical occupational segregation by gender is common across sectors. As mentioned in section 1.1, women are overrepresented in occupations which are considered vulnerable (horizontal segregation) and underrepresented in high-level management positions (vertical segregation). The higher education sector, similar to the broad picture of the Vietnamese labour market, is characterised by vertical occupational segregation. Among 57 public universities, only 10 percent of the leadership roles were held by women (Funnell & Dao, 2013). On examining the organisational structure of 98 public universities in 2020 for an updated picture, only six women were found holding the position of Director or Principal, the top management positions in Vietnamese higher education institutions (HEIs).

Moreover, similar to the topic of female employment in Vietnam, female employment has not been a focus of academic inquiry. Research interests in the Vietnam higher education (HE) sector have revolved around globalisation and HE (T. K. Q. Nguyen, 2011), HE reforms (Harman, Hayden, & Pham, 2010), the decentralisation of HE governance (T. T. Tran, 2014),

development of curriculum (T. N. Phan, Lupton, & Watters, 2016) or internationalisation (T. L. Tran & Marginson, 2018). Few studies have investigated the gender aspects in regard to barriers to and facilitators of female deans (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012), or the experiences of university rectors in Vietnam (Funnell & Dao, 2013). However, neither T. L. H. Nguyen (2012) nor Funnell and Dao (2013) have critically examined how the complexities in Vietnam's colonial history influence the experiences of women and how they behave at work.

Therefore, the gap in the literature is the starting point for choosing Vietnamese academia to be a site for examining the ways waves of colonisation throughout Vietnam history have influenced the construction of gender and the unequal labour market outcomes. More importantly, Vietnamese academia offers a distinctive position for three main reasons: the elite cultural attachment to teaching, the Western influence on Vietnamese higher education and the link of Vietnamese academia to the government's agenda on socio-economic development.

1.3.1 Elite cultural attachment to teaching

As a country under the influence of Confucian traditions, Vietnam has a long tradition of fondness of learning (N. T. Nguyen, 2016), and teaching has been one of the most respected occupations in the Vietnamese society (L. T. Le & Dwyer, 2019; N. T. Nguyen, 2019). In feudal periods before the twentieth century, scholars were highly respected and had higher social status than peasants, workers and businesspeople (N. T. Nguyen, 2016). An example of a popular proverb in Vietnam which demonstrates the respectable status of a teacher is:

Muốn sang phải bắc cầu kiều/Muốn con hay chữ phải yêu lấy thầy

The proverb tells the parents to treat their children's teachers well because without the teachers, their children will not be able to perform well academically. In Vietnamese society today, children's schooling and education at all levels from primary to tertiary education are still the focus of parents, and community attention (C. D. Nguyen & Trent, 2020) and teaching continues to be perceived as a noble profession by both teachers and the society as a whole. For example, T. Q. T. Nguyen (2017) conducted research on how college teachers preserve their public self-image and the repeated theme in her interviews shows that teachers made an effort to maintain their self-image because of their belief that teaching is an honourable profession. T.Q.T. Nguyen's (2017) participants referred to teaching as "a socially respected" profession, a job "respected in the Vietnamese society since the old days" and described their feeling when they are called *teacher* as "the finest thing" (p.83).

Teachers in Vietnam were expected to teach their students to behave morally in addition to providing knowledge (L. T. Le & Dwyer, 2019). Empirical studies show that social expectations of teachers as moral guides are still alive and well (L. T. Le & Dwyer, 2019; L. H. Phan, McPherron, & Phan, 2011; L. H. Phan & Phan, 2006). Similar to the teachers in other Asian societies like Japan (Miyajima, 2008), teachers in Vietnam will be heavily criticised by parents, community and mass media if they are ever involved in any unethical, immoral conduct (Dtinews, 2019; Viet Nam News, 2018). Teachers, particularly those of young learners, are also expected to perform multiple roles: being a teacher, a caregiver, or a judge who settles students' conflicts and disputes (C. D. Nguyen, 2016). Overall, being a teacher in Vietnam is linked to the notion of a noble profession with high ethical conducts.

1.3.2 Western influence on Vietnamese higher education

Similar to academic institutions from East Asian countries (Altbach, 1989), the Vietnamese HE sector has been subject to significant foreign influences as a result of colonisation periods. The contemporary Vietnamese HEIs are characterised by the academic models and practices from France, the Soviet Union, the US and other Western models.

The French education system was introduced to Vietnam during the colonial period in the nineteenth century and gradually replaced the Vietnamese feudal school system. To disseminate French civilisation, the French colonisers adopted an administrative centralisation policy which controlled all schooling practices including recruiting and training teachers, and planning and monitoring curriculum (T. P. H. Tran, 2013). The schooling system was heavily based on examinations (T. P. Nguyen, 2014) and education was reserved for the elite class who served in local administrative government (London, 2007; M. Vu, 2012). The legacy of the French education can still be found in the reliance of the contemporary Vietnamese HE on examination and the dependence of HEIs on state governance. University entrance admission in Vietnam is based on the results of a national exam students take at the end of Year 12, the final year of high school (T. A. M. Tran, 2014; Trines, 2017). Another notable example is the dependence of some HEIs on the state's governance. The appointment of governing boards in some public universities including two biggest national universities of Vietnam, the Vietnam National University in Hanoi and the Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh city, is dependent on the government instead of election or appointment by the shareholders.

The success of the CPV in unifying the North and the South of Vietnam under the same government in 1975 led to the adoption of communist nation models. In Vietnam, the higher

education sector after 1975 was based on the Soviet Union's model of small and specialised colleges and institutes operating under government ministries and dependent on the national government for planning and funding (Martin Hayden & Lam, 2009). The foundation of those colleges and institutes served the ministries' special needs for their trained labour (Martin Hayden & Lam, 2007). Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Vietnamese government's abandonment of the Soviet Union's models in the 1990s, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) attempted to bring those institutes under its management (Martin Hayden & Lam, 2007). However, some of those are still under the management of ministries. For example, University of Finance and Accountancy is managed and governed by the Ministry of Finance (Ministry of Finance, n.d.).

More recently, the influence of US and other Western nations can be seen in the current structuring of Vietnam's HE sector. Since the Doi Moi Policy (Reform Policy) in 1986, together with the Vietnamese government's departure from central planning economic model, the HE sector has undergone significant changes and the new model resembles those of US, UK or Australian universities.

The first noticeable aspect of the adoption of US or other Western models is the import of the Western curricula conducted through the implementation of the advanced programmes in nine universities approved by MOET. The key justification for the implementation of such programmes was the mismatch between the outdated Vietnamese HE curriculum which focused on theoretical knowledge and Marxism-Leninism political indoctrination and the demands of the contemporary Vietnam and global labour market (T. L. Tran, Phan, & Marginson, 2018). As a result, the government, through MOET, approved the adoption of curricula from universities in the U.S, United Kingdom and Australia. In addition to the curricula, the teaching, organisation and training management methodologies which came with these curricula were adopted and English was used as a medium of instruction. The import of Western curricula also created a demand for teachers/lecturers with a good command of English (T. L. Tran et al., 2018).

The last aspect demonstrating the Vietnamese HE sector's adoption of the Western model is the increasing focus on the combination research and teaching. The idea that research is the core element in higher education was proposed by Wilhelm von Humboldt, a German thinker (Altbach, 1989). Over the last decade, the Vietnamese government has affirmed the importance of research activities in HE through the introduction of Resolution 14/2005/NQ-CP, dated

November 2, 2005, entitled ‘A Resolution on the Fundamental and Comprehensive Reform of Higher Education in Vietnam 2006–2020’, also known as the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) (Martin Hayden & Le-Nguyen, 2020). Resolution 14 also encouraged leading public universities to become major scientific centres and increase their income through the commercialisation of research activities (Martin Hayden & Le-Nguyen, 2020). Vietnamese HEIs also are using a system of promotion depending upon publications. Decision 37/2018/QĐ-TTg, dated August 31, 2018, promulgated by the Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, states that for professorship appointment, a candidate must either have three articles in high ranking journals as first author or have two articles in high ranking journals and a book chapter in a book published by reputable publishers (Decision 37/2018/QĐ-TTg, 2018). However, while the demand for more research activities increases, Vietnamese academic staff are still facing high student-teacher ratios and heavy workloads while their salaries remain low (McCornac, 2012).

1.3.4 Link of the Vietnamese academia to the government’s agenda on socio-economic development

The goals of the Vietnamese HE sector have always been closely linked to the Vietnamese government’s agenda on social and economic development. During the First Indochina War against France (1945-1954) and the Vietnam War against the United States (1955-1975), the aims of education were to eradicate illiteracy nationwide and develop the ‘new socialist man’ (and woman) (London, 2011, p. 14). Due to resource and financial constraints, many students during that time were sent to other communist nations, the Soviet Union and China, for higher education. The Vietnamese government paid more attention to developing their higher education sector in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. After the 1990s, education policy has focused on providing human resources for the country’s development and international integration (MOET, 2016). According to Vietnam’s Law on Higher Education (No. 08/2012/QH13), the objectives of higher education are to “provide students with the comprehensive profession knowledge, thorough grasp of the natural – social law and principle, basic practical skill and the ability to work independently, creatively and solve the problems related to the trained profession” (Law No. 08/2012/QH13 on Higher Education, 2012, p. 2) and develop “the qualified and quality workforce in order to satisfy the demand for socio-economic development and assure the National defence and security” (Law No. 08/2012/QH13 on Higher Education, 2012, p. 4).

The close link between the Vietnamese government's goals to respond to the increasing demand in skilful labour force for socio-economic development and higher education is reflected through the Vietnamese government's 'socialisation of education' policy. This policy, which allows the introduction of various types of fees (tuition fees, construction contributions, medical insurance, water and sanitary), is seen as a cost-sharing strategy which shifts the cost of education from the government onto the society (London, 2011). As a result of 'socialisation of education' policy, higher education has been privatised and new forms of institutes have been established. In addition to state-owned public higher education institutions (the facilities invested in and built by the state), the Vietnamese HE sector is a blend of private higher education institutions (possessed and built by social organizations, socio-professional organizations, private economic organizations or individuals), higher education institutions 100 percent invested by foreigners and joint higher education institutions invested by foreigners and domestic investors (Law No. 08/2012/QH13 on Higher Education, 2012). The increase in the number of higher education providers has led to higher enrolment and therefore, to some extent, successfully responded to the emergence of diverse demands from the multi-sector market economy (T. L. Tran & Marginson, 2018).

Overall, I chose the Vietnamese academia, in which the colonial powers have left their imprints, as the site of my research for three main reasons: first, the Vietnamese academic profession carries an elite cultural attachment to the occupation, which is related to the Confucian traditions as a result of the lengthy Chinese colonisation; second, the current Vietnamese university model inherits former models from France's administrative centralisation policy, the Soviet Union's model of small and specialised colleges and institutes, and the US and European models of curricula and the emphasis on research; thirdly, the goals of the Vietnamese HE closely linked to the Vietnamese government agenda to foster social and economic development. Therefore, the Vietnamese academia, which carries the colonising pattern of Vietnam's history, gives a context where the nuances above are explored.

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis will be structured as follows. Chapter Two provides the background context for the thesis. The chapter begins with an overview of Vietnam's history from the formation of the Vietnam in its early history to waves of colonisation through the Chinese colonisation of Vietnam in 111 BC, French colonisation in the nineteenth and twentieth century, US and Soviet Union influence in the twentieth century and the recent Western influence in the present day resulting from the globalisation process. The second part of Chapter Two discusses how

women's positions in Vietnamese society have been profoundly affected by the legacy of different waves of colonisation and how women have gained consciousness of gender inequality.

To gain deeper insight into how waves of colonisation affect Vietnamese women's positions in the society, it is crucial to understand different theoretical orientations in the construction of gender and the performance of gender. Therefore, Chapter Three explores the different ways in which gender has been conceptualised. Each theoretical orientation, the 'nature', 'nurture', social construction lenses and feminist theories, offers a part of the explanations for the way Vietnamese women have been constructed throughout waves of colonisation. An important section of Chapter Three is the discussion of Butler's notion of gender performativity which I find valuable in addressing the changing nature of gender arrangements and allows the discussion of Vietnamese women's agency, subjection, and resistance.

While Chapter Three provides different theorisations on gender, it is unclear how the construction and performativity of gender under the influence of societal, political, and economic structures is manifested in the labour market. Thus, Chapter Four examines explanations for gendered labour market outcomes using the theoretical orientations discussed in Chapter Three. In the last section of Chapter Four, I draw on academia to examine the construction and performance of gender and the (re)production of unequal labour market outcomes in a field highly segregated by gender.

The review of the theorisation of gender, gender performativity in Chapter Three and how the construction and performativity of gender under the influence of societal, political, and economic structures is manifested in the labour market in Chapter Four do have not fully explain how gender is constructed and performed under repeated changes of societal, political and economic structures. Therefore, Chapter Five identifies the research gap and proposes the research question "*How have waves of colonisation influenced how Vietnamese women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes at work?*".

Chapter Six presents my research positioning, and then outlines the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions which underpin this research. My choice of a feminist methodology is justified by my research aim which places gender at the centre of the inquiry. This chapter also discusses the importance of employing a feminist standpoint which focuses on the lives of the oppressed and the aspects which are not visible from the perspectives of the oppressors (S. G. Harding, 1991). The last section of Chapter Six presents the two

research lenses, liberal and postcolonial feminism, before the justification for their relevance is critically analysed.

Chapter Seven is concerned with the research method used in this study. The specific approach to the qualitative methods, the narrative inquiry, is argued being highly appropriate to examine how Vietnamese academic women construct and perceive their world. The chapter then discusses the research process from the participant selection to the conduct of the pilot interviews and then semi-structured interviews with academic women across Vietnamese public universities to generate a rich source of data. Thematic analysis was presented as a foundational method in this study to make sense of the meaning of participants' narratives. The last section of Chapter Seven presents my commitment to reflexivity as a way to enhance my study's trustworthiness.

Chapter Eight and Nine analyse the results of interviews from the liberal feminist and the postcolonial perspectives, respectively. Chapter Eight deals with narratives from the liberal feminist perspective which shows some women enjoyed the supports from their peer or were dependent on their personal efforts to facilitate their career. However, they were perceived to have low career aspirations due to the absence of career goal setting or lack of confidence. Furthermore, while some academic women had access to effective mentoring and training which provided them with access to valuable career advice and professional support, many did not have sufficient mentoring and training, or other forms of professional development provided by their universities. The performance appraisal and promotion processes were not transparent and fair.

Chapter Nine, from the postcolonial feminist perspective, shows that my participants actively performed the Vietnamese filial daughters, dutiful wives, and nurturing mothers. Additionally, they also performed the virtuous women at work because of the spillover of Confucian's essentialisation of gender roles from the domestic into the public sphere. Simultaneously, their universities adopted a work structure and promotional system which prioritised research outcomes due to the impacts of current trend in Western academia. However, their pay which was based on a non-negotiable national salary scale, the remnant of the French colonial system, was not adequate for the costs of livings. They were also expected to conform to the Confucian seniority-based culture.

In Chapter Ten, I argue that the diverse performative acts of femininities among my participants and the various resistance strategies with multi-layers of Western, Confucian and contemporary

global influences highlight the situatedness of gender relations and I therefore advocate for the need to examine relations between different types of femininities and forms of resistance strategies at the site of everyday interactions and within socio-historical arrangements. I call for the re-assessment of the concept of equality, which Vietnamese government and Vietnamese HEIs in my studies equated with sameness and the establishment of a theoretical foundation for Vietnamese (academic) women in relation to political activism.

I draw all the threads together in Chapter Eleven which considers the theoretical, and practical contributions of the research, which pave the way for the recommendations for management practices. A statement of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research follow.

It is worth noting that this thesis has been developed and followed the approach of the research as a developmental exploration conducted with reflexivity, and the notion of putting the researcher's voice into her work. Therefore, my self-reflections will be interwoven into my writing in every chapter. Appendix A is dedicated to my deeper reflections on all aspects of my research from the beginning to the end of my research journey including my oral examination.

CHAPTER TWO: VIETNAMESE WOMEN THROUGH WAVES OF COLONISATION

2.1 Chapter introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined the aim of research was to study how waves of colonisation have affected the construction of gender and gender inequality in the labour market. In this chapter, in order to contextualise the study, I explore and review the history of Vietnam to study the impact of repeated colonisation on the way women are viewed and interact. “We can chart our future clearly and wisely only when we know the path which has led to the present” (Love, 2008, p. 10).

This chapter begins with an overview of how different waves of colonisation have brought different political, economic and cultural influence on Vietnamese society. Then, it moves to a more focused discussion on how these foreign influences have affected Vietnamese women’s status in social relations.

2.2 Vietnam’s history through waves of colonisation

Due to its long and complex colonial history, Vietnamese society retains traces of its colonisers. I use “colonisation” as an umbrella term in this thesis. Colonisation, in the restricted sense, refers to the formal territorial conquest which involves the control and exploitation of a group of people by another foreign group, from another country (Given, 2004). Colonisation used in this research generally refers to “the practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another” (Kohn & Reddy, 2017, p. 1). Such domination can be economic, military, political, cultural or ideological. Colonisation can be achieved with or without colonisers’ settlement, either by force or by commerce. This view of colonisation indicates a continuous arrangement (S. Sen & Marcuzzo, 2018) which does not end with the national liberation movements of the 1960s (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Having said that, this broad interpretation of colonisation encompasses imperialism, and neo-colonialism. I begin this discussion with a brief introduction of early history of Vietnam.

2.2.1 Formation of the indigenous Vietnamese in the early history (2879BC to 207BC)

Some Chinese historians and French sinologists initially viewed early Vietnam as a derivative of Chinese expansion (Cherry, 2009; O’Harrow, 1978; K. W. Taylor, 1983) for two main reasons. Firstly, what is known about this early period has come from Vietnamese ancient folklore and myths. Secondly, exploration work conducted in the French colonial era in the 1920s by untrained archaeologists led to invalid and unreliable conclusions about the

Vietnam's prehistory (Cherry, 2009). However, both the Vietnamese ancient folklore and myths and later scientific explorations in the 1970s point towards the existence of an indigenous culture with distinctive features that were different from that of the Chinese.

According to *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái (Strange tales of the Linh Nam region)* – an accumulation of lore in the fifteenth century, Vietnam was founded in 2879 BC by the first of Hung King (Vua Hùng thứ nhất) who was the descendant of Lạc Long Quân, the prince of the sea and Âu Cơ, a goddess of the mountains (Dao, 2016; T. K. Tran, 2016; T. P. Tran, 2017). Under the rule of Hung King and his descendants, Vietnam, under the name of kingdom of Van Lang at that time, was organised in tribal groups and ruling power was passed from parents to children (T. K. Tran, 2016). However, Kelley (2012) questions the existence of Lạc Long Quân, Âu Cơ and the Hung Kings, and argues that the stories of the Hung Kings were “invented traditions” created by Vietnamese medieval scholars in or after the tenth century so as to make a break with Chinese colonisation and confirm Vietnam's independence from China (p.87).

Nonetheless, the existence of Van Lang and Hung Kings was supported by archaeological work in the 1970s in the Red River Delta in the North Vietnam conducted by Vietnamese and Russian archaeologists. Archaeological excavations suggest the existence of an indigenous civilisation developing between roughly 1000 BC and 1 BC before the arrival of Chinese colonisation (Cherry, 2009; Nam, Lai, & Trinh, 2010). Importantly, there is evidence that civilisation reached a level of development in social organisation which allowed political centralisation, construction planning and resource mobilisation (K. W. Taylor, 1983).

A notable piece of evidence is the ancient citadel found in Cổ Loa, 17km north of the Red River Delta. The citadel which still survives today, consists of fortifications with walls made of bricks and tiles. O'Harrow (1978) remarks the existence of the citadel supports the view that Vietnamese indigenous society was highly productive in food production and therefore had sufficient manpower to build the citadel. In Co Loa and sites across the Red River Delta region, archaeologists also found tools like ploughshares and hoes which suggests that “the skills of the farmers were sufficient to support a clearly defined ruling class” (K. W. Taylor, 1983, p. 12). In addition, archaeologists also detected a bronze drum in Co Loa which weighs 72kg. The size of the drum implies the complexity of the civilisation which could melt between one and seven tons of copper (Fagan, 1996). The ornamented design on the drums of seabirds and amphibians reflect a sea-oriented culture (K. W. Taylor, 1983).

The civilisation associated with the bronze objects and fortifications found across the Red River Delta supported a historical reality rather than a mythical status of the kingdom of Văn Lang and Hung Kings. Scholars in favour of the existence of an indigenous culture consider the Chinese invasion in 111 BC “a temporary intrusion into an already established national life” (K. W. Taylor, 1983, p. 4). This perspective can explain various aspects of the Vietnamese culture such as respect for the Vietnamese tradition, the struggle for independence for thousands of years, and the national pride of the country’s origin and culture.

In summary, in contradiction of some Chinese historians and French sinologists’ view that Vietnamese culture was derived from Chinese culture, there is archaeological evidence of the existence of a Vietnamese indigenous culture. The indigenous culture has formed the national identity and has been a source of pride and motivation for generations of Vietnamese in their struggle against foreign forces from the North (China) and from the West (France, and the US).

2.2.2 Chinese colonisation (207 BC to 938 AD)

The relationship between Vietnam and China has been characterised by China’s multiple attempts to conquer Vietnam and Vietnam’s resistance to China’s invasions. The historian K. W. Taylor (1983) remarks that Vietnam’s consistent resistance “was rooted in the conviction held by Vietnamese that they were not, and did not want to be, Chinese” (p.xviii). China’s first known invasion was led by Chinese war lord Chao To in 207 B.C during the Vietnamese Thuc dynasty. During the first hundred years under Chinese rule, Vietnam’s indigenous culture stayed almost unchanged because the Chinese Han dynasty’s focus at that time was to unify China. However, China’s cultural assimilation mission became more noticeable after 111 BC. Under China’s rule for almost a thousand years until 938 A.D, Vietnam was profoundly influenced by its giant neighbour (Tucker, 1999). The most noticeable trace of China colonisation in Vietnam is the integration of Confucianism, a philosophical system of beliefs (Larm, 2012), also sometimes referred to as a religion (Sun, 2013) in various aspects of social life.

Teachings of Confucianism

Confucianism originates from the teachings and thoughts of Confucius (551-479 BC) and his disciples (Goldin, 2014). Across the years, there have been many tenets of Confucian practices and philosophies; however, Confucianism has two noteworthy features (Larm, 2012). Firstly, human beings have the ability to perfect themselves through the process of moral development, and by perfecting themselves, they contribute to perfecting the world (Goldin, 2014). As a

moral being, a human should prioritise collective well-being over individual desires (Larm, 2012). Secondly, Confucianism also emphasised the ranked pattern of society - rulers over subjects, parents over children, and husbands over wives. The superiors were expected to protect the subordinates while the subordinates were expected to respect their superiors. The subordinates show their obedience, loyalty and respect to their superior (Larm, 2012). Although many Confucianists believe that this hierarchical arrangement of social life can foster effective governance and stable social order, Confucian practices also create unbalanced power among groups, including male and female (Rosenlee, 2006).

Influences of Confucianism on Vietnamese values

Chinese rulers brought Confucianism to Vietnam during the sixth century (N. H. Nguyen, 1998). After Vietnam gained independence from the Chinese rule in 938 A.D, Confucianism remained influential in almost all aspects of life in Vietnam. Confucian values are most visible in four principles of Vietnamese values system: allegiance to family, yearning for a good name, love of learning, and respect for others (D. T. Huynh, 1987; T. Q. N. Nguyen, 2016).

Family is the centre of a Vietnamese's social life. Under a Confucian hierarchical system, parent-child relationships are regulated by filial piety (*hiếu*), a principle which sets the expectation for children to respect and obey their parents. As parents raise and nurture children, when children become adults, they should provide both material support like finance and nonmaterial supports like emotional caring and companionship for their aging parents (Canda, 2013). For Vietnamese, being filial also means producing offspring to continue the family line (Canda, 2013). This belief stems from the teaching of Mencius, the classical Confucian writer who states that "There are three vices that violate the principles of filial piety, and the biggest is being without an offspring" (G. L. Lee, Chan, Hui, & Chan, 2009, p. 139). With regard to offspring, a male child is preferred to a female child (Haughton & Haughton, 1995) because according to Confucian tradition "If you have a son, you can say you have a descendant, but you cannot say so if you have even 10 daughters" (United Nations Children's Fund, 1994, p. 22). Filial piety continues to be a significant factor in the Vietnamese society. Among Vietnamese adults between 18 to 30 years of age, filial piety remains an important source of motivation for parenthood (T. N. A. Duong & Yoo, 2016).

Another aspect of Vietnam's social life which adheres to Confucian values is the importance of reputation. To a Vietnamese, reputation is more precious than any material values (T. Q. N. Nguyen, 2016). Following the Vietnamese proverb, "*Trăm năm bia đá cũng mòn/Ngàn năm*

bia miệng vẫn còn tro tro” (A bad thing never dies), Vietnamese people believe that a bad reputation never leaves you, even after death. A person’s good reputation can be achieved through the act of maintaining face, her or his self-image/self-worth (T. Q. T. Nguyen, 2017). However, in contrast to Anglo-American belief that an individual’s worth is intrinsic, in a face culture like Vietnam and other East Asian nations with a strong Confucian heritage, an individual’s worth is defined by what others think of her or him (Y.-H. Kim & Cohen, 2010). As social worth is the most crucial to a person, it is important to behave appropriately and fulfil one’s role and obligation in every instance through the course of life. Once an individual’s face is lost, she or he also loses social group’s respect and trust in her or his morality (Hwang, 2012).

In addition to the significance of family and reputation in social life, another Vietnamese value associated with Confucian view is the love for learning (T. M. P. Nguyen, Jin, & Gross, 2010; T. M. P. Nguyen, Jin, & Gross, 2013; T. Q. N. Nguyen, 2016). The love for learning originates from the view that learning is a process of obtaining moral, practical and laborious knowledge to become a junzi – a noble person (Hung, 2015). Among all the knowledge, Confucian scholars consider moral knowledge the most valuable (Hung, 2015; Jiang, 2006). In addition, anyone who did not make the effort to learn and overcome difficulties in learning was ranked in the lowest class in society (Hung, 2015). As learning and knowledge are highly appreciated, Vietnamese society values and respects teachers who educate men and contribute to their moral development (T. Q. N. Nguyen, 2016). However, the teacher-student relationship in a Confucian society is not an equal one. Teachers, who have more knowledge than students, have the authority over students and are entitled to students’ respect (Jiang, 2006).

Lastly, under the influence of the teaching of Confucianism, Vietnamese society places an emphasis on the respect for authority. In the domestic sphere, one is expected to respect parents, grandparents, older siblings, and older relatives. In the public sphere, one is expected to respect those in higher positions. Rappa and Tan (2003) suggest that authority within Confucian teaching is authoritative rather than authoritarian, that is, respect for authority is voluntary and based on one’s possession of ethical excellence or possession of knowledge. However, the challenge and question of authority is not encouraged in a Confucian society (D. Y. F. Ho & Ho, 2008) and considered disrespectful (Hallinger, 2010). Confucianism “fosters respect for authority to such an extent that individuals are trapped in submissive positions and attitudes even when those with authority do not merit respect and deference” (Rappa & Tan, 2003, p. 92). Subordinates view the unequal power distribution between them and authority as “natural” and “legitimate” (Thang Dinh Truong, Hallinger, & Sanga, 2016, p. 87).

In conclusion, Confucianism, as a result of Chinese colonisation for approximately a millennium, has a profound impact on Vietnamese society, namely the obligation to the family, the importance of reputation, the fondness of learning and the respect for authority. Such influence is still visible after the Chinese colonisation even during a succession of Vietnamese feudal dynasties: Đinh dynasty (968 – 980), Lý dynasty (1010-1225), Trần dynasty (1225-1400) and Lê dynasty (1428-1788). Until Vietnam became a French colony in 1883, it can be claimed that Vietnam was a Confucian state, at least in terms of its political, social, and educational systems (M Lee & Jones, 2017). Although the Confucian values contribute to Vietnam's social stability, they also result in Vietnamese people being more receptive to inequalities and challenges to the status quo are not well received.

2.2.3 French colonisation (1885-1954)

When the French arrived in Vietnam in 1885, the Nguyen dynasty was in power. Under its conservative rule, Vietnam had weak national defence (A. N. Ho, 2016). Although the real incentive for colonisation was economic as Vietnam had rich natural resources such as coal, timber, and rubber, the French used civilising missions to justify their territorial colonisation of Vietnam (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). Moreover, from some French historian's view, Vietnam made no progress after separating from China; for example, arts and sciences were underdeveloped. Therefore, it was perceived that Vietnam was open to a "stimulus" from people of "a more refined culture" (L. S. Le, 2011, p. 134). Since the French arrival, there have been unsuccessful protests led by Vietnamese patriots such as Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chu Trinh, and peasant riots due to the harsh policies the French imposed on Vietnam. It was only in 1954, the communist revolution, led by Ho Chi Minh, that the French colonial period in Vietnam ended with the Dien Bien Phu triumph (Clayton, 1994).

Introduction of new religion and new fields of knowledge

The period of French colonisation impacted Vietnam in several ways by the introduction of new religion (Catholicism), new writing system (the Romanised writing system), Western branches of knowledge (law and medicine) and new ideologies (liberalism). The most visible cultural impacts of the French were Catholicism and the Romanised writing system (Aditiany, 2016). Catholicism was first introduced to Vietnam during the seventeenth century by religious missionaries along with the Europeans' attempt to establish trading posts in Vietnam (Tucker, 1999). Catholicism was used by the French officials as a cultural and religious force to control the colonised Vietnam (Tucker, 1999). A new writing system developed by the French priest Alexandre de Rhodes using Latin alphabet and diacritical marks was introduced so that priests

could give sermons to the Vietnamese people (Aditiany, 2016). This system later was named *Quốc Ngữ* (the national language) and used widely in schools replacing the Chinese ideographs (Tucker, 1999). The spread of Catholicism and the use of *Quốc Ngữ* in Vietnam showed that the French successfully reduced the influence of China on Vietnam. *Quốc Ngữ* is still used today and Catholicism remains to be one of the biggest religions in Vietnam along with Buddhism and Vietnamese folk religion (atheism) (C. V. Hoang, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2017).

In addition to religion and a new writing system, the French colonists introduced Western education to Vietnam in the form of new fields of knowledge such as legal education (A. N. Ho, 2016), and Western medical techniques (C. M. Thompson, 2010) and new model of an education system. Before the French colonisation, there was no formal legal education in Vietnam and the first law school was established in 1931 (A. N. Ho, 2016; Sidel, 1993). The first medical school of Vietnam, Indochina Medico-Pharmaceutical University, was also established during French colonial period (Hanoi Medical University, 2007). The new fields of knowledge were accompanied by the new French model of education system. As previously mentioned in section 1.3.2, the French adopted an administrative centralisation policy which controlled all schooling practices (T. P. H. Tran, 2013) and the school system was heavily based on examinations (T. P. Nguyen, 2014). The curricula used in the newly established schools and universities by the French mirrored those in France (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004) as the goal of the French education was to train the local elite who served in local administrative government (London, 2007; L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004; M. Vu, 2012). The imprints of the colonial French education are still visible in the contemporary Vietnamese HE, namely the reliance on examination and the dependence of HEIs on state governance. Unlike the appointment of governing boards at private and foreign owned universities, the Vietnamese government have a say in the appointment of board members in public universities (Martin Hayden & Lam, 2009).

Importation of Western values and their influence on social change

While some tangible effects of French colonisation on Vietnam can be observed in the introduction of religion, the writing system and the school system, intangible influences were the adoption of the Enlightenment values especially among the Vietnamese elite (Woodside, 2007). The Enlightenment, fuelled by the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth century and the revolutions especially the French Revolution in 1789, aspired to intellectual progress, and believed in the power of such progress to improve human society and individual

lives (Bristow, 2017). Some concepts, human rights, liberalism and equality, have been associated with works of Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Bristow, 2017).

Enlightenment concepts might have entered Vietnam through China or Japan in the 1800s, but it was the French colonialists who brought the work of Rousseau and Victor Hugo (Woodside, 2007). The adoption of such terms such as liberalism in the French colonial period was shown in a new movement in poetry and literature in the 1930s. Instead of using the conventional seven syllable lushu form and the “six-eight” rule, poets in this period (The Lu, Luu Trong Lu, Huy Can, Che Lan Vien, Han Mac Tu) adopted freer rhyme patterns (Phu Van, 2012). Instead of focusing on humanity and nature, morality, and Confucian ideologies, poets and writers wrote about love and desire for personal happiness (Phu Van, 2012). Individualism became the inspiration for the new movement authors. The Lu, one of the pioneers of the movement, in his poem titled “Self-portrait” described himself as a man who had his own ways of dressing and communicating with others. He rejected the conformity to the public standards of dress and behaviours required by the Confucian society (Jamieson, 1993). Consequently, he took the risk of damaging his reputation, which was critical to a Vietnamese (see section 2.2.2).

However, the concepts of liberalism, individualism or equality were only applicable to small groups of French colonists and Vietnamese elites. Woodside (2007, p. 100) comments on the double standard of the French colonists: “But the French colonists themselves were to practice racial discrimination outside their schools while teaching Rousseau and Hugo inside them”. During the colonial era, the so-called “civilisation” that the French brought only benefited the French colonists and a small class of wealthy Vietnamese while the Vietnamese peasants lived in poverty under the extensive tax regime, and Vietnam labourers experienced poor working conditions (Tucker, 1999).

As a result of this inequity, there was a growing opposition to the French among the Vietnamese in the early twentieth century. Some Vietnamese nationalist intellectuals chose to go to France to see “colonialism’s double standards” (Woodside, 2007, p. 100). Among these nationalists, Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the communist revolution which ended French rule later, travelled to France in 1911 because he “wanted to rethink the Enlightenment’s message in the freer air of Paris” (Woodside, 2007, p. 100). In the 1945 Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh cited the Declaration of the French Revolution in 1791 emphasising individual rights and freedom as the motivation for the revolution (CPV, 2019).

In summary, during the French colonial period, the Chinese influences in Vietnamese people's values were still visible but weakened while the French colonialism had significant impacts on various aspects of Vietnamese's social life, the introduction of new religion, writing system, and Western education system. Concepts in the Western world such as "liberal" and "rights" were introduced to the Vietnamese scholars, which paved the way for revolutions later.

2.2.4 US vs Soviet Union influence (1954 – 1990s)

When Hồ Chí Minh read the Declaration of Independence in Hanoi in 1945 to declare the foundation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, France was not ready to allow its former colony to have full autonomy. The French government continued to send military troops to Vietnam to take offensive action against the newly established communist government in North Vietnam while supporting the establishment of the State of Vietnam in the South headed by the last emperor of Vietnam, Bảo Đại (Randle, 2015). After the military success of the Vietnamese nationalists in Điện Biên Phủ in 1954, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam attended the 1954 Geneva Conference chaired by representatives from Britain and the Soviet Union, with the participation of France, Laos, Cambodia, the United States, and China, to settle the war peacefully and decide on the future of Indochina (Asselin, 2007, 2010).

The 1954 Geneva Conference authorised a temporary separation of Vietnam into two zones divided at the seventeenth parallel (Asselin, 2010). Democratic Republic of Vietnam led by Hồ Chí Minh with support from China and the Soviet Union governed the North, while the State of Vietnam headed by Bảo Đại, then Ngô Đình Diệm with the support from France and then the US governed the South (Tucker, 1999). This period of history was characterised by the emergence of two competing models in Vietnam: the communist North and the capitalist South (LaFeber, 2007) which caused differences in economic and social structures between two regions.

Influence of the capitalist America (1954-1975)

The involvement of the US in South Vietnam was the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations' choice to consider the survival of South Vietnam as of "vital strategic interest" to the United States in order to stop the spread of Soviet and Chinese power" (D. L. Anderson, 2007, p. 14). The US presence in Vietnam lasted relatively briefly compared to that of China and France and its traces in economic and social structures were more noticeable in South Vietnam (the American ally) than North Vietnam (the Soviet Union ally).

The first notable influence of America in South Vietnam is the significant reliance of the South Vietnamese on the US. In order to support the development of a non-communist democratic system and to prevent North Vietnam from taking over South Vietnam (D. C. Nguyen, 2014), the US government poured millions of US dollars in aids into the South Vietnam. The recorded figure was US\$3790 million in 1973 (K. K. Huynh, 1976). The US became South Vietnam's biggest trading partner (Heymann, 1971) and South Vietnamese factories depended greatly on American know-how, spare parts and raw materials for production (K. K. Huynh, 1976). Additionally, the presence of American troops in South Vietnam, approximately half a million soldiers in 1968 (D. C. Nguyen, 2014) led to the development of infrastructure like roads and warehouses and the increase in service jobs to serve American soldiers' needs (K. K. Huynh, 1976). The South Vietnamese economy resembled the characteristics of a market economy with the participation of private, semi-private and state organisations. This was evident in the education sector which had the combination of state, semi-private and private schools. School curricula focused on personal freedom and the progress of society (Dror, 2018).

In addition to these economic changes, the US involvement in South Vietnam also created changes in family structure, which was an immediate consequence of the Vietnam War, also known in Vietnam as the War against America. The war was an attempt by the North to take over South Vietnam under communist rule and North's victory resulted in the withdrawal of the American troops from Vietnam. The war created a major disruption to traditional family life with the increasing number of single parent families due to the death of fathers in the war (Volkman, 2005) or the departure of South Vietnamese to seek political asylum in the US and other countries after 1975 (Jeffries, 1996). There was also a rise in age at marriage of Southern women because of a dearth of males (Hull, 1990).

Influence of the communist Soviet Union (1954 – 1990s)

While South Vietnam was significantly affected by the US, North Vietnam (1954 to 1975), then the North-South united Vietnam (from 1975 onwards) was more strongly impacted by the Soviet Union's models and ideologies. The Soviet Union had become North Vietnam government's most important ally since the mid-1960s in order to mitigate the American power (LaFeber, 2007), expand the Soviet's influence in Southeast Asia and demonstrate the Soviet Union's role as a global power (Gupta, 1973). As a result, the economic and social structures of North Vietnam and then the united Vietnam were strongly influenced by the Soviet approach.

Vietnam's economy in this period can be categorised as a classic command economy with the focus on state ownership, the prohibition of private economic activities and the collectivisation of agricultural activities. During the Vietnam war, the North government's attention was on industries like mechanical engineering, iron and steel to support the war economy (Arkadie & Mallon, 2004). At that same time, the main trading partners of North Vietnam were socialist countries in the Soviet bloc who sold goods to Vietnam at 'friendship prices' (Q. A. Nguyen & Mort, 2016).

In addition to the economic model, Vietnam also adopted the Soviet's the education system. Education under a communist regime was an instrument of a social class; therefore, Vietnam's school programme focused on teaching the Soviet's Marxism-Leninism (Dror, 2018). Vietnam's HE sector after 1975 was a replica of the Soviet Union's model of small and specialised colleges and institutes operating under government ministries and dependent on the national government for planning and funding (Martin Hayden & Lam, 2009). Hence, the mission of these colleges and institutes was to provide Vietnamese government's ministries with a work force customised to their needs (Martin Hayden & Lam, 2007). The family functioned as a unit providing a labour force to society with family members of working age becoming state employees, civil servants, or cooperative members. Wages and incomes of family members were distributed by the State and cooperatives (Volkman, 2005).

To sum up, the temporary separation period between North and South Vietnam for about three decades led to the co-existence of opposing economic models and ideologies with South Vietnam resembling a Western capitalist society and North becoming a communist state. These differences showed the continuous influences of foreign forces on Vietnam even without formal colonisation suggesting that the socioeconomic changes in Vietnam cannot be examined separately from the socioeconomic changes evident in the international arena, especially when the world has become more connected.

2.2.5 Recent Western influence (1990s to the present day)

Although Vietnam in the present day is free from formal territorial colonisation, Western forces continue to have significant influence on Vietnamese society due to both internal and external factors.

The internal factor is the integration into the global system as a result of the Vietnamese government's foreign policy in the late 1980s. This aimed to maintain the nation's independence and freedom while also being open, multilateral, with diversified external

relationships (D. W. P. Elliott, 2012). In addition to the open foreign policy, Vietnamese government replaced a Stalinist-grounded economy based on central planning, price controls, and heavy industrialisation by an outwardly oriented economy based on foreign trade, foreign investment, bilateral and multilateral borrowing, and economic interdependence (Abuza, 1998). These open economic and foreign policies were closely related to the decline and collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, which no longer allowed Vietnam to depend on its communist ally for economic and diplomatic support (D. W. P. Elliott, 2012). Furthermore, economic problems created the need for an economic restructure for the Vietnam government. Vietnam's economic outlook was not promising, especially after the wars against both France and the US. Inflation stood at an all-time high (400 percent in 1988) and GDP was only \$2.2 billion US dollars in 1989 (Abuza, 1998). The implementation of the open policy for about three decades has transformed Vietnam from a poor to a lower middle-income nation with the growth rate of approximately 7 percent in 2018 and 2019, one of the fastest in Asia, and which have lifted more than 45 million Vietnamese out of poverty (WB, 2020a).

The external factor is the widespread globalisation in the 1980s, which, from an economic position, is a process of closer economic integration of global market (financial, product and labour) (Gurría, 2006), accelerated globally thanks to scientific advancement and technological progress (Manicas, 2007). In a broader sense, globalisation encompasses other dimensions: cultural, social and political (Guttal, 2007; Robertson & White, 2007). Although globalisation is not a new phenomenon, globalisation as known and experienced today took hold in the 1980s with the coming to power of the Reagan administration in the US, the Thatcher government in the UK, the formation of international institutions like the United Nations (UN) and the WTO, and the embracing of neo-liberal policies which aim to uphold individualised rights, liberty and choice (Guttal, 2007). As a member of international institutions such as the ASEAN and WTO, Vietnam opened parts of the economy, and adopted liberalisation measures such as tax breaks among the ASEAN Free Trade Area, and welcomed foreign investments (Nathan, 1999).

The open policy against the backdrop of the new opportunities brought by a globalised world has placed pressure on the Vietnamese government, businesses and organisation across sectors to focus on developing both national and organisational competitive advantage (Q. Truong, van der Heijden, & Rowley, 2010). Since economic restructure in 1986, successive Vietnamese governments have made continuous efforts to increase national competitiveness by simplifying the administrative processes for taxation, and the procedures for enterprises establishment and resolution (National Business Registration Portal, 2015). The Global Competitiveness Report

in 2019 revealed that Vietnam made the most significant improvement globally (Schwab, 2019).

Vietnam today

Vietnam's economic restructure in combination with globalisation have had profound implications for the practices of different stakeholders, which implies a continued colonisation process. These influences are evident in business practices. For example, since the early 1990s, Vietnamese businesses and organisations have focused on adopting the Western world's benchmark on products and services and management practices (D. T. N. Nguyen, Teo, & Ho, 2017; T. T. A. Nguyen & Jolly, 2020; WB, 2016).

The influences have been more visible in Vietnam's HE sector, particularly in the MOET's effort to encourage Vietnamese HEIs to move up the ranks in the international ranking system and the HEIs' race to increase academic prestige. Firstly, the MOET has encouraged HEIs to choose and use the world rankings that match their brand strategy and make efforts to raise themselves in the chosen ranking system (MOET, 2019b). Although each ranking system (for example the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities or Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings) has different indices, quality of teaching, quality of faculty and research output are always placed at the centre (Rust & Kim, 2016).

Furthermore, like many universities in Asia, universities in Vietnam do not stay outside the race for academic prestige (Rust & Kim, 2016). One example of universities' effort is to import Western countries' curriculum or partner with overseas universities to provide joint programmes to improve the quality of teaching. The top partners from whom Vietnamese universities are importing curricula are US, UK and Australian universities (Q. H. Pham, 2016). In addition to the curricula (see section 1.3.2), the teaching method, organisation, and training management method which came with these curricula have also been imported and English was used as a medium of instruction. The efforts to meet Western world's standards have resulted in the need for new skills and abilities across sectors. For instance, the importation of Western curricula to meet the indices of the rankings also has placed pressure on Vietnamese lecturers to acquire a command of English (T. L. Tran et al., 2018). In addition, high research output is increasingly important among Vietnamese academic staff. Since 2017, all Ph.D. candidates are required by the Vietnamese government to have at least two international publications before they are granted a doctorate degree (Vuong, 2019). Some proposals on

using international publication as a criterion to recruit and appoint academic positions in HEIs have been made (T. H. T. Nguyen et al., 2020).

In conclusion, this timeline shows waves of colonisation as a complex process which involves the colonisation of land, state power, culture, economics, education system and ideology. Each wave of colonisation does not completely erase the influence of the previous waves but contributes to the complexity of the colonisation processes. Although section 2.2 demonstrates how the colonisation periods have influenced various aspects of life of the colonised, it is unclear how waves of political, economic and cultural changes have affected the way women have been viewed and the way they interact with the labour market.

2.3 Women through waves of colonisation

What is the overall picture of Vietnamese history in the previous section like if it is told from women's perspective? Women's version of history has been challenging to sketch because the study of women in Vietnam history is "extremely underdeveloped and uneven" due to insufficient written records in which women appear (Dutton, 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, history stories were only connected to exceptional individual women like national military heroines, or elite women like queen consorts and princesses. Little has been known about the vast majority of "ordinary" women (Dutton, 2013, p. 6).

Meanwhile, the history of ordinary Vietnamese women is always present, yet often in the obscured in the background. The words that Zuchtriegel (2018) used when he discussed the experience of non-elite groups in Classical Greece seem equally applicable to ordinary Vietnamese women. "They were more akin to an obscure backdrop – invisible, though necessary for the performance of the play" (Zuchtriegel, 2018, p. 2). Through the lens of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, ordinary Vietnamese women are the margins that define the centre, the powerful and important groups (Said, 1994).

This section attempts to sketch the Vietnamese women's version of history, both elite and non-elite, exceptional and ordinary, to critically examine their experiences through waves of colonisation. Such a version will provide a historical background to contemporary Vietnamese women's experience and provide an insight into how this background impacts the way they engage in employment. Table 2.1 below outlines the key waves of colonisation throughout Vietnamese history and the positions of Vietnamese women during those periods.

Table 2.1: Vietnamese women through waves of colonisation

Waves of colonisation	Social, cultural, and political context of Vietnam	Vietnamese women through waves of colonisation
Early history (2879BC to 207BC)	A Vietnamese indigenous civilisation existed and reached a level of development in social organisation which allowed political centralisation, construction planning and resource mobilisation.	Vietnamese women held some power positions in the society including being leaders or warriors against Chinese aggressors.
Chinese colonisation (207BC to 938 AD)	Confucianism deeply affected various aspects of social life during Chinese colonisation continuing in Vietnamese after Chinese colonisation.	Vietnamese women became more oppressed in a Confucian society, but still enjoyed certain rights and had some agency thanks to their adaption of the Chinese models.
French colonisation (1885-1954)	The French introduced Catholicism, the Romanised writing system, Western branches of knowledge, and liberalism.	Upper- and middle-class women enjoyed some autonomy in the public sphere but still upheld the Confucian values. Lower-class women suffered the double colonisation of Confucian restrictions and colonial rule.
US – Soviet Union influence (1954-1975)	Two competing models existed in Vietnam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the communist North, supported by the Soviet Union; and • the capitalist South, supported by the US. 	Southern Vietnamese women held various kinds of jobs in response to the socioeconomic demands caused by the occupancy of American troops in South Vietnam. Northern Vietnamese women held important posts in the communist delegations and worked in agricultural cooperatives, village people’s councils or military support groups to support the Vietnam War.
Recent Western influence	Vietnam integrates into the global system, under the impact of globalisation.	Women participate in the workforce in a large number while facing issues resulting from the coexistence of different ideologies.

2.3.1 Women in the early periods

Some Vietnamese historians believed that Vietnam was originally a matriarchal society (Dao, 2016) which saw women rule over men. However, there were no or very few historical texts to confirm whether the Vietnamese matriarchal society was strictly a mother-centred society based the definition of matriarchy as being maternal values like caretaking, nurturing,

motherliness, as suggested by Goettner-Abendroth (2012). Therefore, to avoid the exaggeration of the status of early Vietnamese women, my argument is that Vietnamese women in the early periods held some powerful positions and enjoyed a certain autonomy which were exemplified in the historical stories of leaders and warriors, and regional customs.

According to Vietnamese historians in the feudal periods, Vietnamese women, especially from noble families, occupied important positions in early history. The royal historian Ngô Sĩ Liên in the famous *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư (Complete Annals of Dai Viet)* published in 1697 described the Trung sisters, the first female rulers in Vietnam history as intelligent and strong. They were praised for leading the Vietnamese in 40 A.D to fight against the Chinese control. In their prime, they managed to reclaim 65 city fortifications from the Chinese armies (Raum, 2019) and Trưng Trắc, the elder sister, became the first queen of Vietnam (Dao, 2016). The Trưng sister's reign lasted for only a short period of time due to the strength of Chinese aggressors. Another female hero who has been honoured by the Vietnamese historians was Lady Triệu Thị Trinh, a female warrior in 248 A.D, who formed her own army from a thousand fighters and revolted against the Chinese colonisers because she witnessed their cruelty against her people. Her army was outnumbered by the Chinese colonisers' and her defeat led to her death (T. K. Tran, 2016).

In addition to historical stories, the ongoing local customs of provinces in North Vietnam reinforced the high positions of early historical leaders and warriors like the Trưng sisters and Lady Triệu. For example, B. N. Nguyen (2009) observes that the Hát river villagers' ritual of making glutinous rice balls every March is associated with the commemoration of the Trưng sisters who were believed to have committed suicide in Hát river after their defeat. In addition to rituals to show respect to the Trưng sisters, there are many other rituals, regional customs and festivals throughout provinces to commemorate their female generals (B. N. Nguyen, 2009).

Lê Thị Nhâm Tuyết, in her book *Vietnamese women through different eras*, provides important insight into the status of Vietnamese women in the early periods, particularly the ordinary women by exploring Vietnamese regional marriage customs. In several provinces in the North until the time of her book (1975), the bride only stayed in her husband's place on the first night of marriage and returned to her own home the next day. If the husband wished to meet his wife, he needed to come to her place. Sometimes the husband moved permanently to his wife's house. T. N. T. Le (1975) argues that the practice of the husband coming to the wife instead of

the wife coming to the husband is unconventional in a Confucian society and shows the wife occupied a superior position in family relation. Although T.N.T.Le's argument should be approached with caution as the husband's agency in the early Vietnamese customs of marriage was unknown, it shows a local tradition which positioned Vietnamese women differently from those in the latter periods.

Overall, the high status of Vietnamese women in early history is not only demonstrated in stories of exceptional female leaders but also in regional customs which put ordinary women at a higher position than those in the next period.

2.3.2 Women under the impact of Chinese colonisation

Despite Vietnamese women in the early periods enjoying relatively high status in the society, approximately a thousand years of Chinese colonisation under the influence of Confucian cultural practices resulted in change in their status. Vietnamese women became more oppressed in a Confucian society, but still enjoyed certain rights and had some agency thanks to the adaption of the Chinese models. Due to a lack of both written and oral accounts of Vietnamese (both women and men) under the Chinese colonisation period, the impact of Chinese colonisation on Vietnamese women is examined largely through the records from the feudal periods when the Vietnamese feudal dynasties adopted Confucianism as a broad system to govern various aspects of social life.

Subordination of women under the strong influence of Confucianism

Like their Chinese counterparts, Vietnamese women under the impact of Confucianism have been associated with weaker elements in a dichotomous view of gender, in which male is linked with ying/light/sun (the stronger and more positive elements) and female with yang/dark/moon (the weaker and more negative elements) (Wiesner, 2011). Some of these dichotomies have been perceived as created by nature rather than historical or cultural developments, resulting in people's view of the male/female dichotomy as being rooted in nature. The binary and hierarchical view of male and female manifests in Vietnamese language.

In the English language, 'female' is a neutral adjective referring to being a woman or a girl. Meanwhile, in Vietnamese the word 'female' (*đàn bà*) is pejorative. When it is used as an adjective to describe a person (either man or woman), it means either small-minded, petty, weak, deceitful, vindictive, nosy, or loquacious. If a man is said to be 'feminine', 'womanly' or having 'female' characteristics (*có tính đàn bà*), it is considered disrespectful and insulting. In contrast, 'male', 'masculine' or 'manly' does not have that negative connotation. Agha

(2007) asserts that language usage reveals social relations among people. Drawing on Agha's argument, the negative connotation of the word female in Vietnamese reflects the hierarchical relations between men and women, in which women are in the inferior position. Therefore, if that usage is naturalised, and unchallenged, it might result in persistent gender bias towards women (and men) and Vietnam society.

In addition to the Vietnamese language, historical texts of the period from the tenth to the early twentieth century written by Confucian scholars associated women mostly with their social roles, especially familial, kinship roles and their observations of proper rituals and the cultivation of corresponding virtues (Rosenlee, 2006). A woman's main responsibilities, including women from royal families and noble classes, were to serve her husband and her husband's family. She was acknowledged only if she could produce male heirs for her husband's family. She was expected to live a life of virtuous chastity after her husband's death to honour her husband's family and clan (T. K. Tran, 2016). Dương Vân Nga, an Empress Dowager in the tenth century, who married Lê Hoàn, a commander after her husband, Emperor Đinh Tiên Hoàng passed away, was strongly criticised by Confucian scholars like Ngô Sĩ Liên in his *Complete Annals of Đại Việt*. To maintain their family and their own reputation, Vietnamese women, even today, are expected to follow Confucian precepts like "men and women should remain physically distant" (*nam nữ thụ thụ bất thân*) by not sitting on the same mat, not using the same rack for clothes, not touching when handing one another something (Rainey, 2010; Rydstrom, 2006).

Another impact of Confucianism on Vietnamese women is the notion of sacrifice (W. N. Duong, 2001), which places women's core value in sacrifice for their family, clan and nation. Daughters, even though born into a royal family like Princess Huyền Trân and An Tư in the fourteenth century, and Princess Ngọc Bảo in the sixteenth century had to sacrifice their individual desires for their respective kings' political purposes. Huyền Trân, King Trần Nhân Tông's daughter, was married off to the neighbour king, King of Champa in exchange for lands. An Tư, King Trần Thánh Tông's sister, was married off to a prince of the Yuan Dynasty in China to exchange for peace (T. K. Tran, 2016). Ngọc Bảo, Lord Trịnh Kiểm's daughter, was offered to her father's rival in exchange for political alliance (N. T. Tran, 2018). It was common practice that daughters from poor peasant families were sold to landlords, and forced to work as maids in rich families to pay family's debts (V. B. Pham, 1998). The peasant daughters could become wealthy men's concubines, also known as 'junior' or 'baby' wife, who did not have similar status to the principal wife (N. T. Tran, 2018, p. 72). Sometimes the concubines were

married into the family for the purpose of bearing children, particularly male children, a duty that the principal wives failed to do and concubines' children were expected to treat their fathers' principal wife as they did their biological mothers (N. T. Tran, 2018). Therefore, it can be concluded that Confucian traditions resulted in a hierarchical view of gender relations with men having power over women, and women from elite and wealthy families having power over women from lower rungs of the Vietnamese society.

Enjoyment of legal rights

Although in accordance with the Confucian ethics Vietnamese women were in a secondary position to men in both the family and society, legal scholars assert that Vietnamese women enjoyed certain rights which were uncommon in Confucian societies. For example, after comparing the Vietnamese Hong Duc Law or the Le Code in the Le Dynasty (1428-1788) with the Chinese Codes, Ta (1981) concludes that the Le Code protected the personal rights of women and “extended far beyond the scope of women’s rights in traditional Chinese law” (p.118). To support his argument, Ta (1981) quotes the 1662 decree in the Le Code which granted the wife the entitlement of love and respect from the husband. The 1662 decree also allowed women to divorce by mutual consent and protected the wife from repudiation if she was mourning for her parents or the husband for his.

In addition to the protection of personal rights in marriage, Ta (1981) posits that the Le Code gave daughters equal inheritance rights to those of sons. However, N. T. Tran (2006) is cautious about Ta’s claim of equality. When N. T. Tran (2006) examined the wills and testaments from the Le dynasty, she found that in practice daughters received a portion of their share of the household property; however, the size of the share was dependent on the power dynamics of each family and the daughter’s share was often significantly less than that of her male siblings.

Therefore, although in many ways Vietnamese women were subjugated under Confucianism, the enactment of this ideology in Vietnam did have differences specific to Vietnam such as the protection of women’s rights in case of divorce and the grant of inheritance rights to daughters.

Integration into social life outside the domestic sphere

Despite the Confucian cultural practices which kept women in the domestic sphere, Vietnamese women managed to leave the confinement of their homes and engage in productive work mostly for economic reasons.

Vietnamese women traditionally were active participators in providing for the family. One of the most popular Vietnamese folk songs pictured a typical day of a farmer’s family.

Trên đồng cạn dưới đồng sâu

Chồng cày vợ cấy con trâu đi bừa

(In the highland, in the low land (of the rice paddy field)

The husband is ploughing,

the wife is transplanting seedlings,

the buffalo is drawing the plough).

Trần Tế Xương, also known by the pen name Tú Xương, a poet born the late nineteenth century expressed his gratitude towards his wife for supporting the family financially:

Quanh năm buôn bán ở mom sông

Nuôi đủ năm con với một chồng

(Vendoring all year around by the river

Raising five children and a husband).

Tú Xương's wife was not a sole example of women who actively engaged in trading activities to contribute to the family financially. The evidence of Vietnamese women's trade activities before the twentieth century can be found in the examination of the spread of the Lieu Hanh cult, a female deity who protects merchants (Dror, 2007). Dror (2007), in his study of women and religion argues that female merchants and entertainers were responsible for funding and development of the Lieu Hanh cult.

In my opinion, female merchants, and possibly entertainers, played a crucial role in the dissemination of Lieu Hanh's cult. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, the only village women to travel seem to have been merchants or entertainers, and only they were in the position to finance the development of this cult. It is entirely appropriate that such people would revere a deity thought to be close to traveling women and to be able to protect them and to grant them favours. Lieu Hanh is portrayed in most stories as engaged in some kind of market or business activity, as the owner of a stall, tavern, or inn, which attests to the connection between her cult and female merchants (p.59).

Vietnamese women's integration in the social and economic spheres through trade and religious activities in a Confucian society shows women's agency and autonomy where they

“were able to leave the confines of their homes” and “created a space in which they could engage in ideological experiment” (Dutton, 2013, p. 26). Although subordinated in some ways, they were able to experiment with new ways of thinking – and possibly resistance. Even if they did not resist, there is a tradition of being aware of the subordination.

It can be concluded that Vietnamese women living under the strong influence of Confucianism were bound to a domestic sphere where their main responsibilities were to serve their family and their husbands’ family regardless of their social class. However, while Vietnamese feudal dynasties adopted Confucianism to govern various aspects of social life, Confucianism in Vietnam was not a mimic of Chinese Confucianism. Vietnamese women did enjoy a certain level of legal rights and were, to some extent, protected by the feudal. Some also seemed to leave their domestic sphere and engage in the public sphere through trade activities. However, their position in the Confucian society was still inferior to that of men.

2.3.4 Women under French colonisation

As a part of the civilising mission, the French colonialists started to admit girls to schools which had been exclusive to men during the feudal periods. The French’s purpose for granting education to women was to liberate Vietnamese women from perceived “backward local cultural practices” (Chiricosta, 2010) and produce valuable citizens for the colony (N. T. Tran, 2012). However, access to education was only available in the urban areas, which resulted in the contradictory effects on different groups of women. Upper- and middle- class women with access to education enjoyed greater empowerment while lower class women with limited access to education suffered the constraints of Confucian traditions, and the racial discrimination and economic exploitation of French colonisation to a more extreme level (Chiricosta, 2010).

Empowerment of upper- and middle-class women under French colonisation

Access to education brought upper- and middle- class Vietnamese women proficiency in French and *Quốc Ngữ*, which in turn gave them exposure to written and printed knowledge in both languages (McHale, 1995). Introduced to the Western concepts of liberalism, individualism or equality, Vietnamese (elite) women “became conscious of themselves as a social group, with particular interests, grievances, and demands” (Marr, 1976, p. 371). Being drawn into the global feminist movement, Vietnamese women gained more clarity to be able to critically reflect their positions and question women’s dependency in the Confucian traditions.

They joined the new movement in poetry and literature in the 1930s (see section 2.2.3) to oppose the rigid structure of the Chinese style literature (Chiricosta, 2010). They published their views and raise their voice in women's issues (N. T. Tran, 2012). Notable examples of publications by women and for women were *Women's Bell* by Suong Nguyệt Anh, an accomplished poet, daughter of an anti-colonial scholar. Her newspaper focused on (elite) women's concerns like child rearing, arts and crafts, and household management (N. T. Tran, 2012). In addition, they formed their own organisations such as Women's Labour-Study Association to support each other. The Association led by Mme Đàm Phương, the granddaughter of Minh Mạng, the Emperor of the Nguyễn dynasty, advocated for providing better educational opportunities and building a sense of self-development for women in the forms of occupational skills like sewing, weaving, raising silkworms and household management skills like cooking (Marr, 1976).

Despite having a greater autonomy in the public sphere, Vietnamese elite women in the colonial period continued to uphold the Confucian morality. Suong Nguyệt Anh in the opening of her journal states that:

As this newspaper appears today, its most essential aim is to take the initiative on women's education. [It] will not dare to meddle into politics, nor will it presume to compete with men (McHale, 1995, p. 182).

While Suong Nguyệt Anh's statement could be interpreted as a shield to colonial censors, she also set a clear boundary between women's and men's spheres and limited women to their own realms. Similarly, while Mme Đàm Phương promoted educational opportunities for women, the set of skills she advocated were restricted among the socially accepted skills for women.

Although the columnists and activists like Suong Nguyệt Anh and Mme Đàm Phương gave women a formal political voice which previous generations of women had no access to, they were criticised by the new Vietnamese communists for ignoring the suffering of the lower-class women. From the Vietnamese communists' perspective, the upper-class women spoke from a privileged position and their activities were "another manifestation of French colonial power that perpetuated social discrimination and divisions in the Vietnamese nation" (Chiricosta, 2010, p. 130).

The double colonisation of lower-class women

In contrast to the relative autonomy and empowerment enjoyed by Vietnamese women from upper- and middle-class families, Vietnamese women from the working class, who had no

access to education, and were illiterate, suffered the double colonisation of Confucian restrictions and colonial rule (Chiricosta, 2010; Lessard, 2004; Marr, 1976).

French colonisation transformed the Vietnam economy from self-sufficiency to surplus production, emphasising exports, and forcing women to seek work outside agricultural work (Lessard, 2004). Daughters from peasant families worked as servants in French colonists' homes (Lessard, 2004), as workers in textile or rubber factories under poor conditions (Tucker, 1999) and as wives, mistresses and prostitutes for French soldiers (Tracol-Huynh, 2010). Work outside of the home exposed Vietnamese women to political, social and racial domination by French colonisation. For example, Tracol-Huynh (2010) in her study of prostitution in colonial Northern Vietnam suggests that the regulation of prostitution in France aimed to protect both French men and women while in Vietnam, the regulation was only concerned with the wellbeing of the European man, his social status and racial dominant power.

In addition to the political and racial oppression brought by colonisation, Vietnamese women from the lower-class continued to suffer from the oppression of the remaining Confucian values. For example, some aspects of Confucianism like the importance of the birth of a male child as a demonstration of one's filial piety to one's family, were still powerful in the colonial period. As mentioned earlier, a husband in a marriage with no male child was allowed to marry concubines so as to carry his bloodline. Concubines, usually from a poor family married off to pay family's debts, were treated like servants and were secondary to the primary wife. As a result, the Confucian heritage which created "a class of women inferior to other women" (Marr, 1976, p. 373) remained powerful during the French colonisation period and continued to shape women's lives.

Overall, French colonisation deepened the gap between different classes of women who suffered from multiple oppression. Some Western values were introduced to Vietnam and replaced some Confucian values and benefited women from the upper-class more than those from the lower-class. Several aspects of Confucianism continued to play significant roles in colonial Vietnamese women's lives, particularly women from poor families.

2.3.5 Women under separated periods (US vs. Soviet Union)

The period between 1954 and 1975 was characterised by the opposing political-economic models in the North and the South Vietnam (see section 2.2.4). North Vietnam, with the support of the Soviet Union, was more a communist state while South Vietnam, with the support of the US, was more a capitalist state. Despite the differences in economic orientation and ideologies,

both North and South Vietnam saw a growing presence of women in political matters, particularly associated with the national liberalisation movement.

South Vietnamese modern women

The appearance of the United States in South Vietnam in combination with the capitalist orientation of the non-communist Southern economy created a new image of Southern Vietnamese women who were young and educated and worked in modern office buildings (Stur, 2011). Various types of jobs were generated for Southern Vietnamese women in response to the socioeconomic demands caused by the presence of American troops in South Vietnam. Some women found jobs as secretaries and typists for American Army Offices; some served in the Southern government's offices and agencies like the National Police. Some worked as hostesses and bar girls to serve American military men in the growing presence of the American troops in the 1970s (Stur, 2011).

In addition to the growing formal participation in the economy, South Vietnamese women began to be involved with political matters. A notable example is Trần Lê Xuân, also known in the English-speaking world as Madame Nhu. She was the sister-in-law of South Vietnam's bachelor president, Ngô Đình Diệm, and served as the de facto first lady of the Diem regime of the 1950s and early 1960s. Despite the absence of an official title, she was known to be an influential figure in Southern government politics and pushed through policies such as the law for women's rights to a profession (Woo, 2011), and the law against divorce, arranged marriages and polygamy (Bui, 2012). Another example is Mme. Nguyễn Văn Thọ who was a member of the National Assembly. She represented the Southern government in foreign trips in 1960 and discussed serious political matters with the US government (Bui, 2012).

Overall, the Southern Vietnamese women in the period before the Vietnam War displayed the image of modern women who participated in government agencies and offices and had both formal and informal political voices. However, they stayed in supporting roles in both their types of jobs and their level of power.

North Vietnamese communist women

In contrast to the portrayal of the modern women in the South, North Vietnamese women were associated with communism and the national liberalisation movement. Liberalising trends arrived in Vietnam together with French colonisation, but they were more popular among the intellectual elites (Turley, 1972). The emancipation of women from oppressive feudal social structures and attitudes was said to come with the Lao Động (Labour) Party of Vietnam in the

1950s. The Labour Party promoted the “new female model” which involved women’s right to vote, divorce, and abort as well as the right to education and wage equality in an effort to demonstrate the success of the Marxist-Leninist theories in the Vietnam context (Chiricosta, 2010, p. 133).

During the Vietnam War led by the Communist Party of Vietnam (1955-1975), while many women joined the battlefields with men, the majority were in supporting roles. They were encouraged into membership in agricultural cooperatives, village people’s councils or military support groups. They worked as nurses, couriers, guides, porters or participated in combat in territorial guerrilla units. However, their most important function was to continue agricultural production to support their family and soldiers in the warfront. Their three responsibilities (ba đảm đàng) were “to replace men and free them for combat, assume control of the family and encourage husbands and sons to enlist, and participate in combat when necessary” (Turley, 1972, p. 800).

Besides the supporting roles, Vietnamese women held important posts in the communist delegations like secretary of Tân Việt women’s group (Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai) (Quinn-Judge, 2001) or representative of the North government at international talks (Nguyễn Thị Bình) (Bui, 2012). However, Quinn-Judge (2001) argues that far from being liberated from patriarchy, women who joined the communist movement had to sacrifice their individual desires to the revolution. She used the examples of Lý Phương Đức and Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai, who sacrificed their personal life by marrying someone they did not love for the sake of the revolution or giving up motherhood. For female communists, “the party replaced the family as the object of their loyalty and the source of authority” (Quinn-Judge, 2001, p. 268).

To conclude, Vietnamese women under communism were more involved in political activities and had important roles in the communist ranks. Their contributions were associated significantly with the national liberalisation movement. However, as Rydstrøm (2012) points out, women’s contribution was mainly recognised through their self-sacrificial suffering related to their real family position. It places women’s experiences at the rear of the war and suggests an understanding of a passive position. To a certain extent, their self-sacrifice was no different from the sacrifice that princesses from the feudal eras, under the influences of Confucianism made.

2.3.6 Women under the communist state and influence of contemporary Western influence

Since the Vietnam War in 1975, the Vietnamese communist government has been focusing on building socialism in Vietnam, which is expressed through the development of prosperous citizens, a strong country, and a democratic, just, and civilised society (Socialist Republic of Vietnam Government Portal, n.d). The goals of socialism have affected women in several ways such as the increase in female participation in the workforce, and the enforcement of laws protecting women's rights. Meanwhile, Vietnamese women are facing issues resulting from the coexistence of different ideologies due to Vietnam's colonisation history.

The notions of prosperous citizens and a strong country in a communist state means that citizens do not suffer from joblessness and poverty and that the country has strong economic prospects, national security and strong international cooperation (T. Q. N. Nguyen, 2016). The commitment of the Vietnamese government to developing prosperous citizens and a strong country has been demonstrated in the implementation of Doi Moi reform in 1986, which aimed to build a socialist oriented market economy, open the economy to international trade, and encourage private businesses. The economic restructure in combination with the integration of Vietnam into the global economy have resulted in an increasing presence of female workers in the workplace (Banerji, Gjonbalaj, Hlatshwayo, & Le, 2018). Vietnam's female labour force participation – the share of working-age women with a job or actively looking for employment – has maintained more than 70 percent for more than two decades, surpassing that of developed economies like Singapore or Australia (Banerji et al., 2018). Vietnamese women work in various types of industries ranging through agriculture, forestry, construction, and services. The number of women working in agriculture accounts for more than a third of female employment (39.8 percent in 2018) (GSO of Vietnam, 2018) but the number of women joining the service and foreign investment sector is increasing (Banerji et al., 2018). The Vietnamese government is focusing on increasing the quality of the labour force by ensuring gender equality for all levels of education (Banerji et al., 2018).

A democratic, just and civilised society, in a Vietnamese interpretation, is a society where everyone enjoys equality in social relations, and distribution of labour results (T. Q. N. Nguyen, 2016). This goal has included legislative changes aimed at creating gender equality such as marriage and family laws that have outlawed feudal practices of polygamy, and child marriage, and enforced voluntary and monogamous marriage and fostered equality between husbands and wives (Law No. 52/2014/QH13 on Marriage and Family, 2014). Other legislative changes are the enforcement of law on gender equality which aims to eliminate gender discrimination

(Law No. 73/2006/QH11 on Gender Equality, 2006) and the introduction of the labour code which ensures the principle of equality between men and women in respect of recruitment, employment, advancement in wage increments and remuneration (Labour Code of Vietnam, 1994). In addition to legislative changes, the Vietnamese government has carried out campaigns like the “New Culture Family” which aims to promote gender inequality by encouraging husbands and wives to share the household responsibilities and make household related decisions together (Thanh Dam Truong, 1996).

Despite the goals of socialism, Confucian values continue to form the overarching framework which defines women’s status within the household and the society at large in Vietnam. Son preference, the Confucian view that perceives son as more desirable than daughters, remains widespread (den Boer & Hudson, 2017; Guilmoto, 2012; Haughton & Haughton, 1995). The notion that motherhood is central to Vietnamese women’s life is supported by the communist state. While the “New Culture Family” supported the division of household chores between husbands and wives, family planning, child education, and the responsibility to maintain a harmonious household are considered women’s main responsibilities (Thanh Dam Truong, 1996). A more recent study, conducted by the Institute for Social Development Studies between 2012 and 2015 shows that Vietnamese women are expected to sacrifice their personal and professional achievement for their families and take on full responsibility for care and support of their husbands, children, and extended family on both sides (Thanh Nien News, 2016). These “selfless endeavours” have been celebrated by mass media and in both the workplace and at home (Thi Thuy H. Truong, 2008). Thi Thuy H. Truong (2008) suggests that Vietnamese women have internalised this perception and used it as a guide to plan their life.

In summary, Vietnamese women under the communist state have more rights than they did in the previous periods. They have legal protection against gender inequalities and integrate further into public sphere. However, they are expected to uphold the expectation to be the main caretakers in the family and to sacrifice their personal goals for their family. To some extent, the pressure to conform to gender roles and responsibilities associated with workforce participation have deteriorated rather than improved the situation of Vietnamese women (Soucy, 2000).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented different waves of colonisation throughout Vietnam history. Each wave of colonisation brought changes in Vietnam’s ideology, socioeconomic structures, and

state governance. However, the presence of one coloniser did not completely erase the effects of previous colonisers. Instead, the history of multiple colonisations of Vietnam has resulted in the coexistence of a variety of ideologies (Confucianism, liberalism, communism) which are visible in various aspects of life in Vietnam nowadays.

Multiple waves of colonisation have had profound influences on the way women are viewed and interact. The portrayal of Vietnamese women and their interactions in social life have been complex and sometimes contradictory. Throughout history, Vietnamese women have been the warriors of ancient wars, subordinated women under Confucian traditions, liberated modern women under the French and American influence, women suffered from double colonisation, active communists in national liberalisation movement, and socialist citizens under the communist state. The complexities in Vietnam's history have given women consciousness of the inequalities between women and men, and between Vietnamese people and colonisers. However, they have faced strong pressure to conform to the notion of self-sacrifice which stems from the interaction between Confucian values, family, and the state benefits. Therefore, the next chapter will examine how Vietnamese women might make sense of the process through the exploration of the construction and performance of gender from different theoretical approaches.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MULTIPLICITY IN THEORISING GENDER

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two shows that the socioeconomic changes, prolonged wars against foreign controls, the North-South Vietnam separation, and Vietnam's integration into the global economy have resulted in the multiple values and ideologies which have impacted significantly on women's status and positions in society. Throughout history, while Vietnamese women have enjoyed certain rights, they have also been the vulnerable "others" who suffer from multiple oppressions (racism, sexism and colonialism). In the contemporary setting, Vietnamese women's thoughts and actions are strongly constrained by the imprints of waves of colonisation, the local structure – an economy in transition period and global structures – which have been changing faster than ever as the effects of globalisation and communist state's objectives to promote gender equality.

I found the words that Pavla Miller (2017) used when she discussed the experience of Indigenous Australians who also suffered from negative impacts of colonisation relatable to the situation of Vietnamese women. "It disorganised many people's sense of coherence: their notions of who they were, how they fitted into the world and where they were going" (P. Miller, 2017, p. 110). If Vietnamese women are not conscious of the process of gender construction and the patterns of inequalities, their individual and collective responses to inequalities may be less effective.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to review previous literature to understand the way gender is constructed and performed, and the factors affecting the construction of gender and the hierarchy in gender relations. However, as gender is an important contemporary concept (Posey, 2016) and human beings still rely on sex/gender as a primary category for making senses of others in order to know how to act in response (Ridgeway, 2009, 2011), there is a large and long-standing literature concerned with gender. Some researchers (Buss, 1994, 2009; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Buunk, Dijkstra, Kenrick, & Warntjes, 2001; Hines, 1982, 2008; Van Goozen, Cohen-Kettenis, Gooren, Frijda, & Van De Poll, 1995), using a 'nature' approach, draw from the biological differences between women and men to explain the gender differences in behaviours. Other researchers (Bandura, 1965, 1977, 1978, 1986, 1992, 1998, 2001; Bem, 1981, 1983; Kohlberg, 1966, 1969), using a 'nurture' approach, propose that an individual's gendered behaviours develop from an early age through the interactions between that person and the environment including the parents, schools, and the media.

Meanwhile, while some social constructionist scholars (Jaggar, 1983; Lorber, 2012; MacKinnon, 1989; C. West & Zimmerman, 1987) agree that gendered behaviours are products of nurture than nature, they focus more on the interaction of gender with other institutions (race, class, micropolitical activities) that influence gendered behaviours and create gender equalities among genders. Last, phenomenologist scholars (Butler, 1988, 1990, 2004, 2007, 2011), while having the same view as social constructionist scholars (C. West & Zimmerman, 1987) that gender should be thought of as a verb rather than a noun and take into account individuals' agency, perceive gendered behaviours as being a result of repetition of day-to-day acts.

Due to the various ways of conceptualising the understanding of 'gender' and explaining gender differences in choices and behaviours, it is important to review these positions. I will evaluate and subsequently adopt the understanding that provides the theoretical frameworks to frame the research questions in Chapter Five.

This chapter will be structured as follows. The first section briefly discusses understandings of gender differences as a result of biological differences. I subsequently examine the nurture argument which focuses on gender development, followed by the theorisation of gender as a social construct which attends to the interaction of gender with other social institutions. Then, gender is examined in relation to the physical body. The next section explores gender performativity, the impacts of cultural, economic, and political system on one's gender performance as well as the penalties for the failure to perform. The chapter concludes with the examination of gender hegemony, multiple masculinities, and femininities.

3.2 Understanding of gender from a 'nature' approach

The Oxford Dictionaries state that 'gender' originates from the Old French *genre*, based on Latin *genus* ("gender," 2019). Its earliest meanings were 'kind, sort, genus' and 'type or class of noun' and were used to classify nouns as male, female or neuter. 'Gender' in this sense is viewed as a synonym with 'sex' which refers to the biological and physical characteristics of men and women (World Health Organisation, n.d.). This understanding of 'gender' highlights male and female differences in chromosomes, reproductive systems, brain functions and other physical features. Researchers (Buss, 1994, 2009; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Buunk et al., 2001; Hines, 1982, 2008; Van Goozen et al., 1995) who draw from the biological differences between women and men to explain the gender differences in behaviours are grounded in the 'nature' argument.

The ‘nature’ argument can be traced back to the classical essentialist philosophy of nature, developed by Aristotle who believed that the things that exist in the world can all be divided into those that exist by nature, those that exist by art and those that exist by chance (Ellis, 2002). Those that exist by nature, known as the ‘natural kinds’, have their essences, their characteristics which distinguish them from the other kinds. Their essences decide how they behave and interact with the world (Ellis, 2002). If biological differences between male and female (chromosomes, hormones, and other physical features) are interpreted as their natural essences, then those essences dictate how women and men behave.

Typical examples of the areas of research that endorse ‘nature’ argument are sociobiology (Buss, 1994; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Marzoli, Havlíček, & Roberts, 2018; E. O. Wilson, 1975) and cognitive biology (Hines, 1982, 2008; Van Goozen et al., 1995). Sociobiology focuses more on the adaptive behaviours which humans have made across generations to increase their chances of survival while cognitive biology focuses the differences in brain functions between women and men to justify the gap in their behaviours, abilities and statuses.

3.2.1 Sociobiology

The field of sociobiology, which originates from Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection (Gould, 2002), developed out of studies of animals (Lindsey, 2016). Researchers of sociobiology assume that the behaviours of both animals and humans are driven by survival instinct, that is, the desire to pass their genes on to the next generations (Lindsey, 2016; Lips, 2019). As a result, in the evolutionary process of increasing survival rate across generations, males and females have different strategies in mating and caring for offspring (Buss, 1994; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Marzoli et al., 2018; E. O. Wilson, 1975). Males, due to their biological characteristics, reproduce their genes by mating with different females. On the contrary, females, whose pregnancy and birth consume much time and energy, are more selective in mating and prioritise caring for offerings to increase their chances of passing their genes on to the next generations (Hesselbart, 1981; Lindsey, 2016; Lips, 2019).

Evolutionary psychologists (Buss, 1994; Buss & Schmitt, 1993) have applied the Darwinian perspective to study humans’ mating behaviours and found the differences between women and men in their preferences of the number and characteristics of mates. For example, data from the sample of 148 college students, although limited in size and age range, show that more men than women were interested in short-term mates and a larger number of mates (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Buss and Schmitt (1993) define short-term mates as people engaged in brief

affairs or one-night stand in opposition to marriage partners. Buss (1994) further finds that men had higher preferences for sexual partners of younger age and with physical attractiveness which were perceived to be an indication of reproductive success. Interestingly, youth and physical attractiveness were more important to men than to women because a man's reproductive success was less closely associated with age and appearance (Buss, 1994). More recent research has also confirmed the differences between two biological sexes in age preferences. Buunk et al. (2001) observe that women in general preferred partners of their own age, regardless of their age, while men in general, regardless of their age, preferred short-term partners and those in their reproductive years.

Although sociobiologists do not explicitly claim that biological differences result in men's dominance and women's inferior positions in society, their biologicistic view implies that behaviours for evolutionary purposes creates different traits "selected for" women and men, which in turn leads to women and men taking different roles in society (Hesselbart, 1981, p. 570). Since women invest more time and energy in pregnancy and childrearing, they are more nurturant and more suitable to be caregivers. Men need to show strength in order to be found more attractive by women; therefore, they are more suitable to be in a labour intensive role and the providers for the family (Hesselbart, 1981).

The ideas of traits selected for women and men was drawn on by another set of 'nature' theorists (Talcott Parsons, 1942; Talcot Parsons & Bales, 1955) to explain the social structure. Talcot Parsons and Bales (1955) assert that men are instrumental, and women are expressive, that is, men were task-oriented, and women were oriented toward feelings and relationships. Therefore, men are more suitable than women for paid work and public life; women are more suitable for the care work in the family. Separate spheres for men and women were functional in reducing competition and conflict in the family and thus preserving social harmony (Chafetz, 2006). Therefore, Saad (2004) suggests that instead of blaming social structures which favour men and subordinate women, advocates for women's rights should consider applying evolutionary ideas to study the differences in gendered behaviours.

Recognising that men and women have evolved different mating strategies, which translate into ubiquitous differences in behaviours, does not imply the superiority of one sex over the other. A true understanding of human condition requires the recognition that we are biological entities that have been shaped by millions of years of

evolution. It is neither sexist or misogynistic for men to be attracted to young and beautiful women (Saad, 2004, pp. 608-609).

Nonetheless, sociobiologists have been challenged. Evolutionary explanations have been critiqued for the inability to explain same-sex attraction, and other forms of sexual diversity (Bagemihl, 1999). The branch of study on mating behaviours was developed out of research on animals (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000), but the link between mating behaviour in nonhumans and humans is weak (Lindsey, 2016).

In summary, sociobiologists depend on evolutionary ideas to explain the gaps in behaviours between women and men and the different roles women and men take as a result of those differences. The major drawback of the Darwinian view is that it focuses solely on binary categories such as female and male, women and men but overlooks the individuals who do not fit neatly into one of those two categories.

3.2.2 Cognitive biology

Another well-established branch of research (Bouchard, Trudeau, Sutton, Boudreault, & Deneault, 2009; Halpern, 2012; Hines, 1982, 2008; Kimura, 1999; Russell, Tchanturia, Rahman, & Schmidt, 2007; Van Goozen et al., 1995) which use the 'natural' argument to explain the differences in sex and gender behaviours is cognitive biology. The basis of cognitive biology is that sex differences in chromosomes lead to the production of different levels of sex hormones, which lead to sex differences in the brain, which, in turn, lead to gendered behaviours (Bluhm, 2017) and gender specific abilities (Van Goozen et al., 1995).

The evidence of the link between gendered behaviours and hormones is found in various studies of early childhood development (Berenbaum & Hines, 1992; Berenbaum & Snyder, 1995; Hines et al., 2002; Lamminmäki et al., 2012). For example, Berenbaum and Hines (1992) suggest that girls with congenital adrenal hyperplasia, a genetic disorder which produces high levels of high level of testosterone, the primary sex hormone in male humans, were more likely to play with boys' toys (helicopters, cars, fire trucks etc.) and less likely to play with girls' toys (dolls, kitchen supplies etc.). Hines et al. (2002) further propose that preschool girls with the high level of testosterone passed on from their mothers during pregnancy, were more likely to demonstrate masculine-typical behaviours in not only toys, but also playmates and activity preferences.

Another set of researchers (Kelly, Ostrowski, & Wilson, 1999; Kimura, 1996, 1999; Van Goozen et al., 1995) use the differences in female and male hormones and brains to explain the

differences in gender specific abilities. Consistent with the view of Berenbaum and Hines (1992), Berenbaum and Snyder (1995), and Lamminmäki et al. (2012) that hormones play a key role in gendered behaviours, Van Goozen et al. (1995) further attest that differences in female and male hormones cause gender specific abilities. Their study on female-to-male transgender individuals shows that after the process of hormone treatment which increased the levels of androgens, the male sex hormone, research participants showed an increase in characteristics which were predominantly male attributes like aggressive behaviour. The rise of androgens also impacted the transsexuals' abilities including an increase in spatial ability (male attribute), and a decrease in verbal fluency (female attribute) (Van Goozen et al., 1995).

Although cognitive biology offers a “part of the answer” to questions such as why males and females differ behaviourally (Hines, 2011, p. 80), the transferability of cognitive biology research is problematic. One might question whether the link between gendered behaviours and hormones found in infancy and early childhood in Hines et al (2002) continues in adulthood. Meanwhile, some researchers raise concerns about the validity of the research focus on the differences in performance between women and men. Kaiser, Haller, Schmitz, and Nitsch (2009) report that some language studies which claim the differences in language ability between the two sexes were based on debatable assumptions or questionable tools of analysis. Furthermore, when some researchers expanded the sample size in comparison with earlier research, the results changed. For example, meta-analysis of data from testing of approximately 7 million pupils from grade 2 to 11 in the US show no discrepancy in mathematical performance between male and female (Hyde, 2016).

3.2.3 Summary

In summary, similar to sociobiologists, cognitive biologists use biological characteristics rather than social factors to explain the differences in sex and gender behaviours between male and female. While sociobiology depends on evolutionary ideas, cognitive biology focuses on the relationships among hormones, brain functions, gendered behaviours and abilities. Overall, researchers who draw in various ways from the ‘nature’ argument posit that biological sex creates the differences in women and men’s behaviours. The biological differences have led to the belief that women and men are “naturally” suited to fulfil certain roles regardless of their intellect, desires, expertise, or experiences (Lindsey, 2016). The interpretation of gender as nature conveys the sense that roles are fixed and dichotomous and there is little room for change.

Through this reading of the literature from the ‘nature’ approach, while I do not deny that biological differences exist and are important in explain human behaviours at certain stages of life, this approach has not addressed the following questions. First, how do gendered behaviours develop? If women and men behave in certain ways and are suitable for certain roles for the sake of survival, how do the changes in the contemporary world affect their behaviours and roles? For example, with the rapid development of technology, women do not have to invest much time and energy in labour intensive activities for survival as historically, why are many women still confined in the domestic sphere? Therefore, in the next section, I turn to the ‘nurture’ approach for these unanswered questions.

3.3 Understanding of gender from a ‘nurture’ approach

In sharp contrast to the interpretation of biological gender as humans’ essence, scholars who understand gender as social learning, or in other words, who advocate for the ‘nurture’ argument, have developed their ideas from existentialism (Bandura, 1978). Existentialists such as Søren Aabye Kierkegaard and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche posit that you are not ready-made with a “predetermined personalities or fate” (Gravil, 2007, p. 8). Instead of being defined by your essences, “you are what you do”; you make your own choices and create your own values (Gravil, 2007, p. 8). In opposition to the essentialist interpretation that men and women have their own place in the structured world which conditions their lives and agency, the existentialist interpretation acknowledges women’s and men’s agency and capability.

Notable examples of the ‘nurture’ approach include social learning theory/social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1965, 1977, 1978; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961, 1963), gender schema theory (Bem, 1981, 1983; Kohlberg, 1966, 1969) and social role theory (Eagly, 1987, 2013).

3.3.1 Social learning theory and social cognitive theory

Social learning theory, developed by the psychologist Albert Bandura, posits that human learns social behaviours through the act of observing and imitating their models’ behaviours and through the models’ reinforcement and punishment on the acquisition of imitative responses (Bandura, 1965, 1977, 1978; Bandura et al., 1961, 1963). It is worth noting that humans do not simply imitate a particular behaviour. They also learn the rules to create behaviours which might not be demonstrated by the models before, but similar to those they observe their models do (Blakemore, Berenbaum, & Liben, 2008).

Social learning theorists (Bandura et al., 1961) have designed experiments to examine how children observed and imitated behaviours. Bandura et al. (1961) noticed that the boys and girls

in the nursery schools in their experiment observed and imitated both the aggressive physical and verbal acts that the models performed on the Bodo doll in the experiment. In a later experiment to test the role of reinforcement and punishment, Bandura (1965) suggests that children who were rewarded by the models or faced no consequences because of their imitation tended to perform more behaviours matching the models' than those who were punished. Other researchers like Perry and Bussey (1979) extend the understanding of the social learning theory by examining the role of the models' sex. Perry and Bussey (1979), in opposition to Eleanor E. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974), conclude that children are more likely to imitate the models that display the attitudes and behaviours appropriate for the children's sex. In other words, children tend to imitate the same-sex models and their behaviours are shaped by reinforcements and punishments.

While the social learning theory emphasises the impact of imitation and modelling on human behaviours, it is critiqued for not paying adequate attention to the environment in which humans acquire and maintain behaviours (Blakemore et al., 2008). In 1986, to address this, Bandura introduced social cognitive theory, based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1986, 1992, 2001). Social cognitive theory focuses on the causal relationships among the personal factors, behaviour patterns and environmental structures (Bandura, 1986; Bussey & Bandura, 1999). When social cognitive theory is used in gender studies, it can explain how each gender's behaviour develops. Children learn about gender roles and behaviours through the male and female models. In most societies, gender is the most important and observable category, and traditional gender conduct dominates, it is challenging for children to learn diverse styles of conducts and roles. People are more likely to adopt modelled styles of behaviours with more valued outcomes. Therefore, when exposed to both male and female models, children tend not only to adopt the same-sex status of the model but also the more powerful ones (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Social learning theory and social cognitive theory have been criticised for depicting children as passive recipients of influence. They also do not take account of the biological or evolutionary influences on children (Blakemore et al., 2008). Social cognitive theory is based on the interaction between the person, the behaviour and the environment but it is unclear the extent to which each of these factors contribute to actual behaviour and if one is more influential than others (LaMorte, 2019).

Overall, social learning theory and social cognitive theory have shed light on how people learn certain behaviours through observing and imitating the behaviours of others, and how these behaviours are maintained through rewards and punishments for appropriate behaviours. However, one might argue the acts in the experimental studies by social learning theorists (Bandura et al., 1961) were easy to observe, punishments and rewards were explicit, how can a person observe and imitate abstract acts which are more subtle, and harder to observe like the enactment and internalisation of cultural beliefs? Therefore, a group of gender schema theorists focuses on schematic processing to explain how gendered behaviours develop.

3.3.2 Gender schema theory

In resonance with the social learning theory and social cognitive theory, psychologists (Bem, 1981, 1983; Kohlberg, 1966, 1969) agree that children learn sex-related behaviours and attributes from an early age and use this schema to process information. They gradually develop their own perceptions of gender through a process of socialisation which combines gender identity (the sense of self associated with one's gender), gender stereotypes (a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed or performed by women and men) and self-perception of gender-type attributes (self-perceptions of attributes that characterise male persons and female persons as groups) (Menon, 2017; Tobin et al., 2010). Children's agencies of socialisation include parents and other family members, teachers, peers, and media (Lips, 2019).

The socialisation process is also known as the "gender identity development" process (Millett, 1971, p. 31). Following this line of thought, gender and sex are not synonyms. Gender, as Bem (1981) argues, is more associated with femininity and masculinity while sex is more associated with biological traits (Mikkola, 2017). What is considered masculine and feminine is defined by cultural beliefs (Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1957).

Femininity refers to the sex-specific traits of what women ought to be and masculinity refers to the sex-specific traits of what men ought to be (Bem, 1981). Bem's (1981) constructs of femininity and masculinity converges with the stereotyped traits associated to women and men (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). Generally, women are associated with stereotypic characteristics such as communal, nice, caring, and nurturing (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Rosette & Tost, 2010) while men are stereotyped as being agentic, assertive, decisive, independent and physically and mentally tough (Bosak, Sczesny, & Eagly, 2008; Moss-Racusin, 2014; Prentice & Carranza, 2002; J. E.

Williams & Best, 1990). Gender stereotypes dictate not only the traits characterising female and male but also contain information about other qualities such as social roles (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses, 2010). For example, on the home front, women are expected to be responsible for domestic work while men are expected to be the breadwinner (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). In a professional setting, women are expected to be in a subordinate role while men are expected to be in a managerial/leadership role (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000).

Women and men are expected to conform to the constructs of femininity and masculinity, which vary across cultures, social and political systems (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Bi, Ybarra, & Zhao, 2013; Dovidio et al., 2010). Individuals' conformity to expectation about being masculine and feminine is maintained by "gender-based schematic processing", a process whereby a male or female learns the behaviours and attributes linked with their own sex, internalises those beliefs, then constructs identity which is consistent with them (Bem, 1981, p. 355). This process is central to Bem's (1981) gender schema theory.

Gender schema theory emphasises the important role of a person's socialisation history in making her or his gender-based schematic. The more exposed a person is to a dichotomous view linked to sex through socialisation since childhood, the more likely she or he develops schemas relevant to her or his gender, and use those schemas to group information, and make decisions (Bem, 1981).

Not everyone becomes equally sex typed, of course, and individual differences presumably derive from the extent to which one's particular socialisation history has stressed the functional importance of gender dichotomy (Bem, 1981, p. 362).

Bem's (1981) gender schema theory has been widely used in empirical studies on development, discrimination/stereotyping, occupations, historically marginalised populations, and mental health and trauma (Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017). A noteworthy example is the application of gender schema theory to explain the underrepresentation of women in technology by Lemons and Parzinger (2007). Lemons and Parzinger (2007) suggest that women in technology are more gender-aschematic than men in technology and men and women in general population. In other words, women in technology are less likely to organise information and make decisions based on gender. However, technology is a male-dominated field; as a result, men create values which are more gender-schematic. Lemons and Parzinger (2007) conclude that the clash between tech women's and men's values results in the view of women as inferior and explaining women's inferior status, and job dissatisfaction. Women, as a consequence, become

more hesitant to enter the profession and those who enter are more likely to leave (Lemons & Parzinger, 2007).

Similar to social learning theory and social cognitive theory, gender schema theory is subject to the criticism of portraying children as passive recipients of influence (Lindsey, 2016). Moreover, the longitudinal study of Campbell, Shirley, and Candy (2004) on children's acquisition of gendered behaviours reveals that the older a person grows, the less gender-schematic she or he is. This result challenges gender schema theory's implication of one's increasing schematic behaviours together with age (Lindsey, 2016).

3.3.3 Social role theory

Another theory which concentrates on the development of gender but with more attention to the social role of women and men is the social role theory. During the socialisation process over a lifespan, which can simply be understood as the process of relating and interacting with others (G. N. Powell & Graves, 2003), both men and women take different roles. Women, depending on their life stages, need to take the role of daughters, spouses, mothers, neighbours, professionals and so on. Social role theory posits that the differences in male and female adults' behaviours results from the differences in the social roles they take (Eagly, 1987, 2013). The social role, as Eagly (1987, 2003) explains, include both gender roles and other roles pertaining to domestic and public spheres. These roles are sometimes internalised when people apply the stereotypic expectations to themselves (Eagly, 1987, 2013). Eagly's arguments are in line with Bem's (1981) gender schema theory.

Eagly (2013) further argues that women and men not only conform to the stereotypic expectations, but also adapt their behaviour to role requirements. For example, women learn domestic skills like cooking to adapt to the role of homemakers while men learn marketable skills in paid employment to adapt to the role of breadwinners (Carli & Eagly, 1999). The motivation for conformity and adaptation is their desire to fit in, and the considerable power that groups and individuals supportive of these norms have to influence others' behaviours through rewards and punishments (Eagly, 1987, 2013).

Social role theorists are critiqued on the treatments of conformity to social norms as "something that is passed down quietly from one generation to the next, like some kind of family heirloom" (Edley, 2017, p. 42). Social role theory characterises women's and men's role as neutral and complementary, but in reality, gender roles are differentiated profoundly by power (Renfrow

& Howard, 2013). For example, the differences in gendered behaviours and roles tend to intensify in male-dominant societies (Pratto, 1996).

3.3.4 Summary

The understanding of gender as 'nurture', exemplified by three theories: social learning theory/social cognitive theory, gender schema theory and social role theory, sees gender as having a social basis in opposition to the 'nature' argument in the previous section which has a biological basis. The 'nurture' argument focuses on the development process of gender, of which the most important phase is childhood which shapes the gender behaviours in adulthood. Supporters of the 'nurture' argument attach the meaning of gender to masculinity (what men ought to be) and femininity (what women ought to be) as being defined by cultural beliefs.

Through my reading of the 'nurture' argument, while I came to see how women and men learn to behave differently and are affected by agents of socialisation, parents, schools and media, the 'nurture' argument has not clarified some of my concerns. For example, who is it that decides what men ought to be and what women ought to be? Who is there to gain if women and men conform to the beliefs of masculinity and femininity? The next section, the understanding of gender as social construct, addresses those concerns.

3.4 Understanding of gender as social construct

The approach that defines gender as social construct converges with the understanding of gender from the nurture approach because both object to essentialist position that 'men' and 'women' are natural kinds with real essences which explain their mode of interaction with the rest of the world (Alsop, Fitzsimons, & Lennon, 2002). Both approaches interpret 'male' and 'female' as constructed rather than natural kinds as the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir famously claims 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (Beauvoir, 1953). In other words, they are products of nurture rather than nature.

However, while the approach of gender as social learning focuses more on the development of gender since childhood, the approach of gender as social construct attends more to the institutions that influence gendered behaviours and create and maintain gender inequalities among genders. The interpretation of gender as a social construct is associated with *social constructionism* which entered sociology through the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967). Although there is no single definition of social constructionism that would be adequate for all writers, Burr (2015) notes that we could categorise an approach as social constructionism if it has one or more of the four key

assumptions. First, *a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge*. Social constructionism challenges the notion of reality as objective, fixed and naturally given. Instead, social constructionists assume that the world is made; in other words, social worlds are interpretive nets woven by individuals and groups. The second assumption is *cultural and historical specificity*. Social constructionism argues that our ways of understanding are culturally and historically situated. In other words, they are products of particular cultures and periods of history. As a result, the categories and concepts we use are specific to culture and history. Thirdly, *knowledge is sustained by social processes*. People construct their realities through interactions of all kinds with others. The last assumption is that *knowledge and social action go together*. Our construction of the world defines what is permissible for different people to do; therefore, it legitimises our social actions. Both the ‘doing gender’ approach and feminist theories focus ‘male’ and ‘female’ as constructed kinds than natural kinds.

3.4.1 Doing gender

Researchers from ethnomethodology (Gherardi, 1994; Gherardi & Poggio, 2001; C. West & Zimmerman, 1987) suggest that ‘gender’ should be thought of as a verb rather than a noun because individuals must engage in *doing gender* for gender to exist. In opposition to the conceptualisation of gender as a role or a set of traits, C. West and Zimmerman (1987) understand gender as a ‘product of social doings of some sort’, constituted through interactions among society members (p.129). “Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine natures” (C. West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). Women and men do gender with the awareness that they will be judged if they do not follow the normative standards of society’s idealisation of feminine and masculine natures (Deutsch, 2007; C. West & Zimmerman, 1987; Wickes & Emmison, 2007). However, it is worth noting that C. West and Zimmerman (1987) saw doing gender as something ongoing embedded in every interaction, not something optional or occasioned that a person can choose to do or undo when appropriate.

Furthermore, the doing gender model assumes that gender is dynamic, what are considered appropriate gender behaviours change and people respond to changing contemporary norms instead of assuming that individuals internalise the salient gendered norms (Deutsch, 2007). Therefore, the research focus should shift from matters internal to individuals to the interactional and institutional arenas (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p.126). Most importantly, the ‘doing gender’ approach implies that if gender is constructed, then it can be de-constructed,

and social interactions that support gendered institutions can be undone through the process of undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007).

The doing gender approach has contributed significantly to the richness of studying 'doing gender' in organisations. Gherardi (1994), using a symbolic approach, applies the notion of 'doing gender' to study organisational culture because, she argues, "it makes us ask how we do gender in a particular organisational setting and when we assume a particular organisational role" (p.595). (Martin, 2001, 2003, 2006) furthers the understanding of the notion of 'doing gender' by exploring a two-sided dynamic: gendering practices and the practising of gender. She argues that men and women construct each other at work by means of this dynamic, which significantly affects both genders' work experience. In addition, the gendering practice produced through this interaction negatively affect women's identities and confidence. She calls for the attention to the practising of gender to examine how inequalities are created in the workplace. Another important theoretical approach which can be linked to 'doing gender' is Acker's theory (1990) of gendered organisations. J. Acker (1990) not only recognises the importance of organisations as an important site for producing and reproducing dimensions of social difference, but also identifies organisational structure as gendered. Therefore, instead of asking why women are excluded from certain roles in organisations, the relevant question is "to what extent have the overall institutional structure and character of particular institutional areas been formed by and through gender?" (J. Acker, 1992, p. 568).

While 'doing gender' is influential in many fields of social research (Wickes & Emmison, 2007), this theory has left some questions unanswered. For example, C. West and Zimmerman's emphasis on evaluation by gendered norms explains why men and women comply but offers little explanation why they resist (Deutsch, 2007). Therefore, 'doing gender' weakens its potential to be theory of resistance. Furthermore, the emphasis on the development of differences between women and men's accomplishment of doing gender legitimates discrimination and inequality based on sex category (Deutsch, 2007).

Overall, gender from the 'doing gender' approach is conceptualised as a social construct, created by social interactions. One engages in doing gender to be categorised as a woman or a man. That engagement is an important part of societal hierarchies and power systems (Nentwich & Kelan, 2014). The next section further explores the conceptualisation of gender in relation to social structures and power systems.

3.4.2 Feminist construction of gender

Feminist scholars situate the hierarchical relationship among genders at the heart of gender conceptualisation. They perceive gender as the basic principle of social organisations and human interaction process (E. N.-l. Chow, Wilkinson, & Zinn, 1996) and take the subordination of women as a fundamental problem (Jaggar, 1983; Lorber, 1993, 2012; MacKinnon, 1982; J. Scott, 2013). In this regard, ‘gender’ is not just a socially constructed binary category; it is a system of domination of women by men. Men as a group dominate and control women as a group, through a system of gender.

3.4.2.1 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism, the earliest feminist movement occurred during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, interprets gender as two groups, women and men. Among these two groups, women, have been treated more unequally than men (Lorber, 2012). The inequalities include the limited access for women to economic and political opportunities; therefore, the primary concern of liberal feminism is to advocate for women’s economic and political equality (McAfee & Howard, 2018). Nonetheless, some have argued that liberal feminism tends to prioritise paid work and give less attention to unpaid work which has been largely done by women across contexts (Lips, 2019). This has given rise to other feminist theories like radical feminism, Marxist feminism and socialist feminism.

3.4.2.2 Radical feminism

Similar to liberal feminists, radical feminists take issue with the individual and free choices and treat gender as a system of domination (Jaggar, 1983; MacKinnon, 1989; McAfee & Howard, 2018). Calás and Smircich (1996) explain that radical feminism is ‘radical’ because it is ‘women centred’ (p.82). For that purpose, the noticeable aspect of radical feminism is the link of gender with sexuality and power relations (Lennon, 2019).

Within radical feminism, there has been an emphasis on embodiment which views the body as a site for the symbolic construction of sexual differences and a part of sources for women’s oppression due to the negative construction of the body (Threadcraft, 2016). Ancient Western philosophers like Plato made a hierarchical distinction between the soul and the body, in which the soul is the rational and the body is the irrational, enormous and annoying part (Spelman, 1982). “If the body gets the upper hand over the soul, or if the irrational part of the soul overpowers the rational part, one can’t have knowledge, one can’t see beauty, one will be far from the highest form of love, and the state will be in utter chaos” (Spelman, 1982, p. 113).

Following Plato's thought, if women are portrayed as bodily beings, being bound by the body, and existing to attend to its needs, women should be suppressed (Spelman, 1982).

Male's domination, according to radical feminism, is reinforced by men's control of women's sexuality and biological reproductive processes. MacKinnon (1989, p. 113) argues:

Women and men are divided by gender, made into the sexes as we know them, by the requirements of its dominant form, heterosexuality, which institutionalises male sexual dominance and female sexual submission. If this is true, sexuality is the linchpin of gender inequality.

Radical feminists, therefore, support the creation of cultures which do not control, exploit or objectify women's bodies and celebrate positive qualities associated with women (Lips, 2019). However, radical feminists are critiqued for having an essentialist view of gender and giving inadequate attention to race, class and ethnic differences among women (Lorber, 2012).

3.4.2.3 Marxist feminism

Marxist feminists are inspired by Marxist theory which views capitalist societies as being characterised by systemic inequality. Marxism posits that the capitalist class (a minority of the people) owns all the resources for production; therefore, they have the power to set the working conditions and pay the working class (the majority of the people) a wage which has less value than what the working class produces (Ehrenreich, 2005).

Marxist feminism "adds gender to the analytical concern of the Marxist perspective" (Calás & Smircich, 1996, p. 88). They propose that 'gender' is similar to 'class', a social category, characterised by relations of domination and oppression, functioning as a determinant of structural patterns in society (Calas & Smircich, 1996). Marxist feminists (Hartmann, 1976; Hartmann & Markusen, 1980) argue that men's domination and oppression of women is maintained by two mechanisms. The first is a patriarchal system in which men are dominant and women are subordinate, and the second is men's techniques of hierarchical organisation and control which they learn through the historical process of controlling the labour of women and children in the family.

Marxist feminism is associated with socialist feminism which was also built on Marxist theory (Lips, 2019). Socialist feminists extend the theorisation of 'gender' as 'class' and link gender inequality with other forms of injustice resulting from racial, sexual, militarist and environmental structures, disability and queerness (Gordon, 2016). The interrelationships of

these different forms of inequalities shape what has become known as intersectionality (Gimenez, 2019).

3.4.2.4 Postcolonial feminism

The failure of other feminist theorisations in giving voices to other women from different races, classes and ethnicities gives rise to postcolonial feminism. From perspectives of the 'Third World' nations, and the developing nations with colonial history, postcolonial feminists argue that gender theorisation has been based on social experiences of privileged women and men in the 'First World', the wealthy and industrialised nations (Bhabha, 1985, 1990; Mohanty, 1988; Spivak, 1988). Mohanty (1988) questions the Western knowledge which homogenises non-Western women's and (men's) experiences. In addition, within the 'Third World' countries, exploitation and control of culture are patterned differently for men and women (Spivak, 1988). Colonialism in combination with patriarchy make domination even worse for women. In other words, women become more dependent and powerless in a colonial setting (Moane, 1999). However, it is worth noting that gender experiences vary not just between the West and non-West but within non-Western societies as well. Therefore, 'gender' from postcolonial feminism theorists is often analysed in relations to the intersections with race, class, ethnicity and others in the context of specific First World/Third World relationships (Calás & Smircich, 1996). The theorisation of 'gender' from postcolonial feminism has facilitated the (de)construction and (re)construction of the term and the articulation of knowledge beyond traditional understanding.

Overall, feminist theories have linked gender to a range of social institutions and structures and different forms of inequalities (Lips, 2019). While a range of interpretations for 'gender' exists within feminist theorising, all feminist theories are concerned with understanding the reasons for gender inequalities and working towards the strategies to eliminate these in social life (Haslanger, 2013; Lips, 2019). Nonetheless, feminists have been critiqued for treating 'women' as a stable and identifiable category (McAfee & Howard, 2018) for the purpose of political representation (Webster, 2002). Such interpretation may lead to the reduction of the category of 'women' to a common biological basis or shared experiences such as motherhood (Webster, 2002).

3.4.3 Summary

The understanding of gender as social construct is similar to that of the nurture approach in the sense that both reject the essentialist understanding of gender as natural kinds with real

essences which explain their mode of interaction with the rest of the world. Within the social constructionist perspective of gender, the feminist construction of gender emphasises institutions that influence gendered behaviours and create and maintain gender inequalities among genders. While there are various ways feminists conceptualise gender, gender from feminist perspective functions as a system and a power hierarchy.

My reading of the conceptualisation of gender as a social construct shed light on the unanswered questions from the previous section. I came to the understanding of a power system with various dimensions: gender, race, ethnicity, class. The interlocking effects of those dimensions dictate what men ought to be and what women ought to be. Although oppression is universal, the degree of oppression and the impacts of each dimension on the construction of gender vary from context to context. However, I am still puzzled whether women and men are conscious of their acts of doing gender and if they are, whether there is any space for agency and resistance against gender norms.

3.5 Understanding of gender as performativity

The understanding of gender as performativity converges with the understanding of gender as doing in section 3.4 as both conceptualise gender as a verb. However, unlike the earlier approaches which tend to separate the meaning of gender (a social term) from sex (a biological term), the understanding of gender in separation from sex is critiqued.

The understanding of gender as performativity derives from the work of Judith Butler (Butler, 1988, 2004, 2007, 2011) who challenges the understanding of gender in separation from sex. She developed and articulated the idea of gender performativity, drawing from phenomenology. Phenomenology refers to the study of “conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view” (D. W. Smith, 2013, p. 2). Conscious experience is unique because we experience, live through, or perform it. However, phenomenologists posit that we are not aware of much of our intentional mental activity. For example, we are not conscious of our patterns of actions or things which we do not attend to. Therefore, we can become conscious through the interrogation of and reflection on our actions (D. W. Smith, 2013).

The concept of gender performativity (Butler, 1988, 2004, 2007, 2011) has important implications for the debate over agency, subjection and resistance (J. L. Powell & Gilbert, 2007). This section will explore the notion of gender performativity, the drive of gender performativity and the consequences if one does not perform.

3.5.1 *Gender performativity*

Like social constructionists, Butler (1988, 2004, 2007, 2011) rejects the essentialist notion of sex/gender. However, she critiqued the commonly assumed sex-gender distinction - the binary view of biological sex as male and female and the understanding of 'gender' as the cultural interpretation of sex. Butler (1988, 2004, 2007, 2011) argues that the binary view of biological sex as natural and obvious exists because of the gendered world in which we live. In her book, *Gender Trouble*, Butler (2007) states that "It would make no sense, then, to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, if sex itself is a gendered category ... Indeed, sex, by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along" (pp.10-11). For Butler, gender and sex are not distinct and physical bodies do not exist outside social meanings. Mikkola (2017) presents a useful example to illustrate Butler's discussion of sex as socially constructed. When a doctor declares a new-born to be a girl or a boy, this is not a descriptive claim, rather the doctor's act of calling the new-born a girl or a boy makes the baby a girl or a boy. The general public engage in activities that make it seem being female or male is objective and natural. In other words, the act of assigning female or male to an infant creates female or male.

Similar to the construction of sex, the announcement and description of gender creates gender. Butler (1988) suggests "gender is not a fact; the various acts of gender create the ideas of gender" (p.522). She defines gender as "an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, 1988, p. 519). Following that line of thought, the gendered behaviours that an individual demonstrates is not 'natural', but they take the status of 'being natural' in the repetition of day-to-day acts. Similar to the aforementioned *doing gender* approach (C. West & Zimmerman, 1987), the acts of gender for Butler are not deliberate acts like those of actors and actresses in the theatre. They are spontaneous and happen unconsciously. Butler (1988, p. 526) reinforces the understanding of gender as being 'imposed' or 'inscribed' upon individuals rather than a 'radical choice' in her interview with Liz Kotz for *Artforum*. She shared that her work was often misunderstood.

Well, there is a bad reading, which unfortunately is the most popular one. The bad reading goes something like this: I can get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender, stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other, so that what you get is something like the commodification of gender, and the understanding of taking on a gender as a kind of consumerism (*Artforum*, 1992, para.11).

Therefore, Butler (1988) further argues, “gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be ... There is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (Butler, 1990, p. 25). Gender performativity is driven by the desire for recognition of the gendered self as a “intelligible”, or in the other words, the desire “to be recognised within a certain sets of norms” (Butler, 2004, p. 3). The performance of gender according to prevailing social norms can produce a sense of coherence, and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice and desire (Butler, 2007).

An important concept in Butler’s theory of gender performativity is “heterosexual matrix” (Butler, 2007, p. 47) which refers to “a hegemonic discursive/epistemological model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositional and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality” (Butler, 1990, p. 151). In the words of Tyler and Cohen (2010, p. 179) a heterosexual matrix is “an ontological, epistemic schema that privileges masculinity through the configuration of gender in binary and hierarchal terms”. Hence, performing one’s gender successfully equates to conforming to the binary and hierarchal term of heteronormativity (Tyler & Cohen, 2010). The failure to perform results in a set of both obvious and direct punishment (Butler, 1988).

In this sense, the strategies for social transformation should be disrupting and challenging the hierarchical and binary system of gender, questioning the coherence of the category of ‘heterosexuality’ (Renold & Ringrose, 2008) and exploring the enactment of alternative performances (Poggio, 2006). The alternative performances might become sites of resistance where gender can be undone (Nentwich & Kelan, 2014). Butler’s focus on the way alternative performances disrupt dominant gender order and binary understanding of masculinity and femininity, in this regard, differentiates her theory from C. West and Zimmerman’s ‘doing gender’. While studies grounded on C. West and Zimmerman’s ‘doing gender’ treat gender as omnirelevant, and focus on the persistence of inequalities, studies employing Butler’s gender performativity treat gender as situated, fluid and context specific and focus on the questions of change (Nentwich & Kelan, 2014).

However, in her discussion of (un)doing gender, Butler (2004) warns that the process of undoing gender is not easy because of the potential clash between an individual’s dependency on the norms and the desire to live in a way which is “transformative”.

This is not easy, because the “I” becomes, to a certain extent unknowable, threatened with unviability, with becoming undone altogether, when it no longer incorporates the norm in such a way that makes this “I” fully recognisable. There is a certain departure from the human that takes place in order to start the process of remaking the human. I may feel that without some recognisability I cannot live. But I may also feel that the terms by which I am recognised make life unliveable. This is the juncture from which critique emerges, where critique is understood as an interrogation of the terms by which life is constrained in order to open up the possibility of different modes of living; in other words, not to celebrate difference as such but to establish more inclusive conditions for sheltering and maintaining life that resists models of assimilation (Butler, 2004, pp. 3-4).

Although Butler’s theory of gender performativity is influential in feminism and gender studies, Butler’s “dualistic understanding of gender norm as either being consolidated/done or subverted/undone by gender performances” is critiqued (W. Xie, 2014, p. 37). W. Xie (2014) suggests that the relationship between gender norms and gender performances are more complicated. She exemplified by citing Saba Mahmood’s case study of Muslim culture which illustrated that norms are performed, inhabited and experienced in a variety of ways. Furthermore, scholars like Nussbaum (2012) question Butler’s notion of agency. Among the counterarguments that Nussbaum (2012) made is that Butler has not addressed the sources of one’s desire to make changes.

Thus the one place for agency in a world constrained by hierarchy is in the small opportunities we have to oppose gender roles every time they take shape. When I find myself doing femaleness, I can turn it around, poke fun at it, do it a little bit differently. Such reactive and parodic performances, in Butler’s view, never destabilize the larger system ... Butler does in the end want to say that we have a kind of agency, an ability to undertake change and resistance. But where does this ability come from, if there is no structure in the personality that is not thoroughly power’s creation? It is not impossible for Butler to answer this question, but she certainly has not answered it yet (Nussbaum, 2012, pp. 10-11).

In the same line of thought with Nussbaum (2012), Webster (2002) claims that Butler’s notion of agency lacks strength as Butler does not provide an account of either how individuals might actively and deliberately resist norms or the conditions that make collective agency possible.

Therefore, theory of gender performativity lacks the implications for practical political action (Nussbaum, 2012; Webster, 2002).

In summary, Butler's theory of gender performativity interprets gender as fluid instead of being a stable and fixed identity. Both sex and gender are socially constructed and performative. They have no ontological status – the act of performing creates what it describes (Poggio, 2006). The terms gender and sex do not simply describe reality but “contribute to enact the reality they describe” (Huault, Kärreman, Perret, & Spicer, 2017, p. 1). An individual's performance of gender is triggered by the desire to be recognised within prevailing social norms. While some questions the implication of Butler's theory of gender performativity for potential political action, the understanding of gender as fluid opens a door for potential changes (Baines, 2010).

3.5.2 Impacts of societal structures on gender performance

Performativity does not take place in isolation. Instead, people are bound by the social conditions that facilitate or constrain their actions (J. L. Powell & Gilbert, 2007). As Butler (1990) asserts, “gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts” and “it becomes impossible to separate out gender from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (pp.4-5). Therefore, this section focuses on the impacts of cultures, political systems and ideologies and economic structures on the performance of gender.

3.5.2.1 Impacts of cultural values on gender performance

Cultural values, also known as the “collective beliefs which shape behaviour” (Middleton, 2002, p. 6), are transmitted through socialization, modeling, and other forms of communication from one generation to another and are powerful instruments which help a community adjust to the environment (Triandis, 2016). Following this line of thought, the pressure to conform to certain gender roles and the ability to perform gender is a product of cultural conditions (Cheong, 2020; Chia, Moore, Lam, Chuang, & Cheng, 1994).

Among the features of societies commonly discussed that relate to the pressure to conform to roles including gender roles is whether a society is individualistic or collectivist.

“Individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: Everyone is expected to look after her/his immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 225).

In other words, the linkages between members of a collectivist society tend to be stronger than those of an individualist society. Furthermore, in individualist societies, members are more likely to value variety in life and their own individual uniqueness. In contrast, in collectivist societies, individuals are more likely to value social relationships, working toward shared goals, and partaking in shared ways of life (Davis & Williamson, 2019). Although individualism and collectivism exist in both Eastern and Western cultures, more societies in the East than the West are collectivist. Conversely, the Western societies tend to be more individualistic than that of the East (Triandis, 2019). Classic examples of collectivist societies are Japan and China while Germany, the United States and Scandinavian countries exemplify individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 2010; Triandis, 2019).

A common feature among many collectivist cultures in East Asia like Japan, China, South Korea and Vietnam is the strong Confucian heritage which values group conformity and obligations to other members of the society (Forbes, Zhang, Doroszewicz, & Haas, 2009). Son (2006) in her study on the relationship between Confucianism and the development of self among Korean American women suggests that Confucianism has been a key factor in shaping the norms of how women should behave. Similar to Vietnamese women under the influence of Confucianism aforementioned in Chapter Two, Korean American women's life was characterised by "obedience in all directions of relationships" (Son, 2006, p. 328). The common theme of the pressure to conform, particularly among members of collectivist cultures (Lim, 2017; Seo & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Son, 2006) might result in the perception that collectivist cultures make women and men accept these norms as natural. Furthermore, it could be argued that individualistic cultures which value personal autonomy give their citizens more space to make choices than collectivist cultures do; therefore, to some extent, individualistic societies are more tolerant towards the pressure to limit their citizens within certain roles, and generate more acceptance of gender equality (Davis & Williamson, 2019).

However, it is not always the case that a woman or a man in an individualistic culture has less pressure to conform than those in a collectivist culture. The process of performing gender is "located very precisely in time and space" (Souza, Brewis, & Rumens, 2016, p. 600). Collectivist cultures can sometimes create a space for one to negotiate their roles which are against the norms. The study of Nazli (1990) on the Vietnamese immigrant community recently settled in the United States rejects that a simplistic view that a woman or man in a collectivist culture has to conform to rigid gender norms. The culture of the Vietnamese immigrant community, as a result of recent re-settlement, was still characterised by Confucianism which

values reputation and stigmatises marital separation or divorce. Thu, an informant in Nazli's study, suffered domestic violence from her husband, Chau, but failed to leave him due to her fear of stigma. The traditional Vietnamese belief often blamed the wife in the event of separation. However, in this case, Chau's abusive behaviours were considered bad by the community and the judgements of Chau's abuse were disseminated among the community, destroyed his reputation and in the end, made him dissolve the marriage. Thu's story in the study of Nazli (1990) shows that collectivist culture not only helped those women to deal with domestic tensions and disputes but also did not necessarily confine women in the traditional roles.

In summary, the cultural characteristics and patterns of a community play an important role in understanding gender performance as the life of a community member is characterised by the hierarchy within the members of that community, the pressure on individuals to conform to roles and norms and the freedom to make personal choices. However, as Baines (2010) argues, there is no clear-cut distinction on whether the individualistic or collectivist culture cause a woman or a man to conform to gender norms more because gender and other axes of identity like culture group, ethnicity, or race are "not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts" (Butler, 1990, p. 4).

3.5.2.2 The impacts of political systems and ideologies on gender performance

In addition to cultural values, human attitudes and activities are heavily influenced by the political system and political ideology (Schwartz, 1992). Political system refers to "the formal and informal political processes by which decisions are made concerning the use, production and distribution of resources in any given society" (Z. Scott & McLoughlin, 2014, p. 1) while political ideology is a belief system which is held by the member of the public or people in power. Political ideology can reflect "both genuine (and even highly accurate) attempts to understand, interpret, and organise information about the political world as well as conscious or unconscious tendencies to rationalise the way things are or, alternatively, the desire for them to be different" (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009, p. 310). The political system and ideology, which inform state's goals and agendas serve as a powerful force in shaping gender norms and impacts gender performativity. Such impacts are more visible in social contexts which have undergone changes in political systems and ideologies such as the post-Soviet societies.

The study of Kandiyoti (2007) presents a useful example of how the political system and ideology can affect how gender in the post-Soviet societies is performed. Kandiyoti (2007)

interprets the Muslim women's liberalisation movements in the Central Asia societies during the Soviet Union era at the beginning of the twentieth century as a "paradox" (p.601). Kandiyoti (2007) argues that these women's liberalisation movements which involved removing the practice of veiling polygamy and child marriage and providing access to education and formal employment to Muslim women is to serve the goals of economic development and create a new proletariat – the new working class. Meanwhile, motherhood was promoted as a social duty to address the decrease in fertility rate. As a result, Central Asian women in the Soviet era had to carry the burden of performing the traditional femininity roles and 'socially useful' worker roles to serve the state's goals. After the break-up of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, the post-Soviet governments in Central Asian nations like Uzbekistan attempted to de-Sovietise by calling for the return of women to traditional and 'natural' roles – caregivers and housekeepers (Kandiyoti, 2007). Hence, it can be inferred from Kandiyoti's (2007) that the state politics have a crucial role in endorsing certain gender practices and significantly impacts the norms one must conform to and perform.

A more recent study by E. Kim (2020) resonates with Kandiyoti's (2007) arguments on the linkage between gender and politics in post-Soviet world. Similar to the Central Asian nations in Kandiyoti's (2007), the post-socialist Kyrgyzstan society after the separation from the Soviet Union in 1991, committed to form its own state ideology and independent national identity. A part of the effort to build independent identity was the return to traditionalist national ideology which glorified young Kyrgyz women's chastity, purity and domesticity. E. Kim (2020) posits that those practices caused women to "perform virginity" (p.714). Such performances were naturalised, legitimised and reinforced women's subordinated positions in the post-socialist Kyrgyzstan society.

Overall, political factors in a society impacts profoundly on the naturalisation, normalisation and legitimisation of practices which confine members of that society to certain norms and roles.

3.5.2.3 Impacts of economic factors on gender performance

Studies in economics have shown the differences in economic activities have an impact on gender performativity. Members in some societies have higher level of conformity to the norms than others.

Barry, Child, and Bacon (1959) suggest that the types of a society's economy have a role in their members' responses to societal norms. Using the categorisation for dominant economy of a society into collecting, hunting, fishing, cultivation, and stock-raising proposed by Forde

(2004), Barry et al. (1959) argue that in societies with low accumulation of food resources, (hunting or fishing) members have to take initiative to harvest food from nature to ensure survival; therefore, they are individualistic, assertive, and venturesome and less obedient to social norms. On the other hand, in societies with high accumulation of food resources (agricultural), members need to preserve the food sources which are grown throughout the year by working with others, complying with rules. They are less likely to experiment with new techniques as the mistakes can result in a shortage of food for months. They tend to be “conscientious, compliant, and conservative” (Barry et al., 1959). Therefore, the overall type of economy may have an impact on individual responses to societal norms and apply these norms within their own relationships (Yodanis & Lauer, 2007).

In addition to the types of economy, studies provide evidence that the distribution of income within a society is tied to the distribution of income in a marriage, which in turn affects the gender roles in marriage (Yodanis & Lauer, 2007). Yodanis and Lauer (2007) note that within a context which practices and supports economic inequality (the unequal distribution of income among different groups in a society), couples themselves are more likely to draw from these rules and adopt them in their households. In other words, the breadwinner role belongs to spouse who earn the most and therefore have greater financial control and access.

However, the study of De Henau and Himmelweit (2013) on the British families exemplifies how economic contributions in the household has little impact on traditional gender roles. De Henau and Himmelweit (2013) explain that men’s full-time employment is often considered more important than that of women. Women’s income is often considered secondary income (Renan-Barzilay, 2018). Even if a woman is a higher earner, her contribution is downplayed. The main reason is the impact of the male-breadwinner ideology on the naturalisation and legitimisation of man’s power which reduce the effects of women’s financial contributions and her shares of household resources (De Henau & Himmelweit, 2013).

Overall, an individual’s gender performance is not fixed. The process of performing (doing) and undoing gender is “located precisely in time and space” (Souza et al., 2016, p. 600). It is constantly changing and dependent on the historical, cultural and socioeconomic context which are interrelated.

3.5.3 Penalties for the failure to perform

Butler (1988) argues that “discrete genders are part of what ‘humanises’ individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished”

(p.522). While Butler's work is more from a theoretical perspective, empirical studies (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; T. W. Ferguson, 2017; Garcia-Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006; S. K. Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008; Sullivan, Moss-Racusin, Lopez, & Williams, 2018) have suggested that they have good reason to hold the belief that the failure to perform gender correctly results in penalties for the non-conformers. The failure to perform gender correctly corresponds well to the violations of gender stereotypes – the violations of the “rigid beliefs about the behaviours, preferences, and traits associated with particular genders” (Sullivan et al., 2018, p. 2).

As mentioned in Section 3.3, women are associated with stereotypic characteristics such as being communal, nice, caring, and nurturant (Eagly et al., 1995; Eagly et al., 1992; Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Rosette & Tost, 2010) while men are stereotyped to be agentic, assertive, decisive, independent and physically and mentally tough (Bosak et al., 2008; Moss-Racusin, 2014; Prentice & Carranza, 2002; J. E. Williams & Best, 1990). As women are expected to be nice, they face negative reactions if they display anger (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Dowd, 2006; Gianakos, 2002). The negative reaction might include being called names, as when Hilary Clinton was called Angry Woman or a she-monster when she expressed anger in public (Dowd, 2006), and being disliked or being negatively judged on the competence in professional settings (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). In contrast, when men show anger, an expression commonly expected of them, they are supported instead of being resented. A useful example is the case of US former President Bill Clinton in his infamous extramarital scandal with Monica Lewinsky. In a study by Tiedens (2001), participants supported Bill Clinton when he showed anger instead of sadness. This result shows that women are more likely to suppress anger in fear of negative consequences (Gianakos, 2002) while men are likely to express anger (Hershcovis et al., 2007). Not only does anger not bring negative consequences to men as it does to women, but even reinforces men's power and status (Tiedens, 2001), particularly those who have already occupied high status (Gibson & Callister, 2009).

In professional settings, women who display masculine characteristics are less likely to be hired or promoted (Hoover, Hack, Garcia, Goodfriend, & Habashi, 2018). As women are generally expected to present or evaluate themselves modestly, a woman who practice self-promotion like talking with pride about her success is considered as violating “the female modesty norm” (Lindeman, Durik, & Dooley, 2019, p. 228). It is worth noting that self-promotion is crucial to hiring and promotion decisions (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010). The inability to self-promote reduces women's likelihood of being hired (Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999).

However, there is evidence that self-promotion is not as harmful to men as it is to women. The study on self-promotion in video resumes by Waung, Hymes, Beatty, and McAuslan (2015) show that that recruiters are less likely to interview and hire self-promoted female applicants while the level of self-promotion has no damaging impacts for male applicants. Similarly, penalties differ when women and men attempt to negotiate. In the experiments of Bowles, Babcock, and Lai (2007), participants were asked to evaluate written accounts or videotapes of candidates who accepted compensation offers or initiated negotiations. The results showed that female candidates were more likely to be penalised than their male counterparts.

There is also strong evidence that women face doubt about their competence from their peers or subordinates when they take on roles, like managerial/leadership roles, which are traditionally men's (T. W. Ferguson, 2017; Garcia-Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006; Rudman & Phelan, 2008). In the work settings, men's social roles overlap with the roles required in organisational leadership, but women's roles do not (Rudman & Phelan, 2008). Particularly if women adopt masculine characteristics or leadership styles typically reserved for men, they are considered less influential (Carli, LaFleur, & Loeber, 1995) or less efficient (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Even when women demonstrate transformational leadership, a style consisting of communal behaviours like empathy or caring in line with women stereotypes, they are less preferred in leadership roles than men (Hentschel, Braun, Peus, & Frey, 2017). Hentschel et al. (2017) find that their research participants rated transformational male leaders as more promotable than transformational female leaders. Additionally, female leaders are under the pressure of performing their roles at a higher standard than their male counterparts. S. K. Johnson et al. (2008) suggest that female leaders are perceived as effective if they demonstrate both sensitivity and strength, although male leaders only need to demonstrate strength.

Similar to women, men face penalties if they violate their gender stereotypes by failing to demonstrate masculine gender stereotypes. As mentioned previously, men are stereotyped to show no weakness and be tough. Therefore, when men disclose their thoughts, feelings and personal information to others, they are considered less well-adjusted than non-expressive males. The negative reactions stemmed from a socialisation process since childhood that encourage girls but discourage boys to be expressive about their feelings (Derlega & Chaikin, 1976). More recent studies (Emslie, Ridge, Ziebland, & Hunt, 2006; J. L. Johnson, Oliffe, Kelly, Galdas, & Ogradniczuk, 2012) in resonance with Derlega and Chaikin (1976) assert that gender stereotyping which punishes expressive men might result in men's greater vulnerability to mental illness in comparison with women. In professional settings, men must also deal with

negative reactions if they occupy roles in fields typically reserved for women like nursing, childcare or early childhood education (Heilman & Wallen, 2010; Moss-Racusin, 2014; Moss-Racusin & Johnson, 2016). The penalties can be the social exclusions like being less respected (Heilman & Wallen, 2010), less likable (Moss-Racusin & Johnson, 2016).

Although both women and men suffer the negative consequences of failing to perform gender right, they “do not pay the same price” in some cases (Heilman & Wallen, 2010, p. 666). For example, Moss-Racusin and Johnson (2016) suggest that in addition to being less likeable, men working as elementary educators, a female-typed job, even had their sexuality questioned. However, while female non-conformers suffered from economic penalties (not being hired), male non-conformers did not. Moss-Racusin and Johnson (2016) further argue that even though men did not face hiring discrimination, their long-term career prospects would still be harmed because the prejudices would prevent men’s entrance to the fields and diminish job satisfaction and advancement potential.

3.5.4 Summary

In summary, Butler (1990) argues that both sex and gender are socially constructed and performative. That is, “bodies viewed as the material foundations on which gender is constructed, are themselves constructed as if they provide such material foundations” (Mikkola, 2017, p. 12). Furthermore, the act of performing sex/gender creates what it describes. Therefore, she critiques the sex/gender distinction (Butler, 1990, 2007). An individual performs gender because of the desire to be recognised within prevailing social norms. The failure to perform might result in social exclusions and economic penalties although the levels and forms of penalties vary from person to person.

Butler’s theory of gender performativity addresses many of my concerns. I understood that because the act of performing gender takes the status of being ‘natural’ in the repetition of day-to-day acts, a person might not be conscious of their performativity. Furthermore, both the ‘nature’ might not be sufficient and the ‘nurture’ and ‘social constructionist’ approach might offer a part of the answer to the question of why women and men conform to the social expectation of gendered behaviours, the theorisation of gender through the lens of Butler’s theory of gender performativity makes clear that the performance of gender according to prevailing social norms can produce a sense of coherence, and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice and desire (Butler, 2007). Lastly, Butler’s theory of gender performativity, which recognises the “multiplicity of cultural, social, and political intersections in which the

concrete array of ‘women’ are constructed” (Butler, 1990, pp. 19-20) gives the potential for change that lies in the multiplicity and inconsistency of gender construction. “Gender and other facets of identity are performed (done) and thus can be changed (un-done or re-done)” (Baines, 2010, p. 122).

3.6 Gender hegemony: The multiple ways gender is performed

Despite the previous theorisations of gender having made the term more fluid, they have not addressed the multiplicity and contradiction of gender relation, Connell (2005) argues that ‘gender’ is “a way in which social practice is ordered” (p.71) and gender relations are characterised by power inequalities between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities. Masculinity and femininity, to Connell (2005), are not equivalent to men or women respectively. Instead, they are the patterns of practice by which people engage that position.

3.6.1 Multiple masculinities

To unpack the dynamics of gender relations, Connell introduces the notion of multiple masculinities (namely hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalization) which serves as a basis for her formulation of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987, 1995).

Hegemony, the first category, refers to “the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life” (Connell, 2005, p.77). Hence, hegemonic masculinity is “a pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectation or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). Non-conformers to natural, normal and ordinary ideals of the hegemonic system and ideology run the risk of being in a *subordinated* position. For example, the study of Rosen and Nofziger (2019) on how bullying contributes to the perpetuation of masculine dominance reveal that American school-aged boys who do not demonstrate masculine traits - muscular, tall, dominant, and heterosexual - either in size, appearance, or sexual behaviour were more likely to be targeted as victims by their peers. Nevertheless, Connell (2005) asserts that most men fall within the third, category, *complicit*. Although only a small number of men enact hegemonic masculinities, the majority of men gain from it because they benefit from the patriarchal dividend, “the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women” (Connell, 2005, p.79). Finally, gender relations take place within different social, historical and cultural contexts. Therefore, the interaction of gender with other structures like class and race

creates further relationships between masculinities. *Marginalised* masculinities are the outcomes of that interplay among different races, classes, ethnicities, or ages (Connell, 2005).

In summary, the enactment of hegemonic masculinity serves to reinforce men's domination over women and other men. Connell (2005) affirms that:

to recognise diversities in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognise the relations between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit and so on. There is a gender politics within masculinity” (p.37).

3.6.2 Multiple femininities

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that “gender is always relational” (p.848) which implies that women and men or masculinities and femininities are defined in relation to one another. Thus, Connell (1987) developed the concept of ‘emphasised femininity’ along with hegemonic masculinity. ‘Emphasised femininity’ was first referred to as ‘hegemonic femininity’, but Connell (1987) explains that the notion of hegemony is associated with a dominant position while no woman occupies a position of dominant power or influence over other women in a patriarchal society. Furthermore, femininity is still “defined around compliance with this subordination [to men] and is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men” (Connell, 1987, p. 183). Therefore, ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and ‘emphasised femininity’ were conceptualised to acknowledge the asymmetrical position of masculinities and femininities in gender order (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

‘Emphasised femininity’ is “the pattern of femininity which is given most cultural and ideological support ... patterns such as sociability ... compliance ... [and] sexual receptivity [to men]” (Connell, 1987, p. 24). It is grounded in white, heterosexual, socially elite, feminine women (Connell, 1987; Essed & Goldberg, 2002). Women who display the ideals of ‘emphasised femininity’ will have more advantages than those who do not. For example, Mattsson (2015) studies how a group of successful nursing women researchers on a Swedish medical faculty do science and maintain their position as researchers using participant observation and qualitative interviews. She learns that the women researchers adopt the strategy of being ‘good girls’, taking care of everyday matters in the faculty while they still work hard to demonstrate that they are competent researchers. In other words, by practising a

collective emphasised femininity, they create the sameness that enables them to be strong as a group and helps them to be well adapted in academia.

However, despite being used as a category for analysis by some scholars (Mattsson, 2015; Pyke & Johnson, 2003), hegemonic femininity/emphasised femininity have not attracted as much attention in the current literature of gender as hegemonic masculinity and multiple masculinities have (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Schippers, 2007). In response to Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) call for closer attention to the practices of women and the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities, Schippers (2007) builds on Connell's (1987) notion of hegemonic masculinity and multiple masculinities, draws from Butler's (1990) notion of heterosexual desire, "a defining features for both women and men, is what binds the masculinity and femininity in a binary, hierarchical relationship" (Schippers, 2007, p. 90) and develops a conceptual framework with multiple femininities. Her goal is "to recover the feminine other and place it in the centre of a theory of gender hegemony" (Schippers, 2007, p. 86).

In contrast to Connell's discussion of the non-existence of hegemonic femininity, Schippers (2007) argues that justification is only valid if masculinity and femininity are theorised in isolation from each other. Instead, the relationship of masculinity and femininity should be understood as complementary. The feminine characteristics which subordinate femininity to masculinity (physical vulnerability, an inability to use violence effectively, and compliance) complement the masculine characteristics which legitimise men's dominance over women (physical strength, the ability to use personal violence in the face of conflict, and authority). Therefore, she reworks Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity and elaborates hegemonic femininity.

Hegemonic masculinity is the qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. Given the centrality of the relationship between masculinity and femininity in the new definition, we now have conceptual space for hegemonic femininity. Hegemonic femininity consists of the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Schippers, 2007, p. 94).

She further attests that hegemonic femininity is ascendant in relation to ‘pariah femininities’, embodied by those who contradict or detach themselves from practices defined as feminine. She exemplifies the embodiment of ‘pariah femininities’ with Messerschmidt’s (2003) work on adolescent violence and gender. Tina, a working-class white girl, who used to successfully embody femininity, went from a popular girl to an outcast because she wore revealing clothing and physically assaulted her friend. Tina then joined a ‘badass group’ who praised her action but had a lower social status than her previous preppy group. Schippers (2007) interprets the ‘badass group’ as the embodiment of ‘pariah femininities’ whose characteristics are considered undesirable and contaminating, and to “constitute a refusal to complement hegemonic masculinity in a relation of subordination and therefore are threatening to male dominance” (p.95).

Schippers’ (2007) notions of hegemonic femininity and pariah femininities have been utilised by various scholars (Hayes & Baker, 2014; Khanikar, 2016; Stone & Gorga, 2014) to understand gender hegemony. A useful example is Stone and Gorga’s (2014) empirical work on lesbians in an American liberal art college’s sorority rush process to examine how hegemonic femininity operates in relation to pariah femininities. As Stone and Gorga (2014) explain, feminine sorority women exclude “undesirable” lesbian women by describing them as being unfit, silencing and hiding lesbianism and designating one group to hold all pariah femininities because of the concern that lesbians would disrupt sorority life. Stone and Gorga’s (2014) study demonstrates how pariah femininities, embodied by lesbian women, are considered a contaminating to not only the relationship between masculinity and femininity but also the hegemonic femininity of other women.

While Schippers’ (2005) re-conceptualisation of Connell’s (1987) hegemonic femininity and her theorisation of pariah femininities has been influential in the literature around gender, particularly around femininities, Paechter (2018) raises concerns in Schippers’s (2005) foundation of gender in sexual desire. Paechter (2018) problematises the assumptions that all humans have sexual desire and questions whether asexual people, who has little or no sexual desire for the others, can be feminine or masculine. Paechter (2018) also critiques both Connell and Schippers’ treatment of non-hegemonic forms of masculinities and femininities as problematic, which leaves no space to conceptualise non-subordinate differences.

3.7 Chapter conclusion

In conclusion in this chapter, I have presented the different approaches to theorising gender. Each theoretical orientation offers a part of the explanations for the way Vietnamese women have been constructed throughout waves of colonisation. For example, the ‘nature’ approach could explain why Vietnamese women have been associated with domestic roles from the Chinese colonisation period to the present days. The ‘nurture’ approach could offer an insight into the way Vietnamese women have been nurtured to comply to gender behaviours in adulthood. Feminist theories, which view gender as a system of domination of women by men (where men as a group dominate and control women as a group), draw my attention to a range of social institutions and structures such as patriarchy and class which (re)produce the inequalities Vietnamese women have experienced systematically throughout waves of colonisation in Vietnamese history. Meanwhile, both ‘doing gender’ and ‘gender performativity’ theorise gender as an ongoing social practice embedded in every interaction among society members. While the ‘doing gender’ approach is useful in explaining why Vietnamese women (and men) comply to gendered norms, I found Butler’s notion of gender performativity valuable in addressing the changing nature of gender arrangements (Connell & Pearse, 2015, p. 20) and allows the discussion of Vietnamese women’s agency, subjection and resistance (J. L. Powell & Gilbert, 2007). Given the theorisation of gender as an act an individual performs to be recognised within prevailing social norms, I might have space to explore the “multiplicity of cultural, social, and political intersections in which the concrete arrays of ‘women’ are constructed” (Butler, 1990, pp. 19-20) in the Vietnam context. Furthermore, as ‘gender performativity’ focuses on the fluidity, flexibility and context specificity of gender constructions, this approach might be the most appropriate for me to explore the existence of multiple femininities of Vietnamese women throughout waves of colonisation. In the next chapter, I explore how the different theoretical approaches help to explain the gendered labour market outcomes, particularly in academia.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE GENDERED LABOUR MARKET

4.1 Chapter introduction

Scholars have had various ways to conceptualise and even contrast the understanding of ‘gender’, the explanation in gender differences in choices and behaviours and the persistence of gender inequalities. Among the most well-established explanations are the ‘nature’, the ‘nurture’, the ‘social construct’, and the ‘performative’ argument.

It is widely acknowledged that occupations are gendered (Alda-Vidal, Rusca, Zwartveen, Schwartz, & Pouw, 2017; K. L. Ashcraft, 2013; R. M. Blackburn & Jarman, 2006; Butt, 2020; Irene & Joya, 2003; Rudman & Phelan, 2010). In this chapter, I draw on the theoretical orientations, as presented in Chapter Three, to understand how the understanding of gender within social, political, and economic structures manifest in gendered labour market outcomes.

This chapter will be structured as followed. First, I provide evidence of gender inequalities in the workplace and then examine why such inequalities persist. I conclude by arguing that academia, which is often presented generally as a neutral system (Skilbeck, 2000), is not immune to gendered practices that create, maintain and sustain impediments to women’s academic career advancement.

4.2 Gendered labour market outcomes

Since the twentieth century, women have become a prominent force in the global labour market; however, the gender gap in labour force participation globally has not been closed (ILO, 2019; WEF, 2019). A global survey shows that 70 percent of women prefer to work at paid jobs (ILO & Gallup, 2017) but only approximately 55 percent of women aged 15 to 64 are in the labour force compared to 78 percent of men of the same cohort (WEF, 2019). Women are more likely to be crowded into a set of occupations and sectors which are often considered low-skilled (ILO, 2019) and to be underrepresented in senior private sector’s management and public sector’s leadership (WEF, 2019).

The systematic distribution of people within and across occupations based on demographic characteristics has been referred to in academic research as gendered occupational segregation (Tilcsik, Anteby, & Knight, 2015), also known as occupational sex segregation, which has both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Horizontal dimension refers to the different distribution of men and women *across* certain professions; vertical dimension refers the different distribution of men and women *within* professions (R. M. Blackburn & Jarman, 2006; Blau & Hendricks,

1979; Charles, 2003; Gedikli, 2019; J. McDonald, 2016; Watts, 2005). This section examines the gendered labour market outcomes from the horizontal and vertical dimensions.

4.2.1 Horizontal segregation

Traditionally, men have been predominantly employed in occupations and sectors which are characterised by stereotypically masculine traits (e.g., physically strong, aggressive, and competitive) while women have been largely employed in occupations and sectors which are characterised by stereotypically feminine traits (e.g., caring, nice, and nurturant) (Campuzano, 2019; Jandeska & Kraimer, 2005). Examples of male-dominated professions are construction workers, engineers, and lawyers; examples of female-dominated occupations are nurses, early childhood education teachers, and secretaries (Carli, Alawa, Lee, Zhao, & Kim, 2016; Catalyst, 2020b; ILO, 2019).

The changes in the views on gender roles and the narrowing gender gap in tertiary education and labour force participants have resulted in more women entering fields stereotypically reserved for men and men working in fields stereotypically reserved for women (Catalyst, 2020b; Charles & Grusky, 2004; McDowell, 2020). For example, more women are employed in STEM related fields (Carli et al., 2016; Hatmaker, 2013), firefighting (Ainsworth, Batty, & Burchielli, 2014; Shuster, 2000), policing (Natarajan, 2008; Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013), or construction (Menches & Abraham, 2007). Simultaneously, an increasing number of men are recruited in early childhood education (Sargent, 2005; Warin, 2018), care work (Bagilhole & Cross, 2006) or nursing (Popper-Giveon, Keshet, & Liberman, 2015).

Despite the changes, horizontal segregation still prevails (ILO, 2019; J. McDonald, 2016; McDowell, 2020). The table below exemplifies horizontal segregation in some European countries in 2019.

Table 4.1: Percentage of women employed by industry in Europe in 2019

Industry	France	Germany	Netherlands	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
Construction	10.2%	5.4%	9.7%	8.2%	11.4%	12.5%
Manufacturing	29.9%	27.1%	22.7%	24.2%	29.7%	26.1%
Transport and storage	25.4%	25.2%	24.4%	22.3%	24.5%	17.7%

Note: Adapted from <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-male-dominated-industries-and-occupations/>.

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Although there are variations across countries, generally women throughout the world are more concentrated in some professions than men and vice versa (ILO, 2019). The uneven

concentration of women and men in a set of professions and sectors reinforces the masculine/feminine stereotypes and contributes to vertical segregation (Catalyst, 2020b).

4.2.2 Vertical segregation

Despite women having made significant progress in labour market participation, their progression to management and leadership positions has been at a slow pace over the last three decades (ILO, 2019). The table below illustrates the modest number of women in senior management across the globe (Grant Thornton, 2020) and shows vertical segregation is alive and well.

Table 4.2: Percentage of women in senior management by region

Region	Women in senior management (%)
Asia-Pacific Nations (APAC)	27
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	35
Africa	38
Eastern Europe	35
European Union (EU)	30
Southern Europe	30
North America	29
Latin America	33

Note: Adapted from https://www.grantthornton.global/globalassets/1.-member-firms/global/insights/women-in-business/2020/women-in-business-2020_report.pdf. Copyright (2020) by Grant Thornton

A number of phenomena in the workplace are associated with vertical segregation including “glass ceiling” (K. S. McDonald & Hite, 1998), “glass cliff” (M. K. Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007; M. K. Ryan et al., 2016) , “sticky floor” (Baert, Pauw, & Deschacht, 2016) or “glass walls” (W. Miller, Kerr, & Reid, 1999). Among those concepts, glass ceiling tends to attract the most attention. The glass ceiling is “the unseen, yet unreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements” (U.S Department of Labour, 1995, p. 4). The term is not identical to gender or racial discrimination, but a specific type of gender/racial inequality (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001).

Cotter et al. (2001) assert that there are four criteria that should be met to define gender or other inequalities as a glass ceiling effect: “A gender or racial difference that is not explained by other job-relevant characteristics of the employee” (p.657); “A gender or racial difference that

is greater at higher levels of an outcome than at lower levels of an outcome” (p.658); “A gender or racial inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels, not merely the proportions of each gender or race currently at those higher levels” (p.659); and “A gender or racial inequality that increases over the course of a career” (p.661).

Research on the glass ceiling across contexts have covered the different aspects associated with the glass ceiling: examination of the existence of the glass ceiling and its effects (Dimovski, Škerlavaj, & Man, 2010); gender wage gap (Biagetti & Scicchitano, 2011); sexual harassment (Segal, 1998; Stockdale & Bhattacharya, 2009); and explanations for the persistence of the glass ceiling (Faniko, Ellemers, Derks, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2017).

The central theme of the glass ceiling research is the examination of its existence. Generally, the evidence for its existence has been found in different sectors and in different national contexts. For example, in the business sector Dimovski et al. (2010) found the presence of the glass ceiling that prevents women middle managers in Singaporean and Malaysian organizations from career advancement due to insufficient organizational support, such as networking, mentoring, and family friendly initiatives. Cstano, Martin, Vazquez, and Martinez (2010) surveyed 242 female and male senior executives in Spanish companies reported the evidence of the glass ceiling effects as a result of cultural patterns and institutional barriers. In politics, the results from an empirical study by Folke and Rickne (2016) shows that a glass ceiling exist for female politicians in Sweden, a country with a long history of efforts to improve women’s political representation. Falk and Grizard (2005) conducted research on some of American largest communication companies and also identified effects of the glass ceiling on women’s career advancement. Few studies fail to find the evidence of the glass ceiling effects. When C. Bryson (2004) examined the consequences for women in the academic profession of the widespread use of fixed term contracts, he found that men were more likely to benefit from non-competitive selection at entry, hold more secure and less certain forms of fixed term contracts and have more success in promotion though statistical evidence is not strong enough to report sex discrimination. Even when the phenomenon cannot be explained by gender discrimination, men still have an advantage in career progression (C. Bryson, 2004).

Earning gaps between female and male managers are also one of the topics of interest among scholars from this area of study. Generally, women are paid less than men in the same job regardless of race, ethnicity, age, occupation or education (Catalyst, 2020a). Catalyst (2017) reports that the gender wage gap increases with age. Although the gap is getting narrower, it

still takes more than a century for the gap to close. Biagetti and Scicchitano (2011) comment that the gender pay gap is due to the differences in rewards that two genders receive for their characteristics. R. A. Smith (2002) affirms that men are more likely than women to have authority and the gender differences in authority attainment can explain the pay differences between men and women. Even when women achieve authority at work, their earnings do not increase, especially in the case of white women (Parcel & Mueller, 1983).

A significant number of studies in this body of research concentrate on the association between sexual harassment and glass ceiling. Women are more likely than men to receive unwelcome attentions (Segal, 1998). Young women, especially those who are relatively young, egalitarian-minded with aspirations to succeed in traditionally male occupations are at higher risk for being sexually harassed (Stockdale & Bhattacharya, 2009). They are also more likely to be the unintended victims of sexual harassment prevention programmes which aim to foster communication and provide mentors for female employees to facilitate their career advancement. However, if these programmes are poorly designed or executed, they can bring the undesired effects that these programmes do not intend – shutting down women’s career development (Segal, 1998).

4.2.3 Summary

In summary, a large body of research on gendered occupational segregation have demonstrated that it is a complex phenomenon. Identifying barriers to tackle the occupational segregation of gender is not simply to allocate women and men into certain professions and positions without acknowledging the factors that impacts on gender performance. The next section examines the different explanations for understanding the gendered labour market.

4.3 Explanations for gendered labour market outcomes

C. L. Williams (1995) asserts that “gender segregation exists in nearly every organisation and every occupation, with men occupying the best paying and most prestigious jobs, and the highest positions of organisational power” (p.10). Since then, a voluminous body of both quantitative and qualitative research has consistently acknowledged the organisation of work around gender differences and that these arrangements create and maintain inequalities between gender groups (J. McDonald, 2016).

4.3.1 ‘Nature’ perspective of gendered labour market outcomes

Some researchers (Govier, 1998; Govier & Bobby, 1994; Govier & Boden, 1997; Kimura, 1996, 1999; Rogers, 1999; Su, Rounds, & Armstrong, 2009) tend to draw on the ‘nature’

approach to explain the differences in choice of occupation between women and men. The main argument from the 'nature' perspective is that biological differences between women and men result in sex differences in interests, abilities, and traits. These differences play an important part in individuals' occupational choice (Govier, 1998), which in turn can explain occupational segregation.

Among the reasons put forward as explanations for the uneven distribution of women and men across a set of professions and within professions is differences in interest caused by brain structure (Govier & Boden, 1997; Su et al., 2009). For example, Govier and Boden (1997) suggest that people whose brains have a more masculine organisation of their verbal processing capacity are more likely to be drawn to masculine-typical jobs. Furthermore, as mentioned in section 3.2.2, cognitive biologists posit that due to the differences in women's and men's hormones, women and men differ in abilities. For example, men tend to outperform women in spatial ability (Linn & Petersen, 1985; Van Goozen et al., 1995); therefore, men are perceived to be fitter than women for jobs, like airplane pilots, which requires strong spatial ability (Rogers, 1999). Men tend to perform better than women in mathematical ability so men are perceived to be more suitable for the fields of technology and engineering (Kimura, 1999). Therefore, Kimura (1999) concludes that the underrepresentation of women in such fields should be attributed to biological causes rather than social factors like gender discrimination.

Justifications for gender domination in certain professions from the 'nature' approach also tend to draw from the application of evolutionary theory to human behaviour (Browne, 1998). Biological differences have been perceived to result in feminine traits, predominantly exhibited by women, like being tender-minded and masculine traits, predominantly exhibited by men, like being assertive (Schmitt, Realo, Voracek, & Allik, 2008). Therefore, feminine occupations (e.g., nurses) are perceived to fit those with feminine traits while masculine occupations (e.g., lawyers) are perceived to fit those with masculine traits (Carli et al., 2016; England, 2005, 2010; Ridgeway, 1997, 2009, 2011; Stoet & Geary, 2018; Wigfield, Battle, Keller, & Eccles, 2002).

While studies based on the 'nature' explanations for occupational segregation have provided insights into career interest and choice, their argument relies heavily on the assumption that what is considered feminine or masculine occupation is unchanged overtime. This is not always the case. For example, archival texts analysis by Arndt and Bigelow (2005) shows that hospital administrators in the US before 1900s whose responsibilities included ordering supplies,

making out payrolls and admitting patients were mostly women. After the tasks of hospital administrators were extended to coordinating and managing departments and other aspects of hospitals, the occupation became the work of men. Another similar example from historical data is the study of Donley and Baird (2017) on occupations in funeral services. When Donley and Baird (2017) reviewed the employment history of occupations in funeral services, they found that the occupations in funeral services were dominated by women before 1900s, but have been masculinised since the nineteenth century. It was believed at that time women were unfit for caring for the deceased because death care need science skills and physical strength and women were not as good at science skills or had the same physical strength as men. It has been feminised recently because of the belief that women are better than men at dealing with families and attending to funeral arrangement, a type of work which requires emotional labour. Both Arndt and Bigelow's (2005) and Donley and Baird's (2017) studies also show how beliefs linked to occupations are dynamic rather than fixed and challenge the essentialist idea associated with jobs characteristics.

In summary, research on the application of sociobiology and cognitive biology to understand career choice has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of women and men's abilities and traits. While biological differences might provide explanations for differences in career choice between women and men, Wertheim, Widom, and Wortzel (1978, p. 241) argue that explanations about the differences between women's and men's career interests and choices "made on the basis of biological sex are overly simplistic". Few scholars have been able to draw on the influence of experience, self-efficacy (A. Burke, Kandler, & Good, 2012) and cultural contexts (Lindsey, 2016) on individuals' career choice.

4.3.2 'Nurture' perspective of gendered labour market outcomes

The interpretation of gendered labour market outcomes through the lens of the understanding of gender as 'nurture' focuses on socialisation as the key process in shaping career interest and choice. From the 'nurture' point of view, gendered occupational segregation starts long before individuals enter jobs (Liu & McMahon, 2017; Schoon, 2001; Watson, Nota, & McMahon, 2015; Whiston & Keller, 2004; Y. U. Xie & Shauman, 1997). Since their childhood, individuals interact with agents of socialisation including parents, peers, teachers and other social institutions like culture norms and that socialisation process has significant influence on individuals' career interests.

In contrast to scholars in the previous section (Govier, 1998; Govier & Bobby, 1994; Kimura, 1996, 1999; Rogers, 1999) who argues that the occupational segregation develops out of differences in traits between women and men, scholars from the 'nurture' perspective find that personality characteristics had minor correlation with career aspiration (Schoon, 2001). Instead, factors like parent's education background and the school environment have a greater impact (Schoon, 2001). Findings from other studies on child career development fit well with Schoon's (2001) findings on the profound influences of agents of socialisation on children's career aspirations and choices. Among the most important agent is family (Liu & McMahon, 2017; Watson et al., 2015; Whiston & Keller, 2004), and within the family context including parents, siblings and other relatives, parents are reported to be the most significant agent (Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005; Liu & McMahon, 2017). Parents provide children with support, encouragement, and activities in line with their interests which "mould" their career interests (Lent, 2013). However, children with low-income parents are less likely to enjoy extracurricular activities and attend advanced classes which facilitate future career success than those with middle and high-income parents (Inoa, 2017; Weinger, 2000).

In addition, parents act as early role models, and "children take in guide yet take on some characteristics of the models with whom they identify" (Savickas, 2013, p. 152). As discussed in section 3.3, gender as social learning, Albert Bandura posits that humans learn social behaviours through the act of observing and imitating their models' behaviours (Bandura, 1965, 1977, 1978; Bandura et al., 1961, 1963). When Bandura's theory is applied from a career perspective, research shows that children observe their parents' career attitudes and behaviours and make career choices. For example, Fulcher (2011) argues that children whose mothers had liberal attitudes often had occupational aspirations non-typical of their gender. Children not only observe how their parents behave in everyday life but also how their parents engage with their career. Alliman-Brissett, Turner, and Skovholt (2004) suggest that the belief in one's ability (self-efficacy) to pursue a certain career of African American boys was dependent on their parents' career modelling activities like taking the children to their workplace, telling children things which happened in the workplace or showing children their work-related tasks. Interestingly, Alliman-Brissett et al. (2004) report higher correlation between sons' self-efficacy and parents' career-related modelling than that of daughters.

Nonetheless, while family context plays an undeniably important role in shaping children's career aspirations, and choices, families, which function as a social system, interact with other social systems like social class or cultural contexts (Lindsey, 2016; Liu & McMahon, 2017).

Those interactions have been reported to have a gendered impact on children's early career choices. Correll's (2001) quantitative study exemplifies the gendering effects of cultural beliefs on self-efficacy and perceptions about competence, and consequently career choices. Specifically, boys tended to overestimate their mathematical ability more than girls did because of the cultural beliefs that led them to believe that mathematics are a male domain. Even though boys and girls performed at the same mathematical level, boys were more likely to engage in activities such as enrolling in advanced-level math class, enabling more boys to pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in later life (Shelley J. Correll, 2001). The findings of Shelley J. Correll (2001) are consonant with those of more recent studies (Louis & Mistele, 2012; X. Wang, 2013). In addition to self-efficacy, the stereotype that STEM careers are less likely to fulfil communal goals than careers in other fields (Diekman, Brown, Johnston, & Clark, 2010) prevents girls and women from being interested in the field (Cheryan, Ziegler, Montoya, & Jiang, 2017). The negative impacts of cultural beliefs and stereotypes on the gender differences in career interests and choices described by Shelley J. Correll (2001), Louis and Mistele (2012) or Diekman et al. (2010) are consistent with the explanation by social cognitive theory, gender schema theory and social role theory on gendered behaviours discussed in the previous chapter.

Overall, parents and cultural beliefs are among the most important agents of socialisation which contribute to the gendered experience individuals have during their childhood and adolescence year. While the 'nurture' perspective is helpful to explain how these experiences shape different career aspirations and choices of women and men in adulthood, it has not addressed the gendering practices within the organisational structures. The next section examines occupational sex segregation from the social constructionist perspective with the focus on the impacts of the gendered division of labour and gendering practices on unequal labour market outcomes.

4.3.3 Social constructionist perspective of gendered labour market outcomes

From the social constructionist point of view, gendered labour market outcomes have been shaped by a gender system, in which men, the dominant group, overpower women, the subordinate group (Connell, 1987). Gendered behaviours and gender inequalities in the workplace have been created and maintained by this gender system owing to men's efforts in holding on to power (Tiron-Tudor & Faragalla, 2018). Linked to gendered labour market outcomes from the social constructionist perspective are the gendered division of labour, androgyny, and mentoring.

4.3.3.1 Gendered division of labour: The control of women's work

“There is a profound way that organisations are deeply gendered, and that is through the hierarchical division of labour” (C. L. Williams, 1995, p. 10). This section examines the notion of the gendered division of labour as an important factor in understanding occupational segregation. First, I discuss gendered division of labour in the domestic sphere and then in the workplace.

Although women's time on unpaid household tasks and care work has reduced recently in some contexts due to the changes in family structures, declined levels of fertility and the availability of pre-prepared foods (Baxter, 2002), women continue to do the majority of unpaid housework across the world (Goñi-Legaz, Ollo-López, & Bayo-Moriones, 2010; Kurowska, 2018; Shelton, 1990; Shelton & John, 1996). On average, women carry out 75 percent of total unpaid household tasks, care work for family members and community services and help to other households (Charmes, 2019). The table below exemplifies the significant share of women in total unpaid work in East Asian and Asia Pacific nations.

Table 4.3: Women's share (%) in total unpaid care work by country

Country and territory	Women's share (%) in total unpaid care work
Cambodia	91.3
Republic of Korea	82.8
Taiwan	80.4
Japan	76.7
Thailand	75.5
China	71.6
Australia	64.4
New Zealand	63.7

Note: Adapted from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_732791.pdf by Charmes (2019), Geneva, Switzerland. Copyright (2019) by International Labour Organization.

European countries like the Netherlands (Poortman & Lippe, 2009), Spain (Álvarez & Miles, 2003; Goñi-Legaz et al., 2010), and Germany (Procher, Ritter, & Vance, 2018) are by no means an exception. Generally, women devote more time to household tasks than men despite women's higher level of education (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000), their increasing participation in paid employment status (Álvarez & Miles, 2003) and their greater contribution to their household income (Procher et al., 2018). The arrangement in which

women take responsibility for unpaid household tasks and care work while men spend more time in paid work is referred to as the gendered division of labour (Ting, Perales, & Baxter, 2016).

On the surface, it can be argued that the allocation of unpaid work to women and paid work to men is rational from the economic perspective. This arrangement allows women and men to be more efficient in specialised work that they do (Becker, 1981, 1985). Therefore, gendered division of labour is beneficial to both women and men and maximises household utility (Becker, 1981, 1985). Following this line of thought, gendered division of labour justifies vertical segregation, particular the glass ceiling phenomenon previously mentioned in section 4.2.2. Women are underrepresented in senior positions because they devote more time to household responsibilities and childcare and less to human capital like knowledge and skills required to advance to a higher rank in the workplace (Becker, 1985).

However, Becker's argument tends to assume that women are 'naturally' suited to domestic roles. In addition, Becker (1981, 1985) has made little attempt to explain why women always do a larger part of household work than men regardless of employment status, or work arrangements. For example, Shelton (1990) finds that when men spend more time on some household activities like playing with children or cleaning up dishes, they spend less time in the other tasks like doing chores. Their total housework and childcare time remain unchanged regardless of their wives' employment status. In a more recent study, Craig and Powell (2011) reveal that when fathers work non-standard hours, mothers do more housework and routine childcare. However, when mothers work non-standard hours, they schedule their own paid work and family responsibilities around each other, and the amount of fathers' household work remains almost unchanged. Similarly, Kurowska (2018) compares the amount of work men and women do when both working from home and finds that women suffer the trap of a double burden of paid and unpaid work when working from home while men do not.

The social constructionist perspective of gendered division of labour might be more helpful than the economic perspective in this sense. From the social constructionist point of view, the continuing acts of women in taking primary responsibility in household tasks and care work and the avoidance of men in doing more chores (Craig & Powell, 2011; Kurowska, 2018; Shelton, 1990) is a manifestation of "doing gender" (C. West & Zimmerman, 1987). Doing housework reaffirms women as feminine and while avoiding doing housework reaffirms men as masculine (Ting et al., 2016). Furthermore, the fact that women always do a larger part of

household work than men regardless of employment status, or work arrangements shows gendered division of labour is mediated by power relations. The household is a “gender factory” (Berk, 1985, p. 22), in which household work is a “symbolic enactment of gender relations” (South & Spitze, 1994, p. 327). Within that relationship, men benefit more from and have more control over division of labour.

Gendered division of labour exists not only in the domestic sphere but also in the workplace. Women do more ‘household’ work which is perceived to be low level and less valuable to organisation and their career (Bikketi, Ifejika Speranza, Bieri, Haller, & Wiesmann, 2016; Loft, 1992; Lupu, 2012; Simiyu & Foeken, 2014). This is evident in the case of Kenyan women in urban crop cultivation. In this case, men were more involved with tasks which required higher level of physical strength, technical knowledge and skills while women were responsible for tasks which were perceived as “easy”, less laborious, and required bargaining skills (Simiyu & Foeken, 2014, p. 777). Another useful example is women’s employment in accountancy. Women carried out a lower level of accountancy work like clerical and administrative functions, which were considered less valuable than tasks which were directly exposed to clients and brought economic value to the firms (Loft, 1992; Lupu, 2012). Therefore, women’s path to the higher level of hierarchy became narrower than that of men (vertical segregation) and some women chose to leave the field or chose an alternative career path (horizontal segregation) (Lupu, 2012).

In summary, gendered division of labour at home and at work contributes to the horizontal and vertical segregation of occupations. At the first glance, gendered division of labour is an efficient arrangement between women and men to maximise household utility. However, it is mediated by the construction of masculinity and femininity. Women and men do gender to display the appropriate gendered behaviours. This enactment of gender relations gives men more power than women in the division of labour. Overall, Connell’s (1987) argument of division of labour remains relevant in contemporary setting. She asserts that gendered division of labour should be understood in relation to the nature and organisation of the work instead of simply as allocating certain types of work to certain categories of people. “It [gendered division of labour] must be seen as part of a larger pattern, a gender-structured system of production, consumption and distribution” (Connell, 1987, p. 103). The next section explores the gendering practices in relation to organisational practices as a part of gender system.

4.3.3.2 Gendering organisation: The control of organisational practices

Organisations are the sites of gendered market outcomes but organisational structures are often presented as gender neutral (J. Acker, 1990). This section examines gendering practices in association with masculine norms through particular phenomena of the androgynous construction of work, and biased practices related to mentoring. Such examination demonstrates not only gendered structure of organisations and but also individuals' action of doing gender.

Androgynous

On the surface organisational processes might look neutral and bias free but the gendering practices in association with adhering to masculine norms have been shaping organisational practices and have a negative impact on career progression. Berdahl, Glick, and Cooper (2018) argue that an organisation with masculine norms is characterised by the following characteristics: (1) "Show no weakness": a workplace that demands swaggering confidence, never admitting doubt or mistakes, and suppressing any tender or vulnerable emotions ("no sissy stuff"); (2) "Strength and stamina": a workplace that prizes strong or athletic people (even in white collar work) or those who show off their endurance (e.g., by working extreme hours); (3) "Put work first": a workplace where nothing outside the organization (e.g., family) can interfere with work, where taking a break or a leave represents an impermissible lack of commitment; and (4) "Dog eat dog": a workplace filled with ruthless competition, where "winners" (the most masculine) focus on defeating "losers" (the less masculine), and no one is trusted.

Lying at the heart of organisational thinking is the positing of a disembodied and universal worker who has no gender. However, further inspection reveals that worker has men's bodies and sexuality (J. Acker, 1990, 1992). The images of men's bodies and masculinities is diffused through all organisational life, marginalising women (J. Acker, 1990). The exclusion of women in the construction of common notions such as jobs and positions illustrates the gendering of organisational processes. From the 'gendered organisations' perspective, researchers should unmask the 'gendered nature' of organisation rather than assume the neutrality of organisation processes. Furthermore, instead of asking why women are excluded, the relevant question is "to what extent have the overall institutional structure and character of particular institutional areas been formed by and through gender?" (J. Acker, 1992, p. 568).

Kantola (2008) contributes to Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisation by interrogating the way hidden discrimination and the gendered organisation work together. She analyses the gendering processes among PhD candidates in a political science department using four dimensions: the gendered division of labour, gendered interaction, gendered symbols and gendered interpretations of each individual's position in the organisation. Her observations show teaching opportunities which could provide valuable work experience and access to the science communities are available to a small all-male inner circle (gendered division of labour), the supervision practices are more favourable to men than they do for women (gendered interaction), the political scientist norm was a man (gendered symbols) and women see their positions in the department as marginal and career prospects as non-existent (gendered interpretations of one's position in the organisation).

Korvajärvi (2002) provides empirical evidence of Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisation through the examination of gender neutrality in formal and informal aspects of organisational culture in a social work office and a call centre. In both workplaces, gender was culturally taken for granted. In other words, workers in the organisation studied did not consider gender as an obstacle or an advantage in their organisational life. However, the researcher observed that the decision-making process is highly gendered: technology-related questions were closely tied up with men and service-related questions with women (the social work office). Additionally, pay and promotion prospects attracted no attention except in the case of the two women in supervisory positions (the call centre). The practice of concealing gendered structures result in the misperception that hierarchical differences (potentially leading to inequality) is not relevant in their workplace.

Mentoring

Mentoring is often framed as one of the remedies in response to the vertical segregation of occupations (R. J. Burke & McKeen, 1990; Devos, 2008). Although mentoring involves various activities, Jacobi (1991) proposes that it should consist of five components. First, the ultimate goal of mentoring is to help the mentee succeed. Second, while the support provided by the mentor varies, the mentor should provide any or all of three components: emotional and psychological support, direct assistance with career and professional development, and role modelling. Third, both the mentor and mentee can benefit emotionally or tangibly from the mentoring relationship. Fourth, there was direct interaction between the mentor and mentee. Finally, the mentor has greater experience, knowledge, skills, and success than the mentee.

Mentoring can be formal (a mentor is assigned to the mentee by the organisation) or informal (the mentee seeks for help from informal network) (Desimone et al., 2014).

Mentoring has been identified as being beneficial to the mentee, the mentor and the organisation (D. C. Braun, Gormally, & Clark, 2017; Bullough & Draper, 2004; I. H.-s. Chow & Ng, 2011; Jacobi, 1991; Palmer & Jones, 2019; Steele & Fisman, 2014). The mentee can learn various skills like networking and conflict management (Steele & Fisman, 2014); therefore, she or he can be more confident on her or his ability to pursue a career (Nicola, Janet, & Abigail, 2016; Nurse, 2014; San Miguel & Kim, 2015) and learn the paths and barriers to career advancement (R. J. Burke & McKeen, 1990; Sutherland-Smith, 2014). As mentoring is a “learning partnership” (Diamond, 2010, p. 199), the mentor not only gains satisfaction from meeting an obligation and helping another human being (R. J. Burke & McKeen, 1990) but also can learn with and from mentee (Steele & Fisman, 2014). Organisations can attract and retain employees (Steele & Fisman, 2014), and as a result increase the talent pool (Chesler & Chesler, 2002).

While mentoring is rewarding for all the parties involved, some researchers argue that organisational strategies associated with formal mentoring process are governed by institutional power, masculine in nature and produce inequalities among different groups (Sutherland-Smith, 2014; Sutherland-Smith, Saltmarsh, & Randell-Moon, 2011). For example, the study of Sutherland-Smith et al. (2011) on research mentoring and leadership for Early Career Researchers in Australian universities reveals that while the universities provided formal mentoring programs for young researchers (the mentees), they aligned their research output agendas with the mentees’ professional development. Although the mentees’ career benefits from high research output, some participants in Sutherland-Smith et al.’s (2011) study perceived this alignment of universities and mentees’ goals as problematic. They were concerned that this practice normalised the demanding nature of academia which requires academic staff to work beyond their campus time and challenges their work-life balance. This particular aspect of Sutherland-Smith et al.’s participant perception resembles the description of the universal worker in the previous section, who looks neutral on the surface but is actually gendered. Women rather than men are often responsible for the care work both at home and at work so will be disadvantaged in the process. In the end, the mentoring programmes served the interests of the universities than the mentees. Furthermore, universities sometimes spend a substantial amount of resources on some “star” individuals, which results in the exclusion of

other academic staff of all genders from encouragement, opportunities and benefits (Sutherland-Smith et al., 2011).

In addition, women face more barriers to accessing the informal mentoring networks than men do, and they may meet difficulties in a cross-gender mentoring relationship, a relationship with mentor of different gender (I. H.-s. Chow & Ng, 2011; Clawson & Kram, 1984; C. Elliott, Leck, Orser, & Mossop, 2011; Ragins, 1996). Clawson and Kram (1984) suggest that a woman might be reluctant to seek a cross-gender relationship due to potential problems like sexual attraction, marriage disruption and gossip. Meanwhile, the number of female mentors with high rank status is not as abundant as that of men (Ragins, 1996). Therefore, women might miss types of support, like instrumental support, perceived to be dominantly provided by male mentors (I. H.-s. Chow & Ng, 2011).

Mentoring may reinforce gender stereotypes in the workplace (Dashper, 2019). Female mentors are reported to provide greater psychological support while male mentors are reported to provide more career advice (C. Elliott et al., 2011; O'Brien, Biga, Kessler, & Allen, 2010). This stereotype is echoed by the general stereotypes of women being responsible for care work and men being responsible for work linked to more tangible values in section 4.3.3.1.

4.3.3.3 Embodiment: The control of a woman's body

Several studies using this approach have investigated how the treatment of the male body as the norm and that the female body as troublesome due to menstruation, pregnancy or menopause plays an important part in the production of gender inequalities in organisations and the workplace. In one example, Gatrell (2013) observed that some professionally and managerially employed mothers felt marginalised and undervalued at work, experiencing the borders between maternity and organisation as unmalleable as a result of the gendering practice which defines the ideal body as rational, self-controlled and detached from the reproduction role. Similarly, data analysis of the study conducted by Fernandes and Leite (2016) reveals that the reproductive function of the maternal body is perceived as incompatible with the masculine organisational rules. Specifically, one Portuguese manager, a participant in the study refused to hire a heavily pregnant candidate because she considered the pregnant body disruptive to the organisation's stability. Moreover, pregnancy is not seen in favourable light in accounting organisations, especially during the auditing season, the busiest work season as "it represents everything that an audit firm would want to avoid" (Tiron-Tudor & Faragalla, 2018)

It is worth noting that participants in both studies show resistance to being marginalised. Gatrell's (2013) informants adopted strategies like accumulating specialist knowledge which is valued by employers while Fernandes and Leite's (2016) participants become protectors of pregnant women and mothers at work. However, both studies and even more recent studies (Gatrell, Cooper, & Kossek, 2017; Maher, Charles, & Wolkowitz, 2019) still show the failure of organisations to recognise maternal body work and to provide sufficient support regarding women's management of career alongside pregnancy and motherhood.

In summary, the social constructionist perspective demonstrates that "gender differences and inequalities may be produced and reproduced in many different contexts by various people engaged in everyday relational processes occurring through organising practices" (Calás, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014, p. 29). On the surface organisational processes might look neutral and bias free but in fact the gendering practices are closely aligned with masculine norms which disadvantage women's career progression. The next section examines the performative acts which contribute or destabilise inequalities in organisations.

4.3.4 Performative perspective of gendered labour market outcomes

As discussed in Chapter Three, Butler (1990, p. 25) posits that "there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results". Informed by Butler's notion of gender performativity, Hodgson (2005) argues that occupational identity occurs in a similar manner. What it means to be a practitioner of an occupation is constructed in the daily performance of that practitioner in accordance with the norms surrounding that profession (Bogaerts, 2011). Therefore, occupational segregation could be seen as an outcome of performative acts (Bogaerts, 2011; Harmer, Savigny, & Ward, 2017; J. McDonald, 2016; Sheerin & Linehan, 2018).

Research on horizontal segregation view from a performative perspective becomes the exploration of gendered performative acts in order to be seen as a practitioner of a particular occupation (J. McDonald, 2016). Meanwhile, research on vertical segregation from the perspective of Butler's theory of performativity could be the examination of leadership as a masculinise performance (Harmer et al., 2017) and the exploration of a leader's performance which produces that leader (N. Harding, Lee, Ford, & Learmonth, 2011). This section discusses gendered labour market outcomes from the performative perspective through the examination of segregation of occupations based on performative acts, the Queen Bee phenomenon as a

specific area where performative acts might be more visible in organisation and performativity backfiring.

4.3.4.1 Segregation of occupations on the basis of performative acts

Instead of assuming that occupations are segregated on the basis of stable categories like gender, race, or class, the performative perspective focuses on the performative acts which constitutes the occupational identity; hence, occupational segregation can be interpreted as the outcomes of performative acts related to particular constructions of difference (J. McDonald, 2016).

Various scholars (Bogaerts, 2011; Y.-Z. Chen & Wang, 2020; Cottingham, Johnson, & Erickson, 2018; Hodgson, 2005; Van Zoonen, 1998; Vick & Martinez, 2011) have employed Butler's conception of performativity to study performative acts which make up occupations. A notable example is the study of Bogaerts (2011) of performative acts viewed as being constitutive of being a journalist. The acts include using various and sometimes opposing sources and preferring factual data and eyewitness report to report news. Bogaerts (2011) suggests that these repetitive performative acts of a journalist which are consonant with being objective, the norms surrounding journalism, constitutes what it means to be a journalist. Other useful examples are teachers' acts of using a range of tones, volumes and expressions or having an upright posture in the classrooms among teachers, which separate being a teacher and a student (Vick & Martinez, 2011) or nurses' act of performing emotional labour among nurses, which accords well with the expectation of the nursing profession (Cottingham et al., 2018).

The understanding of occupational identity as being constitutive of performative acts is beneficial to horizontal segregation research, particularly in the examination of the feminisation or masculinisation of occupations. This is evident in the study of Van Zoonen (1998) which examines how more Dutch women could enter journalism as a profession, which was historically dominated by men. As noted, being a journalist constitutes being "objective". As performing "objective" includes discussing politics, crime or finance and using facts in reporting news, being a journalist is more associated with traditional expectation of men. However, when the performative acts seen as constituting journalists changed from being objective and rational to being entertaining and emotional, which accords well with the traditional expectation of women, more women could enter the field (Van Zoonen, 1998). The finding of Van Zoonen (1998) finding is similar to that reported by Arndt and Bigelow (2005) on hospital administrators, but in reverse order. What is seen as performative acts constitutive

of hospital administration went from being gendered feminine (i.e., being able to maintain a homelike atmosphere in the hospital) to gendered masculine (i.e., being forceful and firm, being able to manage large hospitals).

However, the understanding of performative acts should be “located very precisely in time and space” (Souza et al., 2016, p. 600) because the acts vary among different racial and age groups. For example, nurses of colour have to perform additional emotional labour work in order to remain in the profession (Cottingham et al., 2018). Another useful example is the differences in the performance of young and older childminders who joined their family members in providing home-based childcare services (Y.-Z. Chen & Wang, 2020). Young childminders recognised childminding as a profession and masculinised the work by focusing on the stimulation of child development as the core values of their work. Meanwhile, older childminders defined childminding as a part of family duty and therefore, they focused on accompanying children and assisting their wives in running the business (Y.-Z. Chen & Wang, 2020).

In summary, Butler’s conception of performativity offers a way of looking at occupation “as constructed in and through conduct rather than as pre-existing conduct” (Hodgson, 2005, p. 54). Occupational segregation viewed through the performative perspective allows researchers to examine the instability of categories and avoid the generalisation of similarities and differences within and between groups (J. McDonald, 2016).

4.3.4.2 Queen Bee phenomenon as a case of gendering of performance

The previous section shows that the performative perspective interprets an occupation or profession as being constituted of repetitive performative acts of members of that profession in accordance with the norms surrounding that profession. Therefore, horizontal segregation of occupation can be seen as the segregation of performative acts. This section discusses the performative acts in relation to vertical segregation. Specifically, I employ the Queen Bee phenomenon, a specific area where performative acts might be visible, to illustrate the causal relationship between the gendering of performative acts in leadership/management and the underrepresentation of women in senior positions in organisations.

In opposition to the assumption that “leadership is an objective phenomenon amenable to scientific inquiry” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, p. 370), the leadership/management perspective through Butler’s notion of performativity is composed of performative acts. Those acts can be being visible, motivational, charismatic and visionary (N. Harding et al., 2011, p. 940), being

active (Harmer et al., 2017), being good listeners and communicators (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003), and being competitive and tough (Ellemers, Rink, Derks, & Ryan, 2012). It is the continual performative process that makes the ideas of leadership/management “real” and “fixed” and reinforces them in organisations and society (Whitehead, 2014, p. 444). Leaders/managers who perform those acts are often portrayed as successful (Harmer et al., 2017). However, the performative acts constitutive of leaders/managers are often more associated with masculinity than femininity, which make leadership/management a masculine activity (Harmer et al., 2017). Therefore, the focal point of vertical segregation research from the performative perspective can be whether women who enact masculine behaviours including being competitive, pursuing their own interests, distancing themselves from other women, and being less supportive to the advancement of their female subordinates (Ellemers et al., 2012) are more successful in integrating into the organisational culture and their career (J. McDonald, 2016).

An extreme case of women’s enactment of masculine behaviours at work is the Queen Bee phenomenon, first defined by G. Staines, Tavris, and Jayaratne (1974). The Queen Bee phenomenon refers to the tendency of senior women who are successful in breaking the glass ceiling, but distance themselves from other women, as being less likely to support their junior colleagues’ career advancement and being opposed to the policies that foster gender equalities in the workplace (Derks, Ellemers, van Laar, & de Groot, 2011; Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016; Derks, Van Laar, Ellemers, & de Groot, 2011; Faniko et al., 2017; G. Staines et al., 1974).

There has been evidence of the existence of Queen Bee phenomenon across contexts. For example, Ely (1994) reports in her study that women partners working in law firms, a traditionally male-dominated field were not perceived by junior women lawyers as role models and a source of support. The highly competitive work environment resulted in women lawyers’ inability to establish constructive developmental relationships, particularly within organisations with few senior women. Results of Duguid’s (2011) quantitative study in an American university setting shows token women in high-prestige work groups were reluctant to support the admission of highly or moderately qualified female into their work groups due to their fear of more competition (the highly qualified candidates outperform them) or the fear of having a poor judgement (the moderately qualified candidates perform poorly). In addition, the Queen Bee phenomenon is not limited to women’s failure to support women but sometimes extends to the extent that the Queen Bee “stings other women if her power is threatened”

(Mavin, 2008, p. 75). Harvey (2018), inspired by her own experience of being bullied by her female bosses, conducted a cross-industry survey in the UK and reported that 70 percent of her research participants were either bullied or covertly undermined by a female boss.

Researchers have sought for the reasons for the existence of the Queen Bee phenomenon. Ellemers and Van Laar (2010) propose that the low status of the group prompts individuals to pursue individual success. However, that action comes at the expense of the group outcomes (Derks, Van Laar, Ellemers, & Raghoe, 2015). In this case, a female individual pursues her own interest, which creates barriers for other females, and creates the perception that women have difficulties working with other women. Other scholar (Mavin, 2008) argues that gender stereotypes give rise to the Queen Bee phenomenon. “When men argue, it's a healthy debate. When women argue ... meow! It's a catfight” (Sandberg & Grant, 2016, p. SR 3).

The empirical finding from the study of L. D. Sheppard and Aquino (2013) is in line with Sandberg and Grant's statement. When the research participants in Sheppard and Aquino's study were randomly assigned to read about the workplace conflict types, their judgement of the situations varied depending on whether the scenarios involved a female-female, male-male or male-female conflict. Although the scenarios were identical, and only the name of the people in the scenarios were changed to indicate difference genders, the female-female conflicts were problematised at a higher level than the male-male or male-female conflicts. Furthermore, there is evidence that women's same sex relationships in the workplace is more problematic than men's (L. D. Sheppard & Aquino, 2017). Women are prejudiced against women leaders, especially when they are not under the pressure of staying in solidarity with other women (Hoffmann & Musch, 2019). Women are more critical of other women (Broder, 1993), particularly of those who demonstrate characteristics such as assertiveness, typically reserved for men (Olekalns, Kulik, Simonov, & Bradshaw, 2011). Mavin (2008) concludes that the use of the term Queen Bee is sexist and perpetuates gender stereotypes.

Through the lens of performativity, the Queen Bee phenomenon illustrates that when some women move into higher ranks in the organisational hierarchy, they, knowingly or not, take up masculine behaviours. Their performance is highly influenced by the “code of behaviours” associated with masculinity (Whitehead, 2014). While their efforts might be their ways of “undoing gender and doing gender differently to fit in and survive” (Butler, 2004, p. 27), women's enactment of masculine behaviours might leave the masculinist leadership/management cultures unchallenged. Furthermore, women's urge to compete shows

the realm of leadership/management as “a very uncertain and insecure place”, which discourages female competition (Gherardi, 1995), and leaves women little control of their status in the organisations and making them feel isolated (Whitehead, 2014, p. 448). Therefore, women who break through the glass ceiling might have less motivation to advance further, and the junior women due to the Queen Bee effects including high staff turnover, failure to retain talents, and reduction in employee morale and productivity leave the competition even before it starts (Harvey, 2018).

In summary, the Queen Bee phenomenon through the lens of Butler’s notion of performativity illustrates the gendering of performative acts in highly masculinist position – the leadership or management positions. Performativity is especially helpful in understanding the invisibility of gendering of performative acts within leadership and management and how it contributes to the under-representation of women in senior positions in organisations.

4.3.4.2 Performativity backfire

In addition to the gendering of performative acts, the masculine nature of organisation is also demonstrated through the performative backfire. The discussion on section 3.6.3 demonstrates that if an individual does not perform her or his gender right, she or he will be punished both socially and economically. However, it has been argued that even when gender is correctly performed, there are some negative consequences, or performativity backfire.

Evidence for the negative effects of performing gender right can be found in the study of Madera, Hebl, and Martin (2009) on the correlation between candidates’ characteristics described in the letters of recommendation and the hiring decisions. They argue that letters of recommendation provide information about candidates’ job performances (McCarthy & Goffin, 2001), the fit between candidates’ qualities and experience and the job (George, Karen, & Cynthia, 1998) and the fit between candidates’ goals and organisational goals (Sheehan, McDevitt, & Ross, 1998). Therefore, the description of candidates in the letters of reference can be expected to have an impact on the organisation’s hiring decisions. To investigate their propositions, they carried out two studies. The first study compared the traits used to describe male and female candidates and the second study examined the relationships between these traits and hiring decisions. The results of the first study supported the hypothesis that women were more likely than men to be described with communal terms including affectionate, warm, kind, and caring. This hypothesis resonates with typical stereotypes about women described in section 3.3.3 (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly et al., 1995; Eagly et al., 1992; Eagly & Mladinic,

1989, 1994). However, the second study reveals that candidates described with more communal than agentic characteristics were less likely to be hired (Madera et al., 2009).

Other evidence for the performativity backfire in the labour market is the unfavourable outcomes for physically attractive women at work. Generally, women's gender role is stereotypically linked to physical attractiveness (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991). They are often portrayed in the media as having physical attractiveness (Chyong-Ling & Jin-Tsann, 2009; L. D. Taylor & Setters, 2011) and physical beauty commonly results in more successful work and life outcomes for women (Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Eagly et al., 1991; S. M. Smith, McIntosh, & Bazzini, 1999). Nonetheless, Heilman and Saruwatari (1979) propose that attractiveness was advantageous for women in the workplace only when they applied for nonmanagerial position jobs. Although this quantitative study of Heilman and Saruwatari (1979) does not explain further why attractive women were not desirable for managerial positions, one possible explanation might be association of attractiveness and femininity. An attractive woman is often considered more feminine (Heilman & Stopeck, 1985) while managerial jobs, stereotypically masculine in nature, and are considered to be more suitable for men and are men's gender role (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000).

Heilman and Stopeck (1985) in a later study confirm the causal link between women managers' attractiveness and their success. Heilman and Stopeck (1985) found that attractive women managers were perceived to be less capable than unattractive women managers and their success was attributed to other reasons than skills or talents. In a more recent study, Buunk, Zurriaga, González-Navarro, and Monzani (2016) shed more light on the negative consequences of attractiveness to women's career. Their experiment in a simulated work setting with adult females reveals that attractiveness can evoke jealousy among women who compete for the same job.

Overall, when a woman or a man performs their gender right, they might not face as many difficulties as those who do not. However, there are also circumstances when their performativity backfires and results in both economical (being not desirable for the jobs) and social (facing jealousy and doubt about one's abilities and competence) penalties.

4.3.5 Summary

In summary, this section examines gendered labour market outcomes using four theoretical lenses from the understanding of gender in Chapter Three. From the 'nature' perspective, the uneven distribution of women and men across a set of professions and within professions

originates from gender differences in brain structure which leads to differences in career interests and abilities. From the 'nurture' perspectives, the gendered experience individuals have during their childhood and adolescence shapes different career choices in adulthood. Research from the social constructionist point of view reveals the masculine nature of organisations systematically benefits men more than women and reduces women's choices in career opportunities. Occupations through the performative lens are segregated by performative acts rather than by sex. Women in leadership and management who perform gender in a masculine way are not necessarily more successful than those who perform their gender right.

Overall, each theoretical viewpoint on gender has been helpful in explaining the gendered labour market outcomes. I found them complementary rather than contradictory as their focus is different and each one adds some meaningful information to the conversation. The nurture, social constructionist, and performative perspective seems to be more helpful to my research as they draw my focus to the system of gender in which men have more control over women in both domestic and public spheres. The performativity perspective enables me to see the role of women in enacting certain behaviours. It also gives me space to think about changes as the performative perspective do not generalise categories. "Gender arrangements are in fact always changing, as human practice creates new situations and as structures develop crisis tendencies. Finally, gender had a beginning and may have an end" (Connell & Pearse, 2015, p. 20).

4.4 Academia through the lens of gender

The academic profession has been viewed worldwide as highly prestigious as those in academic profession are the "carriers of knowledge in all disciplines" and "shape the knowledge of the experts working in influential positions in various professional areas" (Höhle & Teichler, 2013, p. 23). In addition, through their work, faculty members have contributed significantly to economic and cultural development of nations (Bentley, Coates, Dobson, Goedegebuure, & Meek, 2013; Gappa, 2002).

In this section, I draw on academia to examine the construction and performance of gender and the (re)production of unequal labour market outcomes in a field highly segregated by gender. The concept of academia used in this thesis refers an overall concept for university, university colleges and other forms of higher education.

4.4.1 HEIs as gendered organisations

Although there has been a growing diversification within the academic profession due to the differences in national contexts, sectors, disciplines or age groups of academic staff (Enders & Musselin, 2008; Gappa, 2002; Kwiek, 2015; K. Williams, 2008), my exploration of literature on academic profession has revealed some key patterns in academia including the normalisation of a culture of overwork, the tie between the changing role of knowledge in the society and academia and the gendered occupational segregation in academia, which I will discuss in turn in the following sections.

4.4.1.1 Normalisation of a culture of overwork

Despite job types and roles, a considerable amount of literature has been published on the normalisation of a culture of overwork in academia. The evidence of a culture of excessive workloads have been found across academia in different regions: New Zealand (Houston, Meyer, & Paewai, 2006; A. Wolf, 2010); Australia (Kenny & Fluck, 2014, 2017; Leder & Forgasz, 2006; Julia Miller, 2019); Ireland (Dowling-Hetherington, 2014); and United Kingdom (Jabbar, Analoui, Kong, & Mirza, 2018; Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper, & Ricketts, 2005). For example, Houston et al. (2006) report that academic staff have to extend their working time beyond full-time to accommodate the demands of their work. Bentley and Kyvik (2012) observe slight differences in the hours of working time of full-time faculties across countries: Hong Kong (52.8), USA (51.4), Canada (51.1), Germany (50.2), Finland (47.2), Italy (46.9), Malaysia (46.3), Brazil (45.7) and Argentina (45.2). These hours suggest the conditions of academic work remain dependent on national higher education traditions. The mean working hours in Bentley and Kyvik's (2012) study, 48.5 hours, is close to that of more recent research by Kenny and Fluck (2017) in Australian academia. Kenny and Fluck (2017) included both casual and part-time staff in their research and found that not only a majority of full-time academics but also a large number of part-time staff find the 37.5 hours per week insufficient to perform their work. They sometimes have to stretch the working time to weekends or evenings.

National higher education contexts aside, a probable explanation for the high number of working hours in academia, compared to a standard forty hours (eight hour day, five day week), is that many academics have to demonstrate their efficiency in three main academic tasks: teaching, research, and service. Boyer, Altbach, and Whitelaw (1994) in their international study of the academic profession among countries like Australia, Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, Israel and Japan note that "in many countries there has been a growing concern about

how professors spend their time, a debate that involved discussions about productivity and most especially about the relationships between teaching, research, and professional service” (p. 11). Although all three areas are important criteria for the tenure and promotion decisions, in more recent studies, teaching and research are considered more important (Adams, 2003; Guarino & Borden, 2017; S. M. Park, 1996; Shin, 2015; Wiley, Wallingford, Monllor-Tormos, & Konyu-Fogel, 2016).

The normalisation of a culture of overwork has contributed to the occupational stress and burnout sometimes experienced to a higher degree by academic staff than by those in other professions (Houston et al., 2006; Langford, 2010) and poor work-life balance (Naz, Fazal, & Khan, 2017; Woodward, 2007). Despite the high level of stress, many faculty members have remained satisfied with their jobs (Shin & Jung, 2014) particularly when they have autonomy at work and clear objectives and knowledge of the job (Stoermer, Luring, & Selmer, 2020). They might become less motivated when there was a lack of fairness and transparency in work allocation among staff (Houston et al., 2006), when they feel their universities place higher emphasis on making profits than generating and disseminating knowledge (Fredman & Doughney, 2012) or when their institutions have unrealistically high levels of expectations for their research outcomes (Zhang, Fu, & Li, 2020).

Overall, while the culture of overwork is not exclusive to the academic profession, it resembles “the image of the white man who is totally dedicated to the work and who has no responsibilities for children or family demands other than earning a living” (J. Acker, 2006, p. 448). The culture of overwork in combination with the changes in the academic environment worldwide, which is discussed in the next section, have contributed to the occupational stress and burnout widely reported by academic staff.

4.4.1.2 Increasingly competitive academic environment

The increasing commonality of a culture of overwork among academic staff across the globe is closely related to the changing academic environment including the global competition in the knowledge economy, academic managerialism and mass/post-mass higher education (Shin, 2015). The three factors are inter-related and have contributed to staff stress, work-life imbalance, and job (dis)satisfaction referred to in the previous section (Fredman & Doughney, 2012; Shin, 2015; Shin & Jung, 2014).

The commonly discussed change in the academic environment is the rising global competition among higher education institutions (HEIs) across the world against the backdrop of the

emergence of a global knowledge economy with an emphasis on knowledge production and knowledge-intensive activities (Bagley & Portnoi, 2014; Marginson, 2006). The competition intensifies with the widespread globalisation, which is, from an economic sense, a process of closer economic integration of global markets: financial, product and labour (Gurría, 2006), accelerated globally thanks to technological advances (Manicas, 2007).

Within this competitive environment, HEIs have adopted corporatized managerial practice, also known as ‘managerialism’ (Fredman & Doughney, 2012). Managerialism involves “incorporation of approaches, systems, and techniques commonly found in the private sector, to the management and conduct of the public sector” (G. Anderson, 2006, p. 578) which result in the shift toward more competitive/performance-based funding and more auditing and accountability (Vardi, 2009), and an increasing emphasis on performance indicators (Kalfa & Taksa, 2017) in HE. Scholarly work on managerialism (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2016; Fredman & Doughney, 2012; Kenny, 2018) has recognised this set of processes as the source of an intensification of academic workloads. By way of illustration, Cannizzo and Osbaldiston (2016) observe that pressures on Australian academics to establish their credentials through visible and quantifiable data (such as publication, and grants) causes a work/life imbalance with many academics reporting working from home and in non-labour time such as the weekend to meet the work demands.

Another notable change is mass higher education, which has become “the international norm at the end of the 20th century” (Altbach, 1999, p. 107). Trow’s (1973) simplistic definition of mass higher education as systems which enrol between 15 percent and 50 percent of the age group remains relevant today although many systems nowadays have gone beyond the 50 percent participation rate (Tight, 2019). The emergence of mass higher education worldwide including in developing nations is thanks to economic growth (Altbach, 1999). Mass higher education has had major impacts on academic life in contemporary higher education such as the expansion of class size (approximately 50 to 100 students in Australian, UK, German or Japanese classrooms), the increasing number of courses professors need to teach or the pressure on lecturers to employ various teaching techniques to instruct underprepared students (Shin, 2015).

All these factors, global competition in the knowledge economy, academic managerialism and mass/post-mass higher education are intertwined and add to the workload of academic staff. However, as these studies referred to have been based on the HE environment in developed

economies, it is unclear how teaching staff in some less developed nations cope with their workload, especially when their salary is insufficient for their living expenses. Maxwell, Nget, Am, Peou, and You (2015) reveal that salaries are not high for public HE workers in Cambodian academia. They only receive for teaching but have no pay in school breaks. Therefore, their workload might be more intense especially if they have to take extra work within or outside academia to cover their living expenses.

4.4.1.3 Gendered occupational segregation in academia

The number of women in academia has been increasing overtime across the world but both horizontal and vertical occupational segregation by gender within academia has still been widely reported across contexts (Dubois-Shaik & Fusulier, 2015; OECD, 2020).

Women in academia are overrepresented in feminised disciplines (Pedagogy, Psychology, Sociology, Literature, Languages, Humanities) and underrepresented in highly prestigious disciplines (Academic Medicine, Law, Economics, Science, Mathematics, Engineering) (Casad et al., 2021; Dubois-Shaik & Fusulier, 2015; O’Connell & McKinnon, 2021; Picardi, 2019; Tsouroufli, 2018). For example, the European Commission’s *‘She Figures 2018’* report finds that the distribution of researchers in the HE sector across fields of research and development in European countries is significantly low with women researchers constituting 15 percent of natural sciences, 17 percent of engineering and technology, and 20 percent of medical sciences (EC, 2019). Women are often channelled into feminised teaching and administrative roles rather than the research routes (Ashencaen Crabtree & Shiel, 2019). Furthermore, the percentage of women academics in research universities is often smaller than men. For example, while women make up half of all academic staff across Chinese universities, they only account for 24 percent in Zhejiang University and 28 percent in Sun Yatsen University, two prestigious research universities (L. Tang & Horta, 2021).

In addition to the horizontal segregation of women in feminised disciplines and roles, women’s representation in full professorship, tenured positions and managerial positions has been modest across the globe. The number of women in full professorship, the professorial end of the academic career path (O’Connell & McKinnon, 2021), has been comparatively low in various contexts. For example, in 2018–2019, women in India held 27.3 percent of professor and equivalent faculty positions and women in Canada comprised 28 percent of professors (Catalyst, 2020c). While women in the United States held 49.7 percent of all tenure-track positions in 2018, only 39.3 percent were granted tenured positions (Catalyst, 2020c), the

positions associated with academic freedom and job security (Boyd, Caraway, & Niemann, 2017).

In terms of managerial positions, only 41 of the top 200 institutions in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings are currently led by women (Times Higher Education, 2021). In fact, the existence of glass ceiling, a commonly discussed form of vertical segregation, in higher education has been well-documented in various studies in different national contexts for the last three decades (Arooj, Muhammad Zeb, & Zia, 2019; Behery, Al-Nasser, & Parakandi, 2017; Bülbül, 2021; Carvalho & Santiago, 2010; Jackson, O'Callaghan, & Leon, 2014; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Linehan, Buckley, & Koslowski, 2009). The glass ceiling phenomenon is closely related to the “leaky pipeline”, the lessening of women at each step of the career path, from undergraduate to graduate to postdoc to faculty members and finally to senior positions (Bailyn, 2003b; Gasser & Shaffer, 2014; Pell, 1996). Despite the uneven labour market outcomes between women and men faculty members, Linehan et al. (2009) conclude that gender issues have not been paid adequate attention by those at senior management level in the university.

In summary, academia is a highly gendered field, and a successful academic staff resembles the disembodied and universal worker as described in section 4.3.3.2. While the gendered nature of HEIs is not restricted only to academia, the tie between academia and the socio-cultural and economic development makes it an excellent site to examine how gender is constructed and performed and how it is linked to the gendered market outcomes. The next sections will examine both the informal and formal “processes of exclusion and devaluation that constitute major impediments to women faculty members’ achievements” (Fotaki, 2013, p. 1253) and their performance in those processes.

4.4.2 Gendering practices in academic selection and promotion

Recruiting, selecting and promoting the ‘right’ person for a position is crucial for organisations to achieve their desired outcomes and for employees to meet their career goals (Hendry, 2011; Hurrell & Scholarios, 2016). This section discusses the formal and informal processes in relation to selection and promotion of academic staff which produce gendered practices in academia.

4.4.2.1 Gendering practices in recruitment and selection of new academics

The process of recruitment and selection of academic staff in universities is not “a purely technical endeavour” (Van den Brink, Benschop, & Jansen, 2010, p. 1463). In fact, that process

is a gendered practice which contributes to the (re)production of unequal labour market outcomes for women (Carvalho & Santiago, 2010; Nielsen, 2016; Picardi, 2019; Steinpreis, Anders, & Ritzke, 1999; Van den Brink et al., 2010).

At the first glance, the formal recruitment and selection of new academic staff is a gender-neutral process which judges potential candidates' merits and talents through their teaching, research and service experience (Nielsen, 2016). However, Van den Brink et al. (2010) suggest that recruiting and selecting new staff is a gendered practice which involves micropolitics, "the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations" (Blase, 1991, p. 11). Especially when the recruitment committee encounter two candidates with similar qualifications and experience, the recruitment process could become a power game driven by who was favoured by a certain committee member.

Furthermore, the assessment of a candidate's competence and work commitment can contain potential bias in favour of men. There has been empirical evidence that when male and female recruiters reviewed identical curriculum vitae of job applicants with the names of the applicants changed to typical male or female names, both genders were more likely to vote to hire a male named applicant than an equally qualified female named applicant (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012; Steinpreis et al., 1999). Therefore, women often lose in the process because they have to outperform men in order to be able to be recognised as equally capable (Van den Brink et al., 2010). In addition to competence, women are often perceived as being less committed to their work than men, even by senior academic women, and even when there was no proof of differences between women's and men's commitment to work (Ellemers, Heuvel, Gilder, Maass, & Bonvini, 2004). The biased perception of women's competence and commitment can lead to the biased decision by the recruitment committee.

Finally, personal invitation, an informal form of recruitment and hiring of new academic staff has sometimes been based on the old boys' network. Men make up the majority of full professors and the majority members of the recruitment and selection committee, which gives men greater access to the network and opportunities than women (Carvalho & Santiago, 2010). Although the rise of women in academia has contributed to the decline of the old boys' network, it remains alive and well in academia (Reeves, Friedman, Rahal, & Flemmen, 2017).

In sum, many women candidates hit the "glass door", the invisible barrier, when they wish to enter academia (Picardi, 2019, p. 1) due to the gendering practices in association with recruitment and selection. These practices act as a gender hegemony which keep men in a more

powerful position over women. In the recruitment process, the bias that both women and men have about women in the recruitment process demonstrates that both genders unconsciously and actively adhere to and perform male norms which in turn reinforces that gender hegemony. The next section discusses the extension of gender hegemony in performance appraisal and promotion.

4.4.2.2 Gendering practices in performance appraisal and promotion

As aforementioned in section 4.4.1, teaching, research, and service, are important criteria for performance appraisal and promotion decisions in academia. However, research is perceived as carrying more weight than other criteria (Adams, 2003; Guarino & Borden, 2017; S. M. Park, 1996; Shin, 2015; Wiley et al., 2016). This section examines the gendering practices in performance appraisal and promotion in relation to research funding, the most important component among all three criteria.

Various studies have observed that men have more research projects funded and receive higher funding than women (Head, Fitchett, Cooke, Wurie, & Atun, 2013; Steinþórsdóttir, Einarsdóttir, Pétursdóttir, & Himmelweit, 2020; Van Der Lee & Ellemers, 2015). This is exemplified in the work undertaken by Head et al. (2013) who investigate funding awards to UK institutions for all infectious disease research from 1997 to 2010. They observe consistent differences in funding received by men and women principal investigators over the 14-year study period: the funded study received by women ranged from 14.3 percent in 1998 to 26.8 percent in 2009. These results are similar to those reported by Van Der Lee and Ellemers (2015) in The Netherlands. Van Der Lee and Ellemers (2015) examined the grant funding rates of a national full population of early career scientists in The Netherlands and also found that the success rate was systematically lower for female applicants (14.9%) than for male applicants (17.7%). In the latest study by Steinþórsdóttir et al. (2020), the results from assessing grant funding submissions and awards in Iceland show that for every grant awarded to women, men received between 1.5 and 2.0 grants.

A possible explanation for the disparities in the funding is gender bias. Some might argue that women receive less funding than men because women were less likely than men to apply for grant funding (Boyle, Smith, Cooper, Williams, & O'Connor, 2015). Boyle et al. (2015) considered applications to the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Research Grants 'open call' scheme between 2008 and 2013 and found that the number of applications by academic women made up only 41 percent of applications. However, Steinþórsdóttir et al.

(2020) observe that the proportion of female applicants for University of Iceland Research Fund (UIRF) is higher than the proportion of women holding full, associate and assistant professorships, indicating that women in those positions are more likely to apply than their male colleagues. Nevertheless, the gender disparity continues to exist. Specifically, for every grant awarded to a female full professor, male professors, on average, receive two to three grants and higher funding. Furthermore, while the smaller number of female applicants than male causes the gender gap in research funding (Boyle et al., 2015), potential gender bias might appear after further investigation. For example, some female academics in the study of Leberman, Eames, and Barnett (2016) study in the New Zealand context explained that they did not apply for funding because they had their high workload and they were not ready to compromise with a lower standard of work considering the time constraints of funding applications.

Academic excellence is believed to be another reason for the different outcomes in research grant funding applications. Fabila-Castillo (2019) offers another explanation from the Mexican context for the differences in success rates between both genders: National System of Researchers (SNI) level, a peer review classification of the researchers working in Mexico made on the basis of scientific productivity, experience and recognition. A logistic regression analysis (logit) was performed considering the success rate as the dependent variable. The independent variables “SNI level” + “category” (of the proposal) + “gender” + “scientific discipline” were used to determine which variable had an influence on success. The results reveal that SNI level and category were the only variables that were statistically significant. There was no suggestion of an association between gender and success as this variable was not statistically significant. Although Fabila-Castillo (2019) observe no evidence of gender discrimination between male and female academics, the dismissal of gender bias in grant funding should be approached with caution. In Fabila-Castillo’s (2019) study, the SNI level of the candidates, one of the key criteria for grant funding decision, is subject to the number of scientific papers and books they publish, the ranking of the journals or editorials where they are published, the number of citation, the number of Master’s and PhD theses they have supervised, the recognition and leadership of the candidate in their field, invitations to give plenary lectures in international meetings and the establishment or development of new research groups in the country. While these criteria are undoubtedly helpful to assess the productivity of the researchers, Van Der Lee and Ellemers (2015) make a notable observation. When the evaluation criterion for funding is “scientific excellence of the researcher”, the grant

schemes reveal gender disparity in funding rates. In contrast, when reviewers are requested to focus on the quality of the proposal alone, gender differences disappear.

In conclusion, the allocation of research grant funding showed many features of academia as a gendered organisation. The use of ‘quality of the researcher’ as a criterion for research funding seems ‘fair’ at the first glance, but as Beddoes and Schimpf (2018) note, “the discourse of fairness encourages an unproblematized adoption of fairness as a core criterion, ignoring the ways fairness may be conceptualized to benefit some groups over others” (p.31). Moreover, gendered practices are deeply embedded in social, interpersonal and organizational relations (Kjeldal, Rindfleish, & Sheridan, 2005; Määttä & Dahlborg Lyckhage, 2011), they are less likely to be made explicit and be challenged.

4.4.3 Gendered division of labour in academia

As mentioned in section 3.5.2.1, the sexual division of labour, women are mainly responsible for domestic chores which generate less economic values and recognition in the domestic sphere. Similarly, women in academia have been doing time-consuming tasks which are considered not as important as the “real” work of scholars such as research and teaching, and therefore, these tasks do not provide them an advantage in performance appraisal and promotion decisions. Among the notable tasks which have been done mainly by female academic staff are academic service and emotional labour.

4.4.3.1 Academic service

K. Ward (2003) categorises academic service into two dimensions – internal and external. Internal service refers to “service to the institutions as a means to conduct institutional business and service to the discipline as means to maintain disciplinary associations and their work” while external service refers to “a means for institutions to communicate to multiple external audiences what it is that higher education does to meet societal needs” (p.iv). Examples of internal service are activities related to faculty governance, faculty recruitment, evaluation and promotion, student admissions and scholarships, programme supervision, development and marketing, internal awards and the like (Guarino & Borden, 2017). Guarino and Borden (2017) also add that the level of compensation for staff’s internal service depends on their job description. Those, such as deans, who take administrative roles are compensated but the majority of faculty receive no extra compensation because these activities are considered part of their jobs. Examples of external service include extension, consulting, service-learning, and community and civic service and might occur outside the campus (K. Ward, 2003).

Despite different promotability values attached to teaching, research and academic service, a number of studies have shown that more women than men engage in academic service (Antonio, Astin, & Cress, 2000; Guarino & Borden, 2017; O'Meara, 2016; Porter, 2007). For instance, many studies whose focus is on faculty members' community engagement, one of the aforementioned external academic services (Aguirre, 2000; Antonio et al., 2000; Vogelgesang, Denson, & Jayakumar, 2010) have reported that women (and academic staff of colour) are more likely than men to be involved in those activities. Community engagement refers to a "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (Driscoll, 2008, p. 39). In particular, the findings from the 1995-1996 national survey on faculty engagement with and commitment to community service in HE in the US with the sample size of more than 30,000 full-time undergraduate teaching faculty members by Antonio et al. (2000) show higher proportions of women than men performing service or volunteer work, advising student groups doing service, featuring community service in their coursework, maintaining educational goals focused on service, and strongly favouring institutional policies that support community service and involvement. In a more recent survey, Vogelgesang et al. (2010) found the same trajectory that women faculty tended to perceive higher institutional commitment to community engagement, use their scholarship to address community needs and collaborate with the local community in research/teaching.

Many researchers have questioned the gender differences in the level of engagement and commitment in academic services (Misra, Lundquist, Holmes, & Agiomavritis, 2011; Mitchell & Hesli, 2013; O'Meara, 2016; O'Meara, Kuvaeva, Nyunt, Waugaman, & Jackson, 2017). A useful example is O'Meara's (2016) qualitative study which highlights the gender differences in the perceptions of campus service within university environments. Her analysis of 88 semi-structured interviews with faculty members demonstrates that more women framed campus service in communal terms while more men positioned service as a campus problem. Therefore, men tend to avoid or minimise involvement in campus service so as not to hurt their career. Gender distinction is further exemplified in the study of O'Meara et al. (2017) who examined how university associate and full professors spent their work time using time-diary methods. O'Meara et al. (2017) found that women spend more time than men on campus service and student advising. Notably, women received more requests to be engaged in teaching, student advising, and professional service than men; therefore, they devoted more time to non-research

activities than men. The findings of O'Meara et al. (2017) are consistent with previous study by Misra et al. (2011) whose sample is also research-intensive universities or studies whose attention is on specific fields such as Mitchell and Hesli (2013) in the field of political science or Link, Siegel, and Bozeman (2007) in the field of science and technology.

Although both internal and external services are acknowledged in annual performance reviews, Guarino and Borden (2017) insist that internal service is undervalued relative to external service in terms of career advancement. Guarino and Borden (2017) explain that external service provides the staff member with visibility and enhances her or his reputation among a broad group of peers. However, even though such recognition could potentially lead to career advancement in the staff member's home institution and job offers in other institutions, generally academic service ranks as the least influential among tenure and promotion criteria behind teaching and researching (Adams, 2003; Guarino & Borden, 2017; S. M. Park, 1996; Wiley et al., 2016). Specifically, the quantitative study on the professoriate in American business schools by Wiley et al. (2016) shows that the most critical element for achieving the rank of full professor is effective teaching, followed by research. The quality of teaching is measured by students' assessments, peer evaluations and reviews, the ability to demonstrate the nature and quality of assignments, the ability to develop and update curriculum and the ability to integrate pedagogical approaches. Concurrently, an academic staff member's research success is demonstrated by publications in professional journals, other work in progress, grant applications, professional meeting presentation, book contributions or editorial/advisory roles for professional publications (Wiley et al., 2016).

4.4.3.2 Emotional labour

Another manifestation of the gendered division of labour in academia is emotional labour. Emotional labour refers to "the development, management, and performance of affective work. Such labour can include demonstrations of sympathy and empathy, one-on-one attention, supportive communication, counselling, general development of personal relationships, and making a person 'feel good'" (Lawless, 2018, p. 86). The use of emotional labour is crucial in customer-facing roles such as flight attendants (Hochschild, 2012), hospitality workers (Seeger-Guttmann & Medler-Liraz, 2018), call centre workers (Cho, Kim, Lee, Lim, & Jeong, 2019) and nursing (Gray, 2009).

Emotional labour is becoming increasingly important in teaching due to the changes in the academia discussed in section 4.4.1.2 which position students as customers of HEIs and

teaching as a service provided to students (Dhanpat, 2016; Lawless, 2018; Newcomb, 2021). However, in addition to emotional labour in customer-service roles which requires the demonstration of positive emotions, emotional labour within the academic context also requires the expression of emotions that convey authority, disciplines and assertiveness (Tunguz, 2016). Regardless of the sectors, emotional labour is invisible and difficult to identify (Hochschild, 2012); as a result, it is not perceived as having valuable skills and is often poorly rewarded (Bellas, 1999).

While both female and male academic staff are expected to perform emotional labour with the context of academia, women are more expected and more likely to perform emotional labour than men (Ashencaen Crabtree & Shiel, 2019; Lawless, 2018; Newcomb, 2021; Tunguz, 2016). For example, a participant in the qualitative study of Ashencaen Crabtree and Shiel (2019) shared an incident when a male colleague who was married with two children sent a pregnant student looking for advice on academic options to her. He assumed that she could provide more appropriate talk to the student despite the fact that the female academic was never pregnant or had children. Furthermore, the emotional labour female academics are expected to perform extends beyond academic issues. In a personal account, Lawless (2018) describes the pressure of meeting her student's expectation of her to reach out and provide additional social support when the student lost a family member. Another example is the reflection of Newcomb (2021) on how her students expected her to soothe and comfort them in the transition to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Apart from the expectation of female academic staff, they are more willing to perform emotional labour than their male colleagues (Bellas, 1999; Statham, Richardson, & Cook, 1991). For instance, in the classroom, female academics are more likely to demonstrate friendliness and caring behaviours (Statham et al., 1991).

Although the performance of emotional labour can bring job satisfaction to some academics (Ogbonna & Harris, 2004), female faculty members' career have been negatively affected. They have less time to spend on research or other academic activities (Ashencaen Crabtree & Shiel, 2019). Their emotional well-being is also negatively affected (Newcomb, 2021; Rickett & Morris, 2021) and stress and burnout becomes more common (Tunguz, 2016).

The expectation and the willingness of female academics to perform emotional labour might stem from the traditional role of women as mothers and caregivers in the family. Emotional care is often portrayed as a natural activity (Koster, 2011) and a demonstration of femininity (Leathwood, 2005). This understanding of emotional labour explains the assumption of the

male faculty member in the aforementioned study of Ashencaen Crabtree and Shiel (2019) that a female colleague could deal with the pregnant student better just because they are both women. The gendered nature of emotional labour can also be attributed to the gender differences in the conceptualisation of teaching between men and women. While women perceive emotional aspects of teaching as a part of their jobs, men focus on teaching as “a technical problem” (Statham et al., 1991, p. 48); and therefore, they keep emotional labour and teaching practices separate.

From a social constructionist perspective, due to the lack of access to economic resources, authority and status, women make feeling an important resource and offer it in return for the other resources they lack (Hochschild, 2012). From a performative perspective, performing emotional labour equates with performing femininity. Leathwood (2005) proposes that academic women’s performance of emotional labour is to avoid having their femininity questioned. Tsouroufli (2018) further suggests performing emotional labour is a form of resistance academic women adopt to challenge the masculine nature of academia and negotiate their position in the patriarchal structure.

In summary, the examination of academic service and emotional labour as the manifestation of the gendered division of labour provides a lens through which to explore the integration of masculine norms within the academic context and contributes to the explanation of the persistence of gender inequalities in academia. The performative perspective reveals the resistance and agencies and an open door for changes. The next section continues to explore the construction of academic motherhood, which complicates the gender issues in academia.

4.4.4 Negotiation between being a ‘good’ mother and a ‘good’ academic staff

It can be argued that among work in the domestic sphere, childcaring and rearing is particularly pertinent to women, firstly for biological reason - only women can bear children. Second, unlike the other domestic work like cooking and cleaning, there are currently no household technologies that can liberate women from caring for children. Additionally, some might argue that taking care of children is an act of parental love (Craig, 2006); therefore, it should be considered as a chore. Finally, caring for children can be joyful and satisfying (Dickson, 2018; Manne, 2005; N. Wolf, 2001). In some cases, it is beneficial to a mother’s career. For example, participants in Dickson’s (2018) study on academic women in the United Arab Emirates consider their children as an inspiration to their work output and career goals, with the key motivation of trying to build a better life or financial security for themselves. However, there

is evidence across contexts that academic mothers face the pressure of negotiating the notions of good mother and academic professional (Huopainen & Satama, 2019; Low & Damian Martin, 2019; Thun, 2020).

Being a parent is hard work for both mothers and fathers, but more challenging for mothers. Using diary-based time-use surveys, Craig (2006) estimates that one child under three years of age in Australia brought a daily household time allocation of nearly four and a half hours to parents. However, gender differences became more visible when the amount of time spent on childcare and domestic work is combined. The amount of time mothers of one child under three years old spent on child related tasks and domestic chores were nearly four times higher than that of fathers. Similar results can be found in other contexts like the US (Milkie, Raley, & Bianchi, 2009) and some European countries (Gershuny, Sullivan, & Robinson, 2014) although there were variations in the total amount of time mothers spent. While the workload associated with child-related tasks places a huge pressure on mothers in a family with two wage-earners, time constraints become worse with the arrival of the second child (Craig, 2007) or for single mothers (Thun, 2020).

This gendered division of labour at home takes its toll on academic mothers' well-being. As discussed in section 4.4.1, an academic career is demanding and working more than 40 hours a week and outside the fixed office hours is a norm across the world (Houston et al., 2006; Kenny & Fluck, 2017). The academic environment is highly competitive with expectations for academic staff's high efficiency in research, teaching, and service (Shin, 2015; Wiley et al., 2016). The demanding nature of academia in combination with the enormous amount of child-related tasks put academic mothers in constant "state of emergency" (Thun, 2020, p. 172). For example, Thun (2020) describes the hectic schedule of a Norwegian academic mother: working the whole day in the office, going home to put the children to bed, going back to the office and working the whole night and then going home in the morning again to make breakfast for her children. Therefore, psychological stress, exhaustion and burnout become unavoidable for academic mothers (S. Acker & Armenti, 2004; Dickson, 2020; Thun, 2020). Exhaustion intensified during time of the Covid-19 pandemic when mothers had to balance working from home and caring for children (Gewin, 2021; Langin, 2021; Newcomb, 2021).

Academic mothers' sources of stress are not only from the need to reconcile work and motherhood, but also from maternal guilt and shame in relation to their roles as mothers. For example, K. Ward (2012) reports that academic women in her study expressed the feeling of

guilt about spending too little time with their children. Gilbert (2008), in her reflective essay on maternal guilt, shares that she had felt intense guilt “most of the time” since the birth of her daughter (p.203) and nothing she did was “well enough” (p.204). Although Gilbert (2008) did not safeguard her role as mother through “maternal gatekeeping”, “a collection of beliefs and behaviours that ultimately inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work by limiting men’s opportunities for learning and growing through caring for home and children” (Allen & Hawkins, 1999, p. 200) or practice the “intensive mothering” ideology which links good childrearing practices to “the day-to-day labour of nurturing the child, listening to the child, attempting to decipher the child’s needs and desires, struggling to meet the child’s wishes, and placing the child’s well-being ahead of their [mothers’] own convenience” (Hays, 1996, p.115), her performance of mothering still occurred within the construction of ‘good mothering’ (Hays, 1996), the society’s expectation of motherhood as child-centred and time-consuming. Her failure to prioritise her child’s needs contributed to her perception of failing as a ‘good’ mother (V. May, 2008). However, it is worth noting that what constitute a ‘good’ mother might vary across cultural contexts, ethnicities, and social classes (Sutherland, 2010).

In addition to stress and burnout, academic mothers also face the unfavourable consequences of motherhood to their career to a more extreme level than fathers or childless colleagues. The “motherhood penalty” which refers to the negative perception of mothers’ commitment to work and their competence (S. J. Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007, p. 1297) has been documented in academia (Hargens, McCann, & Reskin, 1978; Krapf, Ursprung, & Zimmermann, 2017; J. S. Long, 1990; Lutter & Schröder, 2020). For example, Krapf et al. (2017) find that mothers of children that are up to 3 years old have an average loss of research productivity of about 19.7 percent, significantly higher than the 4 percent loss of fathers and the loss for both women and men lowers gradually as the children grow older. This finding is consonant with that of Lutter and Schröder (2020). Lutter and Schröder (2020), however, argue that the research productivity prior to childbirth should be taken into account. They find that the publication outputs of lower-performing women tend to suffer to a larger extent than that of higher-performing women (defined as those who have been granted academic awards).

Motherhood also negatively affects female academics’ career prospects. Particularly, for early career academics, taking up postdoc projects in other countries is becoming increasingly common (Cantwell & Taylor, 2013). However, international mobility which involves temporary academic positions and job insecurity often clashes with the establishment of family

and having children (Thun, 2020; K. Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2016). Sometimes female academics have to make difficult choices between listening to the ‘tenure clock’ and the ‘biological clock’ (S. Acker & Armenti, 2004, p. 11). To achieve tenure, academic staff are expected to spend the first five to seven years of their faculty life uninterrupted, which concurs with women’s childbearing years. As a result, the choice of having children might delay the achievement of female academics’ career goals (Easterly & Ricard, 2011).

Overall, the demanding nature of academia requires an ideal academic staff who can work more than the standard 40-hour work week, who can devote their uninterrupted time to producing high research outputs while maintaining high quality teaching and service. The notion of that ideal work benefits men more than it does women due to the gendered division of labour at home and academic women’s performance of mothering which fits the societal expectation of a ‘good mother’. Therefore, academic mothers’ strategy of working extra hours or prioritising family life only helps them to survive but not thrive (Low & Damian Martin, 2019).

4.4.5 Summary

Section 4.3 shows that the social constructionist perspective can unveil the gendering processes and practices in organisations that contributes to the unequal labour market outcomes between men and women. Although there are common themes among sectors, each sector/organisation has its own formal and informal norms which has led to different gendering process and practices (Maddock & Parkin, 1993). My review of accessible studies in academia reveals that academia is constructed as masculine in nature. The large workload with expectations of high research outputs is more aligned with characteristics and behaviours culturally defined as masculine while teaching and service are most closely aligned with characteristics and behaviours culturally defined as feminine (Bellas, 1999). The performative perspective demonstrates that women actively perform their roles as mothers at home and as caregivers at work who provide service and emotional labour to the students. Because of the socio-economic and cultural differences, the structures of academic tasks or the notion of a ‘good’ mother might be different across contexts.

4.5 Chapter conclusion

This section examines the manifestation of the understanding of gender on the labour market. Although the ‘nature’ perspective, and ‘nurture’ perspective contributes to the explanation of the inequalities in the labour market, my focus is on the gendering practices which recognise the importance of organisations as an important site for producing and reproducing dimensions

of social difference and identify organisational structure as gendered. Within that gendered structure, “gender differences and inequalities may be produced and reproduced in many different contexts by various people engaged in everyday relational processes occurring through organising practices” (Calás, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014, p. 29). I also find the performative perspective useful to understand how the acts that women and men perform take the status of ‘being natural’ in their repetition of day-to-day acts.

Academia is used as a specific site of gender inequalities (re)produced through organisational structures and practices. As a highly gendered field, many masculine norms have been integrated in the features of academia across contexts. However, existing narratives of gendered labour market outcomes in academia have been based on the Western contexts or some Asian countries like China and India but very few on contexts with multiple waves of changes and influences like Vietnam. In the next chapter, I will present the key gap and research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE EXPLORATION OF RESEARCH GAP AND FORMATION OF RESEARCH QUESTION

5.1 Chapter introduction

Multiple waves of colonisation have left imprints on various economic, political, and social aspects of the colonised, including the way gender is constructed. These imprints were elaborated in Chapters Two where I reviewed the colonisation history of Vietnam and the representation of Vietnamese women through waves of colonisation. The multiple ways Vietnamese women have constructed gender under the influence of Vietnam's long and complex colonial history led me to review theoretical approaches on gender, gender construction and performance in Chapter Three. I begin by revisiting the classic nature-nurture debates (Eagly & Wood, 2013), then the social constructionist view with a focus on institutions that influence gendered behaviours and create and maintain gender inequalities among genders. My particular interest lies in the theorising of gender as performativity, informed by the work of Butler (1988, 2004, 2007, 2011). In Chapter Four, I explored how the multiple understanding of gender manifest in the gendered labour market. These three chapters constituted the background and theoretical framework for this thesis. In this chapter, I draw together the conclusion from each of these chapters, to synthesise the argument developed across all three to identify the research gap and form the research question. This chapter has two main parts. First, I will explore the research gap. Then, the main research question is presented.

5.2 Research gap

5.2.1 Synthesising the literature

In Chapter Two, I briefly reviewed the Vietnamese history from around 2879 BC to the present. No wave of colonisation, whether economic, military, political, domination; achieved without or without colonisers' settlement; either by force or by commerce ended with the struggles for independence and freedom. The latter waves did not entirely erase the impacts of the previous ones. Multiple waves of colonisation have had profound impacts on the way women have been viewed and interacted. Throughout history, Vietnamese women are the warriors of ancient wars, subordinated women under Confucian traditions, liberated modern women under the French and American influence, the colonial women suffering from double colonisation, active communists in national liberalisation movement, and socialist citizens under the communist state. However, the way Vietnamese women construct their gender through waves of colonisation, to my knowledge, is a field of inquiry given little attention. This led me to Chapter Three, which reviewed theoretical orientations of gender.

In Chapter Three, I examined different approaches to understanding gender and explains the ways women and men behave and the ways they are treated. While a large body of empirical studies have either supported or refuted these approaches, it is undeniable that gender is not a fixed state. “Gender arrangements are in fact always changing, as human practice creates new situations and as structures develop crisis tendency” (Connell & Pearse, 2015, p. 20). Within these arrangements, regardless of theoretical orientations, a gendered hierarchy always exists with men in power and women in the subordinated position. Among the gender power relations, a certain form of femininity or masculinity always has an advantage over the others.

I am particularly interested in the performativity perspective which enables me to see the role of women in enacting certain behaviours. The concept of gender performativity (Butler, 1988, 2004, 2007, 2011) theorises gender as a construction that arises only through the performances of gendered acts. Successful performative acts and conforming to the accepted gendered performances are linked to upholding gendered hierarchies; conversely, unsuccessful performative acts are met with punishment (Butler, 1988). However, there is no single way a person performs her/his gender as gender/the gendered body is the “styles of the flesh”. “These styles are never fully self-styled, for styles have a history, and those histories condition and limit the possibilities” (Butler, 1990, p. 96).

As my interest is in how waves of historical colonisation impacted gendering, this interest in gender performativity drew my attention to the ‘history’ of the styles, which, from my interpretation, involves not only the historical, cultural and social structures that influence the gender relations, but also the multiple ways women perform their alternative acts (Poggio, 2006) and experience subordination and privileges (J. McDonald, 2016). Performativity offers a way to gain insight into the multiple ways in which Vietnamese women construct and perform gender in their social locations. The theorisation of gender as a performance also provides a theoretical space to consider and interrogate Vietnamese women’s practices of resistance and agency.

In Chapter Four, I explored how the multiple understanding of gender is embedded in the gendered labour market. The examination of the labour market outcomes shows that the essentialist understanding of gender which assigns women with feminine traits and roles has manifested in the labour market in forms of horizontal and vertical segregation. Horizontal segregation of occupation has been rationalised on the biological differences between women and men, which have been perceived to result in feminine traits (like communal and caring)

and masculine traits (like agentic and aggressive). Therefore, women are perceived to be suitable for feminine occupations with feminine traits like care work or primary school teaching. Meanwhile, vertical segregation of occupation blames the deterministic belief that women are not suitable for leadership positions for women's the low-level roles in the organisation. A typical example of vertical segregation is the glass ceiling phenomenon of which evidence has been widely found in various contexts and occupations including academia. However, simply allocating women and men to certain professions and positions is not the solution to occupational segregation of gender due to the well-embedded gendering practices in organisations.

My further exploration of the gendered labour market also shows that from the 'nurture' perspective, women (and men) actively participate in (re)producing the gendered practices in organisations because these are nurtured by various agents of socialisation from childhood. Gendered behaviours and hierarchies in the workplace have been maintained by this gender system owing to men's efforts in holding on to power, according to social constructionists. Additionally, women (and men) uphold the gendered hierarchies in order to conform to the expected performances of their gender. Resistance to the hierarchies often results in punishment. However, performance backfires exist even with correct gender performance.

My examination of the multiplicities in theorising gender and the manifestation of multiple understanding of gender in the labour market shows that the 'nature' understanding of gender or biological determinism does not fully explain the gendered behaviours and gendering practices in organisations. There is a need to embrace other theoretical orientations, particularly the performativity perspective to examine whether the performance of gender is responsible for the positions of women, including Vietnamese academic women, in the labour market. While I examined the studies on the gendered labour market, I observed that although all the studies acknowledge cultural, economic and ideological impacts of a context on gender performativity, more studies from the Western perspective have been done than from non-Western perspectives. The non-Western context, particularly those with a colonial history, can offer insight into the complexities and ambiguities of non-Western gender relations.

5.2.2 Exploring the gap from similar contexts

A growing body of research into gender in societies with colonial heritage has revealed the complexities of gender construction and performativity in the context of cultural, economic,

and political changes. From a non-Western perspective, scholars have predominantly explored the context of Hong Kong, India or Southeast Asian nations.

5.2.2.1 Hong Kong

As a British colony in the nineteenth century, a part of China since 1997 and an international business centre (Mizuoka, 2018), Hong Kong has been at the crossroad of multiple influences. Therefore, the construction of gender in Hong Kong has been drawn not only from the commonly essentialist understanding of gender but also from the social and political landscapes.

Similar to multiple contexts discussed in previous chapters, women and men in Hong Kong are expected to conform to traditional gender traits, which results in stereotypical tasks and occupations for each gender. A study on primary school teachers by A. K.-w. Chan (2004) exemplifies this essentialist understanding of gender. A. K.-w. Chan (2004) posits that women mainly do the care work for the students while men are responsible for transmitting knowledge and practising disciplines. Women can move onto the men's sphere if their presence serves the purposes of the state. For example, A. H.-N. Chan and Ho (2017) reveal that European and western educated elites in Hong Kong lobbied and advocated for policewomen to be introduced so as to enforce newly passed legislation to respond to the trafficking of women and children. Feminine qualities such as empathy and sensitivity were perceived to generate better services and greater social justice.

In addition to the widespread essentialist understanding of gender, gender construction in Hong Kong has been subject to the changing social and political landscape of a post British colony and a multi-ethnic society. Colonial women's identities are fractured due to the negotiation between the colonial and postcolonial idea of a woman. A notable example is the study of Leonard (2010) on colonial women in the period since the return to Chinese rule in 1997. Due to the colonial heritage, colonial women, particularly the white British expatriates, had the pressure of performing traditional image of "the bank wife" who is married to a wealthy British man, and has plenty of time and money for herself and her children. While they wished to depart from that performance, they found themselves to be "unable to sustain a coherent place" outside the dominant understanding of gender, whiteness and Britishness (Leonard, 2010, p. 353).

5.2.2.2 India

Similar to Hong Kong, India was once a British colony (Bayly, 1987). Voluminous studies in the Indian context (Basu, 1992; Channa, 2013; Datta, 2020; Mohanty, 1988; Narayan, 1997; Ray, 2000) have shed light into the construction and reconstruction of gender in the postcolonial context.

Before the arrival of the British colonialists in the eighteenth century, Channa (2013) posits that feminine and masculine qualities were not separated. Women could be intellectual and rational, which are often perceived as masculine traits. Even though Indian women were restricted to the traditional feminine role as wives and mothers, they had some space within the traditional structures of power. Mother-in-laws and wives were considered “home ministers” who controlled the domestic matters (Channa, 2013, p. 46). Husbands/sons did not have a say in domestic affairs. However, the British colonisation led to the imposition of Western values on Indian society, including the dichotomy of gender. The construction of the “new women” among the upper class women exemplified the changes in the gender relations under colonisation (Channa, 2013, p. 57). Women from the upper class were more confined to the domestic sphere by upholding the *devi* image of purity and superiority and demonstrating modesty by wearing Western style clothing. Although women under the British colonial rule were provided access to education, the main goal of the colonial ruler was to make them become better wives and mothers (Desai, 2016).

The nation-state played a significant role in constructing and reconstructing women’s role in the postcolonial Indian society (Puri, 1999). Women of all classes were encouraged to participate in the struggle for independence against the British rule; as a result, they came into the public realm rather than staying in the domestic sphere (Desai, 2016). Meanwhile, women, particularly the middle-class, became a symbol of culture and tradition (Poggendorf-Kakar, 2018). They were promoted to being the upholders of moral values, purity, and dignity (through the safeguard of chastity) to restore the nation’s value. In other words, the female body has been politicised as an element to maintain the nation’s identity.

Gender relations in the contemporary India are still characterised by a dichotomous understanding of gender. For example, Huberman (2011) observes a sharp difference in the perception and act of girls and boys working as guides and peddlers in the Indian tourism industry. Girls perceived their work as an “act of necessity” (providing for the family and themselves) and an “act of service and devotion” (being a good child to their parents); in

contrast, boys perceived their work as being “an opportunity to integrate themselves into a new network of social, economic, and political relations” (Huberman, 2011, p. 179). While Huberman (2011) does not provide a detailed explanation for the difference, she cites cultural logics and the emergence of consumer-identity as the source of the difference. A more recent study by Bhattacharyya (2020) on Northeast Indian women in higher education resonates the well-defined feminine and masculine roles in the contemporary context. Women in higher education, regardless of education background and employment status, still shape their career in relation to their role as daughters, daughters in law and wives.

It is worth noting that gender construction in India should not be understood as monolithic. Instead, it varies by geographical regions due to the diverse landscapes and regional cultures (Datta, 2020). Specifically, there are differences among regions in the level of women’s autonomy (Goli & Maikho Apollo Pou, 2014; Jejeebhoy, 2002; Singh, 2010), women’s positions within the family structures (Grover, 2018; Ramberg, 2013), or the degree of son preference (Das Gupta, 1987; Dasgupta & Fletcher, 2018; Robitaille, 2020). Therefore, Datta (2020) advocates for the examination of gender in relation to the space in which gender is constructed and performed.

5.2.2.3 Southeast Asia

A sizeable body of research on gender (Andaya, 2006; S. Blackburn & Ting, 2013; Chin & Mohd Daud, 2017; Koh & Balasingamchow, 2015; Schröter, 2013; K. Sen & Stivens, 1998) has focused on Southeast Asian as a region. Three main possible explanations might be that Southeast Asia is considered to be host of social structures which traditionally granted women relatively high status (Andaya, 2006; Schröter, 2013). Southeast Asian countries’ gender order has also been affected by colonial history including British control over Singapore, Malaysia, Burma and Thailand, Spanish and American domination over The Philippines, Dutch colonisation over Indonesia and French rule over Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Booth, 2007). Lastly, Southeast Asian nations, despite of being at different stages in economic and social developments, have risen as a competitive regional economy in the last half of the twentieth century (Basu Das, 2013).

Like the gender relations in Hong Kong, India and other postcolonial contexts, those of the Southeast Asian nations are defined by deterministic gender binaries. Women and men have a well-defined place in a patriarchal family which was the result of the interaction between local cultures and the exposure with European colonisation. Useful examples can be found in the

case of Singapore (PuruShotam, 1998), Malaysia (Joseph, 2009), or Indonesia (Chin, 2017). In addition, similar to many postcolonial contexts, Southeast Asian women gained their political awareness through their national struggle for independence and freedom from colonial rule (Tope, 2017). This is evident in the case of Indonesian women (Schröter, 2014), Filipino women (Roces, 1998), Burmese women (Ikeya, 2013), Lao women (Pholsena, 2013), and Vietnamese women (Chiricosta, 2010).

Southeast Asian women have also been the centre projects led by governments to demonstrate unique national traditions and identity although there have been variations of how women are constructed among Southeast Asian nations. For example, the Singapore Girl – the naturally attractive, feminine, warm, graceful female flight attendant working on-board Singapore Airlines' aircraft has been promoted as the soul of Singapore Airlines and Singapore in general. She represents the national identity of independent Singapore (Obendorf, 2015). Another notable example is the construction of Indonesia's "good" wives and mothers as an essence of rhetoric imagining of nation as "one happy family", an effort to promote harmony and unity among different groups and ideologies in the country (Chin, 2017, p. 89).

There are also variations in the construction of femininities and masculinities among Southeast Asian nations. For instance, computer science, a male-dominated field in Western society, is perceived to be suitable for women in Malaysia as works associated with computer science are often done in indoor spaces, and require less physical strength or outdoor exposure (Mellström, 2009). However, Mellström (2009) notes that the gendered understanding of occupations in Malaysia varies among ethnic groups; therefore, he advocates for a culturally situated analysis of gender in relations to race and class. The study of Lukasiewicz (2011) on households with farming wives and migrant husbands in the rural Philippines also demonstrates the need for a contextual analysis of gender identity. Lukasiewicz (2011) suggests that due to the migration of husbands out of rural area for economic reasons, rural Filipino women take up types of farm work like labour-intensive work or farm managers which are traditionally considered masculine.

While the changing gender roles in the case of women farmers in the Philippines and the domination of women in a male field in the case of Malaysia might contribute to the optimism about gender equality in Southeast Asian nations, there is a dearth of women leaders in the Southeast nations with Burma's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi as the only female leader (Septiari, 2020). It is worth noting that Burma's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi comes

from a family in politics and her father was a nationalist leader, Aung San (Richter, 1991). The discussion of Aung San Suu Kyi's family background is not to disregard her competence, it is undeniable that Southeast Asian women leaders benefit from a network of social relationships, wealth or heredity (Brecht-Drouart, 2013).

Overall, a brief examination of gender construction and performance in postcolonial contexts has demonstrated how gender come in various configurations. While there are some common themes like the construction of revival of old femininities and construction of new femininities for national identity, gender construction varies. Furthermore, there is a need to speak of gender from locations other than the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon world. The place in which gender is performed cannot be overlooked and is central to its construction (Datta, 2020). Therefore, to respond to the call for a culturally situated analysis of gender, gender construction in the Vietnamese context is proposed to be a topic of examination.

5.2.2 Vietnam as a research context

Vietnam is an appropriate context for such an exploration of gender construction for two main reasons. First, gender studies in the Vietnamese context, although not as voluminous as previously reviewed studies in the context of Hong Kong, India or Southeast Asian nations, fit into the overall picture of the postcolonial context. Gender roles are seen as fixed and stems from an essentialist view of gender (Schuler et al., 2006; H. T. Vu et al., 2019) as a result of the interaction between Vietnamese culture and ideologies brought by colonists. Women are perceived to embody feminine traits such as nurturing and caring and are expected to focus on their role as daughters, mothers and wives; hence, unsuitable for leadership roles (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012). Similar to the pre-colonial Indian context, Vietnamese women hold relatively high status within the domestic sphere. They are called “generals of the interior” (Do & Brennan, 2015, p. 279). However, the high expectation put tremendous demands on women. They are expected to be responsible for things within their control (their own behaviours) and things outside of their control (children's grades and husbands' violent behaviours) (Schuler et al., 2006). The attainment of Vietnamese women's political awareness also resembles that of the early mentioned postcolonial contexts (Chiricosta, 2010). Vietnamese women have also been the central aspect of Vietnamese government's effort to maintain national identity and foster economic development and modernisation through the Three Criteria Women Campaign (Schuler et al., 2006). Therefore, since the number of studies on gender in the Vietnamese context is developing, a deeper study into gender construction and performance will provide more insights from the Southeast Asian women's perspective.

The second reason is far more than just adding Vietnamese women to the Southeast Asian women's narratives. Vietnamese women's social positions had remained static until the arrival of outsider systems (N. T. Tran, 2018). While contemporary gender roles in Vietnam have been influenced by simultaneous ideologies (Grosse, 2015), to my knowledge, little attention has been directed onto how the different waves of foreign influences affect how Vietnamese women construct and perform genders. Such examination can capture the complexities and ambiguities of non-western gender relations. Within that small space, academia is an appropriate sector to examine the gender relations in the workplace.

Gender in academia in Vietnam

Overall, I chose the Vietnamese academia, in which the colonial powers have left all the imprints, as the site of my research for three main reasons. First, Vietnamese academic profession carries elite cultural attachment to the occupation, which is related to the Confucian traditions as a result of the lengthy Chinese colonisation. Meanwhile, the current Vietnamese university model inherits the former models from France's administrative centralisation policy, the Soviet Union's model of small and specialised colleges and institutes, and the US and European models of curricula and emphasis on research. Thirdly, the goals of the Vietnamese HE are tied closely to the Vietnamese government agenda to foster social and economic development. Therefore, the Vietnamese academia, which carries the similar colonising pattern of Vietnam's history, gives me a context to explore the impacts of waves of colonisation on women's involvement at work.

Furthermore, few studies with gender as the main analytical theme have been done in the context of Vietnamese academia. For example, T. L. H. Nguyen (2012) examines the barriers to and facilitators of female deans from personal, institutional, and societal level. The factors which hindered academic women's career progress were family obligations and negative stereotypes towards female leaders from both the public and women themselves. Meanwhile, strong family support was the facilitator to women's career. Women in T.L.H.Nguyen's (2012) study were depicted as both agent and object of change in academic women's empowerment. While T. L. H. Nguyen (2012) focuses on the female dean, a middle-management position, Funnell and Dao (2013) examine the experiences of Vietnamese women rectors, a top-management position in Vietnam universities. The study of Funnell and Dao (2013) is among the first, and of few studies, to my knowledge, which employs a feminist standpoint theory to explore women's experiences in Vietnam HE sector. Therefore, the "processes of becoming" (Funnell & Dao, 2013, p. 299), or the social conditions shaped

Vietnamese academic women's experiences, were explored in association with the important changes in the twentieth century including Indochina War, Vietnam War and the Doi Moi (Reform) in the 1990s. While Funnell and Dao (2013) draw the attention to the uniqueness of Vietnam's political and economic conditions, the impacts of Confucianism were the focus of the whole rich colonial history. Another study which attends to the social conditions of gender relations is that of Do and Brennan (2015). Using Connell's (1987) concept of hegemonic masculinity, Do and Brennan (2015) explore the complexities of multiple femininities in Vietnam and argue that certain forms of Vietnamese femininities like 'woman behind the throne' or 'general of the interior' represent the informal power of Vietnamese women. However, although some Vietnamese women, thanks to the historical matriarchy, had their agency and power instead of being a victim of patriarchal society, patriarchal domination remains too persistent and powerful to challenge.

While T. L. H. Nguyen (2012), Funnell and Dao (2013), and Do and Brennan (2015) examine Vietnamese academic women's career from women's perspectives, other scholars incorporate the perspective of both women and men (Dang, 2012, 2017; Maheshwari & Nayak, 2020; T. V. H. Vu, 2018) or female leaders' subordinates (T. T. T. Tran & Nguyen, 2020). While the studies from men or subordinates' perspectives show similar themes to previous studies like women's strong family responsibilities, negative stereotypes toward feminine traits and women leaders or insufficient institutional support for women's career, they also reveal men's resentment towards women's leadership due to gender role incongruity (Dang, 2017), the impact of the preference towards male leaders on women leaders' legitimacy (T. T. T. Tran & Nguyen, 2020; T. V. H. Vu, 2018), and the generational shift in mindset with younger generations (men below 40 years old) holding a more favourable view towards female leaders (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2020).

There are a number of doctoral theses (Dang, 2012; T. V. H. Vu, 2018) which I was able to locate discussing women and gender issues in the Vietnamese academia. Similar to previous studies (Do & Brennan, 2015; Funnell & Dao, 2013; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012), these theses found both facilitators and hindrances to the career path of Vietnamese academic women at macro, meso and micro levels. Dang's (2012) major contributions are her elaboration on the gap between gender equality policies and gender practices at the national, institutional, and individual levels in Viet Nam and the impact of Vietnamese culture on women's personal lives and their leadership development process. Meanwhile, T.V.H.Vu's (2018) main findings include her discussion on the interplay among the role of the communist Vietnamese

movement, the lack of a feminist movement and Vietnam's early matriarchal history in shaping a misleading belief that gender equality has been achieved.

While these studies have contributed to a growing literature in women's career in the Vietnamese academic setting and gender relation in a broader context, very little is known about how the complexities in Vietnam's colonial history impact the experiences of women at work. In addition, those studies have not addressed how Vietnamese women construct and perform gender influences their positions at work.

5.3 Forming the research questions

I chose the main research question for my study as follows.

How have waves of colonisation impacted how Vietnamese academic women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes at work?

The sub-questions are:

- (1) How do the cultural, economic and ideological changes impact the way Vietnamese academic women construct and perform gender?
- (2) How does the construction and performance of gender in Vietnam affect Vietnamese academic women's working life?
- (3) How do Vietnamese academic women internalise, reproduce, and challenge the strategies of social control?
- (4) What measures should individuals, educational administrators and policy makers take to tackle gender inequalities in Vietnamese academia?

5.4 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed how the literature from Chapter Two to Four contributes to my focus on gender relations in non-Western contexts, particularly in those with a colonial history, where I can explore the complexities and ambiguities of non-Western gender relations. I subsequently examined the literature from similar contexts including Hong Kong, India and Southeast Asian nations. I then argued that Vietnam is an appropriate context to explore non-Western gender relations at work as gender studies in the Vietnamese context, which are not as voluminous as previously reviewed studies in the context of Asian nations, fit into the overall picture of the postcolonial context. Within the context of Vietnam, the Vietnamese academia in which the colonial powers have left all the imprints, is the suitable site for my research. Furthermore, no current studies, to my knowledge, in a growing literature in women's career

in the Vietnamese academic setting, has examined how the complexities in Vietnam's colonial history influence the experiences of women at work. I therefore presented my research question. In the next chapter, I will present the research methodology.

CHAPTER SIX: METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five, I synthesised the studies on Vietnamese women over the various periods of history, the literature on the understanding of gender from multiple perspectives and the diverse ways that gender inequalities in the labour market are explained to identify the research gaps. I argued that while the voluminous literature has contributed to understanding of gender inequalities in numerous fields including academia, very little is known about how multiple waves of colonialism impact on the experiences of women at work. Therefore, I chose the main research question: “*How have waves of colonisation impacted how Vietnamese academic women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes at work*” for my study, which focuses on a context characterised by multiple colonial waves.

In this chapter, I explain my research methodology in relation to my research question. Some might argue that researchers can separate themselves from the plans and procedures for their research (Phillips & Burbules, 2000; G. Ryan, 2018). However, my understanding of research is aligned with that of Burrell and Morgan (2019), who hold that social scientists at every stage of their research, make explicit or implicit assumptions about how they understand the world and how they know what they know. Therefore, it is essential for me to be conscious of the explicit or implicit assumptions that I have about the world and knowledge while I design a research project in which all the elements of the research process including topic selection, methodological choice, research method, data collection and data analysis are entwined with these assumptions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Three sets of assumptions underpinning all research are epistemology, ontology and axiology (Creswell, 2013, 2018; Saunders et al., 2016). Ontology refers to the nature of reality (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Neuman, 2011; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2008; Saunders et al., 2016) or in the words of Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), “the essence of phenomena under investigation” (p.7). Two broad positions within ontology are realist and nominalist (Neuman, 2011). The world from the perspective of a realist is organised into pre-existing categories just waiting to be discovered while a nominalist assumes that reality is the combination of our interpretations of the world through the lens of inner thoughts, cultural background and subjectivity (Neuman, 2011). The issue of ontology lies prior to and governs epistemological and methodological assumptions (Chua, 1986).

Epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know (Chua, 1986; Crotty, 1998; Myers, 2013; Saunders et al., 2016). It is also concerned with who can be a “knower” or “agents of knowledge” (S. G. Harding, 1987, p. 3) and the relationship between the knower and the world (Spencer, Pryce, & Walsh, 2014). A realist learns about reality by making careful observations. Based on empirical evidence, the researcher can either verify or reject her or his ideas about reality. Meanwhile, a nominalist gains knowledge by offering her or his carefully considered interpretations of specific people in specific settings (Neuman, 2011).

Axiology refers to the role that the researcher’s own values and perception plays influencing the research process (J. Wilson, 2010). The researcher makes her or his axiological choices by addressing a range of questions. For example, To what the extent does the researcher wish to view the impact of her or his own values and beliefs on her/his research as a positive thing? (Saunders et al., 2016); What places do the emotions, expectation and values of the researcher have in the research process? (Spencer et al., 2014); Should the researcher take systemic steps to ensure the research is kept free from these emotions, expectations and values? (Spencer et al., 2014).

The differences in these three sets of assumptions, namely ontology, epistemology and axiology, are often used by researchers to distinguish research paradigms (Creswell, 2013, 2018; Saunders et al., 2016). Therefore, in the first section of this chapter, I distinguish and evaluate three dominant research paradigms using these three assumptions and then I justify my choice of research paradigm which will best answer my research questions in Chapter Five. Next, I argue for the relevance of a feminist methodology in my research and introduce the feminist standpoint. Lastly, I explain the relevance of two research lenses: liberal and postcolonial feminist.

6.2 Research paradigm

Kuhn (2012) defines a research paradigm as “universally recognised scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to community of practitioners” (p.xiii). The achievements served as exemplars for what to do, the kinds of questions to ask, successful applications, and exemplary observations and experiments (Hacking, 2012, p. xxii). Although Kuhn’s (2012) definition was directed to natural science, it has been influential in social science (Paton, 2014). However, there has not been a consensus among scholars in social sciences about what constitutes a paradigm (Freshwater & Cahill, 2013). For example, a paradigm can

be interpreted as a worldview, an epistemological stance, a set of shared beliefs among members of a specialty area and a model example of research (Morgan, 2007).

My understanding of paradigm is based on the definition by Leavy (2014), who holds that paradigms are like “sunglasses, with different colour lenses. When you put a pair on, it influences everything you see” (p.3). In academic terms, “it is an overarching perspective that guides the research process” (Leavy, 2014, p. 3). The choice of paradigm is crucial because it affects the whole research process from choosing the research topic, theoretical orientation, research methodology, research methods, and data analysis (Bryman, 2016; Neuman, 2011). It not only provides researchers with a framework to make sense of social life but also focuses their attention on all sorts of problems which would not arise in other paradigms (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

6.2.1 Critical paradigm

The critical paradigm is often discussed as a strand of radical paradigm whose focus is not only on understanding social reality but also changing it (Grant & Giddings, 2002). The main thinkers associated with critical research philosophy include Plato, Hegel and Marx (Chua, 1986).

The ontological assumption of critical paradigm is that reality is the combination of two components: (1) a deep and prestructured reality, not invented by human and (2) reality constructed by human from their subjective experiences, cultural beliefs, and social interactions (Neuman, 2011). The primary goal of studies with a critical perspective is to “critique the status quo, through the exposure of what are believed to be deep-seated, structural contradictions within social systems, and thereby to transform these alienating and restrictive social conditions” (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 6). The transformation is achieved by empowering people, especially those who are less powerful and marginalised (Neuman, 2011).

With respect to epistemological assumptions, critical philosophers posit that knowledge “is grounded in social and historical practices” (Chua, 1986, p. 620). Similar to interpretive researchers, critical researchers believe in a socially constructed world. However, critical researchers believe that interpretation of the social world is not enough. Researchers need to understand the social conditions, or the systems of social relationships which determine the actions of individuals and both the intended and unintended consequences of those actions (Fay, 2014). Therefore, critical researchers critically analyse the social world using the particular theoretical frameworks they adopt for their studies, instead of merely accepting the

versions of the social world provided by their research participants (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).

Critical researchers tend to prefer phenomena within contexts to statistically modelling of situations (Chua, 1986). They also support a kind of reasoning that is practical, moral, and ethically and politically informed (Schwandt, 2007). The critical researchers' role is "to bring consciousness to the restrictive conditions of the status quo" (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 21). Schwandt (2007) also adds that a critical perspective is self-reflexive. In other words, the cultural and historical conditions on which the critical theorist's own intellectual activity depends is acknowledged. Therefore, Deetz (1996) concludes that among all the paradigmatic orientations, critical studies "have the most explicit set of value commitments and most direct attention of moral and ethical issues" (p.202).

Nonetheless, critical paradigm has been subjected to criticism (Chua, 1986; Myers & Klein, 2011; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Scherer, 2009). A major limitation is that studies with critical paradigm draw on assumptions from neo-Marxism, feminism, poststructuralism, to postmodernism (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008); therefore, a single coherent theoretical foundation does not exist (Myers & Klein, 2011). Chua (1986) further argues that the ambiguity of theoretical foundation extends to the ambiguity of knowledge generated. "Critical theorists do not share common philosophical standards for evaluation of theories. What is acceptable theory or explanation is still debatable" (Chua, 1986, p. 626). Furthermore, there has been criticism even among variants of critical researchers. For instance, feminist researchers criticise other critical researchers' inability to recognise patriarchy as a source of oppression. "Critical theory is not aware of the gender related form of domination and oppression" (Scherer, 2009, p. 44).

In summary, my intention for my research project which aims to explain the unequal labour market outcomes for Vietnamese women has generated my choice of a critical perspective for the research paradigm. The next section underpins this choice with elements of my researcher positioning, helping to explain how these elements also influenced the choice.

6.2.2 Researcher positioning and paradigm choice

Cunliffe (2011) posits that the development in social theories has given researchers a wide range of choices about their work in terms of metatheoretical and methodological options. Therefore, it is necessary for us as researchers to "be mindful of the choices we make and situate our work in a careful and informed ways (p.648). My choice of research paradigm, the critical paradigm, is influenced by my ontological, epistemological and axiological stances

which have been formed through my family background, my gendered upbringing as a Vietnamese woman, and my professional life as an academic working in Vietnamese academia for eight years.

My ontological and epistemological assumptions that “social reality is historically constituted and that is produced and reproduced by people” (Myers, 2013, p. 43) first originate from my observation of my maternal grandmother’s life. She was born in a peasant family in the 1920s, when Vietnam was under the French colonial rule. She lost her parents at a young age and had to work for rich families to earn a living. Therefore, she never had any opportunities to go to school. She was then married to my grandfather at the age of seventeen. When my grandfather was in the forefront of the wars: The First Indochina War against France (1945-1954) and the Vietnam War against the United States (1954-1975), she stepped up to be the breadwinner of the family by working in the rice paddy fields and selling the produce from her garden. She raised four children and took care of her parents-in-law on her own. Despite her lack of formal education, she was an active member of her agricultural cooperative and women’s association during the wartime. She returned to the role of a stay-at-home mother when my grandfather came back from the wars. Her life story motivates me to think about how social reality is historically constituted (Chua, 1986). My grandmother’s role changed from a daughter of a peasant family whose life was restricted by her lower-class status and economic hardship to the breadwinner role, which was traditionally a men’s role in the Vietnamese society profoundly influenced by Confucian values. Her life also inspires me to reflect on how a phenomenon (i.e., my grandmother’s multiple roles) should not be treated as an isolated phenomenon (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Her multiple roles from a typical lower-class Vietnamese woman’s role to a breadwinner role to a proletariat role then to a stay-at-home mother role were bound to the historical and political changes of Vietnam of her time.

My ontological and epistemological assumptions are also influenced by my observations of my mother’s life, my grandmother’s third child. My mother went to a Teacher Training College, became a primary school teacher and then the principal for a primary school in the 1990s, a time when few women took managerial roles. Meanwhile, she struggled to balance her work and life. Vietnamese society, which has been heavily influenced by Confucianism, as a very patriarchal system discussed in Chapter Two, still places pressure on women to be the main caregivers. In addition to her employment responsibilities as a principal, my mother was also responsible for the second shift at home (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). My mother’s success in reaching the top of her career ladder, has shown me a fulfilled potentiality and her ability to

act and change her material circumstance. However, her capacity to enact change was constrained by the cultural authority, the strong Confucian values in the Vietnamese society (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).

Similar to my mother, I was trained to take care of domestic chores while my younger brother did not have to meet the same expectation. I was taught the Four Virtues of Confucianism: *công* (diligence), *dung* (physical grace), *ngôn* (deferential speech), and *hạnh* (faithfulness, proper conduct) from my childhood. While my grandmother's, my mother's and my lives are different in many ways, we all experience the impact of our gender, not as "an 'innocent' social category or an unimportant aspect of our identity. Instead, it may open or close doors in our lives, and limit or broaden our responsibilities to live our life to the fullest" (Järviluoma, Moisala, & Vilkkö, 2003, p. 6).

Additionally, since 2008, I have been working as a teacher at Foreign Trade University in Vietnam. I have developed close friendships with women in my workplace and network with other academic women through conferences, and formal training. I have observed that women have various perceptions about career, career advancement and barriers to their career progress. The observation of my grandmother and mother's lives, the awareness of my gendered being in the Vietnamese society and my interaction with Vietnamese academic women through my professional network triggered my interest in gender inequalities in general and occupational segregation by gender specifically. Having said that, I am aware that each woman has a different career path and not every woman wants to be in any senior role. At the heart of my concern is women's lack of autonomy to pursue different career options. After all, a society can only be "good" or "just" if it embraces individuals' autonomy which can be achieved through a system of individual rights (Calás & Smircich, 1996).

Therefore, differently from the positivist perspective that the researchers need to maintain an objective stance and avoid bringing their bias to their research (J. Wilson, 2010), my choice of research topic is subjective and affected by my upbringing and interactions with my family and colleagues. Furthermore, I agree with Myers that the main task of research is "being one of social critique, whereby the restrictive and alienating conditions of the status quo are brought to light" and it should seek to be emancipatory; in other words, it should help to "eliminate the causes of alienation and domination" (Myers, 2013, p. 43). My purpose in carrying out the research is to not only understand how gender inequalities which limits women's career choice are (re)produced but also make them aware of the ways they are disadvantaged and make

informed decisions about their career. In addition, addressing the injustice that Vietnamese women in the Vietnamese academia endure and “empower the oppressed through conscientizing them, as well as engaging with them in collective action to change the world” (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 18) is also an ethical need to me.

My ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions have best aligned with the critical paradigm. Under a critical paradigm, I chose to adopt a feminist methodology for my research which places gender at the centre of inquiry. Epistemologically, feminist theories recognise women’s (and other historically marginalised groups) experience as legitimate and core sources of knowledge (Spencer et al., 2014). The relevance of feminist methodology to my research is discussed in detail in the next section.

6.3 Feminist methodology

Feminist studies arise from the female critiques of the social sciences which omit or distort the experience of women (D. E. Smith, 1987). Stanley and Wise (1993) criticise social sciences as being “sexist, biased, and rotten with patriarchal values” (p.26). As a result, feminist research occurred to fill in the gap and misinterpretation of the existing knowledges.

The term “feminist” was first used in English in the nineteenth century and its meaning is still a topic of debate. D. M. Ashcraft (2013) defines feminist theory as “a mode of thinking, a set of beliefs that influence our ideas about why women are in subordinate position to that of men and about how to resolve this inequality” (p.2). This study employs the definition of feminism adopted by V. Bryson (2016) as

any theory or theorist that sees the relationship between the sexes as one of inequality, subordination or oppression, and sees this as a problem of political power rather than a fact of nature, and sees this problem as important for political theory and practice (p.1).

The goal of feminist research is to “entertain a critical dialogue that focuses on women's experiences in historical, cultural, and socioeconomic perspectives” (Powers & Knapp, 2011, p. 65), which gives me space to examine the experiences of Vietnamese women in a context of multiple political, cultural, and socioeconomic changes resulting from the specific colonial history. However, as noted by Webb (1993), it should not be mistaken that feminist research is the study of women and/or done by women. Instead, it is research on women and for women whose prime concern is female experience and any theories generated are firmly situated in this experience. As feminist research acknowledges openly the positionality of the researcher and situatedness of knowledge production (Castree, Kitchin, & Rogers, 2013), I have made a

commitment to a high degree of reflexivity throughout the whole research process from my choice of research topic and research paradigm aforementioned in the previous section to data collection and analysis which is discussed in subsequent chapter. While feminist research can be divided into various main groups based on their themes (Powers & Knapp, 2011), what distinguishes feminist research is its methodology rather than its methods (S. G. Harding, 1987).

6.3.1 *Feminist ontology and epistemology*

Within feminist research, ontology and epistemology are intertwined (Hemmings, 2012). The ontological assumption of feminist research is “social relations in which individuals are embedded in, and constituted by, historically unequal political, economic and social structures” (Ackerly, Stern, & True, 2006, p. 25). Feminist ontology challenges the Cartesian understanding of the relationship between the body, the mind and emotions which views reality as the combination of two opposing substances: reason and emotion, masculinity and femininity, to name a few (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Accordingly, feminist researchers hold that these opposing principles have created an ontological framework that endorses patriarchy (Chandler & Munday, 2020). Therefore, in contrast, feminist ontology recognises the differentiation but does not consider them oppositional or dualistic (Stanley & Wise, 1993). With feminist research, ontology stresses the existence of patriarchal social relations and the negative realities these produce for women (Barron, 2006).

One of the negative effects of the patriarchal social relations is that women have been systematically excluded as “knowers” (either intentionally or unintentionally); as a result, there is a need for the establishment of legitimate female epistemological knowledge (S. G. Harding, 1987). Feminist epistemologies foreground the dynamics between knowledge and politics – politics can be characterised by what moves us, rather than that which confirms us in what we already know. This knowing can be gained through challenges to objectivity that prioritise embodiment and location and through a focus on “*knowing differently*” and knowing different things (Hemmings, 2012, p. 151). In addition, “in order to know differently, we have to feel differently” (Hemmings, 2012, p. 150). Hemmings (2012) advocates for an affectively attentive epistemology which “challenges the status of the expert, considers the importance of shared epistemic claims from below, thinks outside of one’s own initial investments in the desire for clearer and more accountable knowledge” (p.151).

Probyn (1993) in *Sexing the Self* highlights the dynamic nature of the relationship between ontology and epistemology and the importance of “experience” in understanding that relationship. She proposes that experience can be made to work at both ontological and epistemological level:

At an ontological level, the concept of experience posits a separate realm of experience – it testifies to the gendered, sexual and racial facticity of being in the social; it can be called an immediate experiential self. At an epistemological level, the self is revealed in its condition of possibility; here experience is recognised as more obviously discursive and can be used overtly to politicise the ontological (Probyn, 1993, p. 14).

The feminist ontological and epistemological positions have offered me a starting point by making explicit my belief and knowledge about gender and power. In addition, I can make sense of my feeling of “ill fit with social descriptions”, “feeling undervalued” and the motivation for “politicised intervention” generated from my gendered upbringing and socialisation processes (Hemmings, 2012, p. 150). They also helped me to adopt a standpoint for my study – the feminist standpoint.

6.3.2 *Feminist standpoint*

In order to explore the Vietnamese academic women’s experience through their own eyes, I choose to take a feminist standpoint for my study. Feminist standpoint epistemology developed in the context of Black feminist, third world and postcolonial feminist challenges to the dual systems of patriarchy and capitalism (Naples, 2013). The concept of a standpoint is associated with a duality of levels of reality: the surface/appearance and the essence, in which the latter can explain the former (Hartsock, 1998). A standpoint carries with it the contention that there are some perspectives on society from which better real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world can be revealed (Hartsock, 1998).

A standpoint in standpoint theory should not be understood as one person’s perspective and automatically gained thanks to one’s biology or social identity. Being female is social location but it does not necessarily lead to a feminist standpoint (Wood, 2009). Instead, a standpoint is both individual and collective (John, 2011). It is “crafted out of struggle, out of engagement, and then becomes a powerful possibility for fuelling a different kind of knowledge in the world” (Bhavnani & Haraway, 1994, p. 37).

Standpoint theorists argue that research should begin from the lives of the oppressed, either natural or social causes (John, 2011) because it can inform us about the aspects which are not

visible from the perspectives of the oppressors (S. G. Harding, 1991). The main reason is that the dominant groups have the privileges of not having to understand the perspectives of the marginalised groups in order to survive (Wood, 2009). In a society where power is organised hierarchically, a person's view is distorted by the way the relations of domination are organised; therefore, the oppressors will try to maintain the unjust conditions that provide them with unearned privileges and power (S. G. Harding, 1991).

Feminist standpoint theories are rooted in Hegel's account of the master/slave dialectic, Lukacs' idea of the standpoint of the proletariat and Marx's class position. They claim that the slave/proletariat has better standing points for understanding oppression and injustice; thus, they have epistemic advantage over the master/the rulers (Bowell, n.d.). Similarly, marginalised women have better standing points for understanding the reality thanks to their marginalised status. Despite being related to the proletariat standpoint, a feminist standpoint which emerges by examining women's activities is going deeper as Marx ignores the sexual division of labour and takes for granted women's responsibility for household labour (Hartsock, 1983). Hartsock (1983) claims that women's activity has a double aspect – their contribution to subsistence and their contribution to childrearing. Women as a sex are forced to become the kinds of people who can do both jobs. Hartsock (1983) adds that the time the (male) proletariat contact with nature is limited to the factory time while much of the work outside the factory is done by women. The feminist standpoint theories also create a decentred subject of knowledge and of history instead of only one kind of homogeneous, oppressed, heroic, and agent of history envisioned by the Marxian accounts (S. G. Harding, 2004).

The original formulation of feminist standpoint theories is based on two assumptions: (1) that all knowledge is located and situated and (2) that the standpoint of women provides a vantage point to get access to social reality (Hekman, 1997). Though there are different assumptions and concerns about taking a feminist standpoint, according to Hekman (1997) the feminist standpoint has five key characteristics:

- (1) Exploring relations between knowledge and power;
- (2) Deconstructing the 'knowing feminist';
- (3) Being grounded in women's experience, including emotions and embodiment;
- (4) Taking account of diversity in women's experiences and the interconnecting power relations between women; and
- (5) Generating partial knowledge.

Hekman (1997) also asserts that despite the fact that feminist theories produce multiple knowledges, women still can work together for specific political goals.

However, standpoint theorists still struggle with the controversy of knowledge claims. S. G. Harding (2004) contrasts standpoint grounds for knowledge with the “God-trick”, ethnocentrism, relativism and the unique abilities of the oppressed to produce knowledge. She argues that standpoint knowledge projects do not claim to perform the “God-trick”. Instead, they acknowledge the social situatedness which is a part of any knowledge-seeking projects. She rejects the claim that the starting point of standpoint theory is superior to the others and that all social situations provide equally useful resources for learning about the world. S. G. Harding (2008) concludes that standpoint theory which uses differences as those of gender, race and class can “provide resources for achieving stronger forms of the objectivity, reliability, and rationality of scientific work than conventional sciences and philosophies of science have produced” (p.114).

A feminist standpoint suits this study as it focuses on women’s experience and acknowledges the diversity of women’s experience. I use my perspective as a Vietnamese academic woman to critically examine the (re)production of unequal labour market outcomes in the higher education sector in Vietnam. Taking the feminist standpoint helps me to gain critical insights about how subordinated women make sense of their marginalisation and of the position of power. The use of feminist standpoint theory in this study also creates grounds for knowledge production. After all, knowledge is supposed to be based on experiences and so different experiences should enable different perceptions of ourselves and our environment (S. G. Harding, 2004). In order to “maximise objectivity”, “strong reflexivity” will be used in this study as S. G. Harding (2004) asserts:

The subject of knowledge – the individual and the historically located social community whose unexamined beliefs its members are likely to hold ‘unknowingly,’ so to speak – must be considered as the part of the object of knowledge from the perspective of scientific method” (p.136).

However, as a feminist from a non-Western country, I face some problems emerging from feminist epistemology.

6.3.3 Perspective from a non-Western feminist

Feminist epistemology resembles the efforts of many oppressed groups to reclaim for themselves the value of their own experience; therefore, its practitioners are different both

philosophically and politically (Narayan, 2004). For example, the essay of (Collins, 2004) on the sociological significance of Black feminist thought offers a helpful argument that the themes included in the Black women's standpoint might be experienced and expressed differently than groups of Afro-American women. Similarly, Narayan (2004) claims that non-western feminists face some problems that western feminists do not due to different social settings and vice versa.

The first challenge is that the non-western feminists must think and function within the context of a powerful tradition which oppresses women while highly praising women's roles of wife and mother and women's qualities. The same tension arises in this study as the Vietnamese culture sees women as second-class citizens whose fate is dependent on their father, husband, and son. Concurrently, women were glorified for their sacrifice during the wartime as discussed in Chapter Two and have been considered the key holders to family happiness under the influence of Confucianism. A common proverb among the Vietnamese people is "Men build houses; women build homes". The second challenge for non-Western feminists is the "double vision" argument which claims that the subordinated groups have an epistemic advantage as they have knowledge of the practices of both their own contexts and those of their subordinators (Narayan, 2004). Nevertheless, the non-Western feminists have to struggle between two different frameworks: their own cultures and practices, and those acquired through Western education. Similar issues can arise for Vietnamese feminists. As a feminist born and raised in Vietnam but attaining higher education in New Zealand, I do not fully reject one context and compliment the other. Instead, I adopt Narayan's (2004) suggestion to examine both contexts critically to gain insights into the problem.

Though the double vision has a dark side, living inside the structures does provide an epistemic advantage (Narayan, 2004). Narayan comments that:

Our commitment to the contextual nature of knowledge does not require us to claim that those who do not inhabit these contexts can never have any knowledge of them. But this commitment does permit us to argue that it is easier and more likely for the oppressed to have critical insights into the conditions of their own oppression than it is for those who live outside the structures (Narayan, 2004, p. 220).

6.3.4 Summary

This research is underpinned by a feminist methodology within a critical paradigm, which allows me to focus on women's experiences through multiple waves of cultural, economic and

ideological changes. Within a feminist methodology, my choice of a standpoint theory is informed by my ontological and epistemological assumptions that research should begin from the lives of the marginalised as the standpoint of the marginalised give better insights into the relationships between political and social power. I am fully aware of possible tensions emerging from my standpoint of a non-western feminist who was born and raised within a context of power Confucian traditions but attained higher education in New Zealand. I consider this “double vision” (Narayan, 2004) an advantage as it motivates me to engage more in “strong reflexivity” to (S. G. Harding, 2004).

6.4 Feminist research lenses

With the intention of examining the gendered labour market outcomes in the Vietnamese higher education sector, bearing in mind the distinctive features of the country’s history, culture, and economic background, I adopt two lenses for my study: the liberal and the postcolonial approaches. I first present the central gender issue through the liberal feminist lens, and subsequently the postcolonial feminist lens before providing the justifications of the relevance of both lenses to my study.

6.4.1 Liberal feminist

The liberal feminist theory has its roots in the eighteenth century with early liberal political theorists such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1792), Harriet Taylor Mill (1851) and John Stuart Mill (1869) (McHugh, 2007). Early liberal feminists claimed that there were few sex differences between male and female; thus, they should be treated similarly. They advocate for equality of opportunities which means opportunities should be given to both men and women at their level of social hierarchy (D. M. Ashcraft, 2013). However, Friedan (1981) suggests that even when women did achieve equality of opportunities, they remained unhappy as they could not “have the best of both worlds” – some of them have to sacrifice private life for professional success. Therefore, second-stage liberal feminism emerged, and feminists started to examine the sex differences (D. M. Ashcraft, 2013).

Despite the different concerns in the past two hundred years, the central characteristics of liberal feminism can be summarised in six key concepts: freedom, choice, rights, equality, rationality and control (Zalewski, 2000). In other words, the themes of liberal feminism have always focused on barriers to women’s education and economic opportunities, women’s access to citizenship rights and equal treatment outside the family and freedom of opportunities in the public sphere (Munson & Saulnier, 2014).

Similar to other feminist schools of thought, the central issue addressed by liberal feminists is that of gender (Munson & Saulnier, 2014). However, what distinguishes liberal feminist theory from others is the claim that women and men have a similar capacity to reason (Jaggar, 1983). Reason, which distinguishes us from the other creatures, is defined by liberal feminists as the ability to comprehend the rational principles of morality (moral aspect) or the ability to calculate the best means to achieve some desired ends (prudential aspect) (Tong, 2013).

Liberal feminists argue that women's subordination results from gender stereotypes (Zalewski, 2000). Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the key Enlightenment philosophers described men as "active and strong" and women as "passive and weak". He also claimed that "woman is especially constituted to please man", as a result, she should be "obedient and industrious" and women's education should be relative to that of men in order to "please them, to be useful for them and to make them happy" (Rousseau, 1895). The pleasure giving role of women of Rousseau (1895) has long been rejected by Mary Wollstonecraft (1792). Wollstonecraft (1792) reasoned that men would develop the same characteristics of women if they were in the same "cage" (Tong, 2013). Mill (1869) not only blames women's subordination on faulty education but also adds that the rule of men over women is accepted voluntarily. As women's subordination is considered universal, attacking the universal opinion is difficult (Mill, 1869). O'Brien (1983) shared Mill's view and claimed that the sex differences (biological) are gender differences (cultural) and gender is a sex-appropriate socialisation of the individual.

Therefore, liberal feminists advocate for the rights of women to be treated like men and do what men do such as voting and running for office (Zalewski, 2000). Mill (1869) proposes providing women with education as it could help change their self-perception. They would no longer consider attracting, obeying, and loving their 'masters' as the main goals of their life (V. Bryson, 2016). Other solutions to tackle the problem include accessible and adequate childcare, reproductive rights, job retraining, workplaces free of sexual harassment and equality in education (McHugh, 2007) as gender oppression is also caused by the lack of or limited access for women to good jobs, gender stereotypes, and legal constraints (Calás & Smircich, 1996). After all, a society can only be "good" or "just" if it embraces individuals' autonomy which can be achieved through a system of individual rights (Calás & Smircich, 1996).

When employing a liberal feminist approach for my study, I am fully aware of its shortcomings. Early liberal feminists fought for equality of opportunity, which is gained once the number of

men and women at each level of hierarchy is equal. However, many women are still not happy even when they gain access to the masculine world. Some women who delayed having children regretted not having them while the others who had children struggle to achieve a work-life balance (D. M. Ashcraft, 2013). Moreover, critiques of liberal feminism argue that the success in both domestic and work spheres of some women come at the expense of other women who are usually working-class and are forced to work in domestic and child-care jobs at low rates of pay (Weedon, 2007a). The failure of the “equality of opportunity” might be due to unchanged social structures. It is difficult for women to win in a game using men’s rules. Furthermore, liberal feminists are still criticised for accepting male values as human values (Tong, 2013). Liberal feminism’s conception of self is rational and autonomous, but it is fundamentally a male conception (Tong, 2013). Liberal feminists also fail to acknowledge the importance of other forms of power such as class, race, and heterosexism as they affect choices which hinder their effectiveness in bringing about change (Weedon, 2007a). In addition, they see the status of women as individual accomplishment (Calás & Smircich, 1996). Lastly, liberal feminists are criticised for focusing mainly on the needs and interests of middle-class women and ignoring minority women and women of lower socioeconomic status (D. M. Ashcraft, 2013).

In summary, the liberal lens is appropriate in this study as the aspects of liberal feminism such as equality of opportunities and gender equality have been reflected in the formation of some international conventions such as CEDAW and the efforts of governments worldwide including the Vietnamese government to dismantle gender discrimination. Its explanations for women’s subordination are in line with explanations by various studies on gendered occupational segregation in Chapter Four. However, there are some weaknesses in the theory, so it has not fully explained the cause as well as the persistence of gender inequalities. Therefore, it is necessary for me to employ more than one approach to my study on Vietnamese academic women’s career in the Vietnamese tertiary education sector. Specifically, I also employ the postcolonial feminist position which takes into account the historical, cultural and social factors to critically examine the issue.

6.4.2 Postcolonial feminist

Although liberal feminism has successfully drawn scholars and policy makers’ attention to making “the rules of the game fair” (Tong, 2013, p. 2) for women, it has been criticised for downplaying the differences of class, race, sexuality and location between women (Weedon, 2007b). Moreover, gender and gender issues have been portrayed from the perspectives and

experiences of women and men in the First World (Calás & Smircich, 1996) or global North (Alcoff, 2017). Therefore, postcolonial feminism has emerged to highlight non-Eurocentric epistemic standpoints from the diverse perspectives of members of communities in the Third World or global South (Parekh & Wilcox, 2020). Postcolonial feminist theorisation is closely associated with global feminism, Third World feminism, transnational feminism and ethics of care feminism and there have been no sharp boundaries between those strands. Nevertheless, postcolonial feminism is characterised by the following key claims.

Firstly, drawing from postcolonial and feminist theories, postcolonial feminism acknowledges the economic, cultural, political and historical processes which have shaped the local practices in developing countries particularly in connection to Western colonialism and imperialism (Parekh & Wilcox, 2020). The recognition of colonial content enables scholars to respond to a range of social, cultural, political, ethical and philosophical questions that address the salience of the colonial experience and its persisting consequences (G. Jack, Westwood, Srinivas, & Sardar, 2011). Moreover, the highlight of colonial experience allows research to examine the multifaceted phenomena of gender issues because colonialism, which encompasses political, economic, cultural and psychological colonisation, political and cultural decolonisation, neo-colonialism, post-colonialism, imperialism and post-imperialism, is a gendered process (Moane, 1999). Moane (1999) argues that in a colonial context, violence, political exclusion, economic exploitation, sexual exploitation, control of culture, divide and conquer are patterned differently for men and women. Colonisation functioned not only as military violence and economic control but also as a discourse of domination (Said, 1994). Colonialism in combination with patriarchy make domination even worse for women as they become more dependent and powerless in a colonial setting (Moane, 1999).

Even after former colonised nations gained independence, women, particularly in developing nations, still suffer the ongoing double colonisation (Rutherford & Petersen, 1986), namely neo-colonisation and patriarchy. These neo-colonisation practices, brought to developing countries by multinational corporations and global businesses during the globalisation processes, have been enacted through Western business models, hegemonic culture, exploitation of workers, and displacement of traditional trades (Scholz, 2008). Therefore, it can be argued that post-colonial women in contemporary society have not had a break at all. Even worse, they are experiencing triple colonisation - the aftermath of traditional form of colonisation, the consequences of neo-colonial practices and patriarchy. As a result, the

utilisation of a postcolonial feminist approach can unveil multiple sites of oppression and to reject universalisms around gendered experiences of women (and men) (Parashar, 2016).

The second contribution of postcolonial feminists is the appreciation of other conceptualisations and subjectivities beyond the knowledge of mainstream Western feminism (Calás & Smircich, 1996). The early influential postcolonial feminist theorists include Mohanty (1988) and Spivak (1988) who claim that in discussion of “women as an oppressed group”, Western women are the ‘true subjects’ while third world women “never rise above their generality and the ‘object’ status” (Mohanty, 1988, p. 351). Mohanty (1988) argues that experiences of different groups of women in the third world have been homogenised and systematised by Western feminists and suggests that culture, ideology and economic conditions should be analysed. She calls for the rewriting of history based on the specific locations and history of struggle to articulate knowledge of the “Others” who are categorised as inferior, hence, subordinated by the dominant groups through the process of “othering” (Schwalbe et al., 2000). The “Others” from postcolonial perspective are the Third World women who are often portrayed as backward, ignorant and passive recipients of Western knowledge (Calás & Smircich, 1996).

Pande’s (2015) study on the practice of arranged marriages from the perspective of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women resident in Britain exemplifies the need of employing a postcolonial feminist approach to gain insights beyond Eurocentric knowledge. In opposition to simplistic analysis that arranged marriage is an indication of the Third world women’s oppression, Pande (2015) interprets her informants’ skilful negotiation with their family on their desired partners in arranged marriages as sign of resistance. Pande (2015) argues that this approach let her think about agency in a more complex way. Agency should not be recognised at the moment of resistance but also in ordinary life interaction and negotiation. Therefore, postcolonial feminism can offer scholars a space to articulate agency, and the strategies of resistance among women in different contexts.

However, there are inconsistencies in how early postcolonial feminists conceptualised some themes. For example, the term subaltern voice (Spivak, 1988) attracts many debates. It emerges in postcolonial feminism to refer to marginalised groups imposed through patriarchies, nations, states, empires, political economy and neo-colonisation. It is first used by the Italian Marxist political activist Antonio Gramsci to refer to any low rank person or group of people in a particular society who suffer from hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies

them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation (Louai, 2012). The term is extended by Guha (1982) who founded and led the Subaltern Studies Collective. He defines subaltern as “the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (Guha, 1982). To Guha, the term constitutes the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those who we have described as the elite (Louai, 2012).

Spivak (1988) in the famous essay “Can the subaltern speak?” raises the question “who speaks for whom?” (p.284). She is sceptical about the possibility of the subaltern to speak and insists that any attempts to retrieve the female subaltern consciousness are doomed to fail because multiple levels of oppression have made the subaltern voiceless. The various levels of oppression include dominant foreign groups, dominant indigenous groups and dominant indigenous groups at regional and local levels (Spivak, 1988). Apple and Buras (2006) argue that not only can the subaltern speak but they are also speaking right now. Thus, the question should be “How can we hear the subaltern? And how can we help the others to hear the voices?” (Asgharzadeh, 2008, p. 342).

I am also aware of the risks while taking the postcolonial position. Postcolonial feminism is also criticised by the “beyond gender” argument within critiques of neo-colonialisms to avoid co-optation and trivialisation of gendered issues (Calás & Smircich, 1996). Some western feminists also disagree with postcolonial feminists’ tendency to overstate the homogeneity of western feminism (V. Bryson, 2016). Similarly, postcolonial feminists need to be cautious so as not to fall into their own trap of overstating the homogeneity of the subordinated women.

In conclusion, postcolonial feminism explores the interconnectedness of colonialism and neo-colonialism in relation to gender, class, race, and sexualities in the different contexts of women’s lives, their subjectivities, work, sexuality, and rights. “Rather than blindly embrace or reject Western theories, postcolonial feminists in their best moments have successfully anchored these theories in historically and geographically specific social realities” (Rajan & Park, 2005, p. 66).

6.4.3 Summary and justifications of the relevance of the two approaches to the study

In order to examine Vietnamese academic women’s experience, a feminist orientation has been adopted. My early literature review on the context of Vietnam has shown many aspects of liberal feminist ideals adopted by the Vietnamese government to tackle gender inequalities

such as the enforcement of the 2006 Law on Gender Equality, the 2007 Law on the Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence and the ratification of CEDAW in 1982. My research topic and research question are drawn from the notion that men and women are born equal and are free to make their own choices which originates in the theme of liberal feminism to see individuals as apparently free, autonomous, and rational subjects. Parts of the literature review have already offered explanations for women's subordination and underrepresentation in the academic sector such as gender stereotypes and lack of training for women but have not provided a clear and broad picture of the issue. Therefore, the use of a single theory is insufficient to explore and provide solutions to the problem.

A review of the research context in Chapter Two earlier also reveals distinctive features of the Vietnamese history which have affected gender issues in Vietnam. As a country which underwent a thousand years of colonisation by China, the Vietnamese society has still been organised and characterised by values of Confucianism. Confucianism views that "a woman's duty is not to control or take charge" or "Woman's greatest duty is to produce a son" (Munro, 2012). Every Vietnamese woman is expected to practice the three Confucian obedience as daughters to obey their fathers, as wives to obey their husbands, as widows to obey their eldest sons (Funnell & Dao, 2013). During the French colonisation period, women's position in both private and public sectors was considered to be inferior to that of men. A. Q. Nguyen (1925), in his famous essays "The Trial of French Colonization" reveals the abuse Vietnamese women suffered caused by the French officers. A. Q. Nguyen (1925) reports a case when a Vietnamese girl was brutally raped and murdered but the French offender was not arrested because the victim was Vietnamese. After Vietnam has gained independence and economic conditions improve, women's subordination is still widespread. Patriarchal oppression can still be observed in the contemporary setting. Many girls in the remote areas do not have access to education; they must drop out of school and get married at very young ages (Viet Nam News, 2013). It can be concluded that Vietnamese women have been subordinated not only by gender but also by patriarchies and colonisation. Colonialism and patriarchy reinforce each other as systems of domination (Moane, 1999) for Vietnamese academic women. Therefore, the post-colonial lens fits this study as it enables me as the researcher to examine women's subordination through patriarchies, nations, states, empires, political economy and neo-colonialism. Moreover, since solutions offered by the liberal feminism approach do not offer a solution to address the persistence of gender inequalities, there is a need for commitment to location and historical, social and cultural specificity. In the end, Third World feminists "need

to challenge the larger pictures of Nation, National History, and Cultural Traditions that conceal their own historicity and their own status as representations instead of replicating the Western agendas” (Weedon, 2007b, p. 293). Both postcolonialism and feminism “share the mutual goal of challenging forms of oppression” (McLeod, 2000, p. 174).

To sum up, a single approach is not sufficient to explain the causes of gender inequalities in the academic sphere in the Vietnamese context. Moreover, it is impossible to interpret a phenomenon without investigating its historical, cultural and social context. A single theory will be insufficient to interpret Vietnamese women’s experience, especially in the contemporary social setting. In today’s world, new forms of domination such as cultural imperialism and interdependence among poorer and richer nations still appear despite the fact that the golden age of colonisation has long gone (V. Bryson, 2016). My position is drawn from the view of a liberal feminist which considers the gender issue as the central issue and believes in the similar capacity of men and women to reason. Meanwhile, my aim is to raise the voice of Vietnamese women in the new context of social, cultural and economic integration of Vietnam through the adoption of the postcolonial feminist lens. A feminist standpoint position viewed through the lenses of liberal and postcolonial feminist can identify the social structures which maintain inequalities, critically analyse them and tackle the problem.

Although the debate has not yet been finalised, there are some aspects of the postcolonial lens which fit my study. As this school of thoughts focuses on people who are subjected to colonisation and their persisting effects to raise their voice about the oppression, it allows me to explore Vietnamese women’s subordination under the domination of colonisation and patriarchy. As a result, Vietnamese academic women might have a chance to make their voices heard about their subordination.

6.5 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I evaluated the suitability of critical research paradigm for my research. The evaluation demonstrates that critical paradigm is the best fit with my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. Within the critical paradigm, I drew on a feminist methodology as it enables me to examine Vietnamese women’s experience as “a problem of political power rather than a fact of nature” (V. Bryson, 2016, p. 1). I adopted two research lenses, the liberal feminist and postcolonial feminist. I started with a liberal lens which believes in the similar capacity of men and women to reason because as a Vietnamese woman, I have experienced and observed gender inequalities in various aspects of life. My initial goal

was to advocate for equality of opportunities, equal treatment, and freedom of choices for women and men. Furthermore, equality of opportunities and gender equality, which is closely linked to liberal feminism, have been reflected in the efforts of the Vietnamese government to dismantle gender discrimination. However, while liberal feminism allowed me to focus on gender inequalities at an individual and organisational level, it has not fully explained the causes as well as the persistence of gender inequalities or considered Vietnam's historical, cultural and social factors. Therefore, I employed the postcolonial lens to observe the waves of changes in Vietnam's social, cultural, and economic background in relation to gender issues. In Chapter Seven, I will present the process of the research: the qualitative methods to data collection, the process of data collection, data analysis and ethical consideration for the research.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

7.1 Introduction

Following the discussion of the philosophical assumption underpinning this research as well as the research methodology and lenses, this chapter presents the research methods – “the specific practical measures and tools employed to access or create data through different forms of interaction with those we are studying” (Barbour, 2014, p. 7). First, I introduce the qualitative methods of data collection. This is followed by the specific approach to the qualitative methods I adopt for my research, the narrative inquiry. Then I describe the research process including selection of participants, sampling strategy, narrative interviews, and the thematic analysis I have used to analyse the narrative data. The next section presents the ethical considerations that guided the entire research process. The chapter ends with a discussion of trustworthiness of my research. Using the notion of a research onion by Saunders et al. (2016), Figure 7.1 below illustrates the interconnections of my feminist methodology.

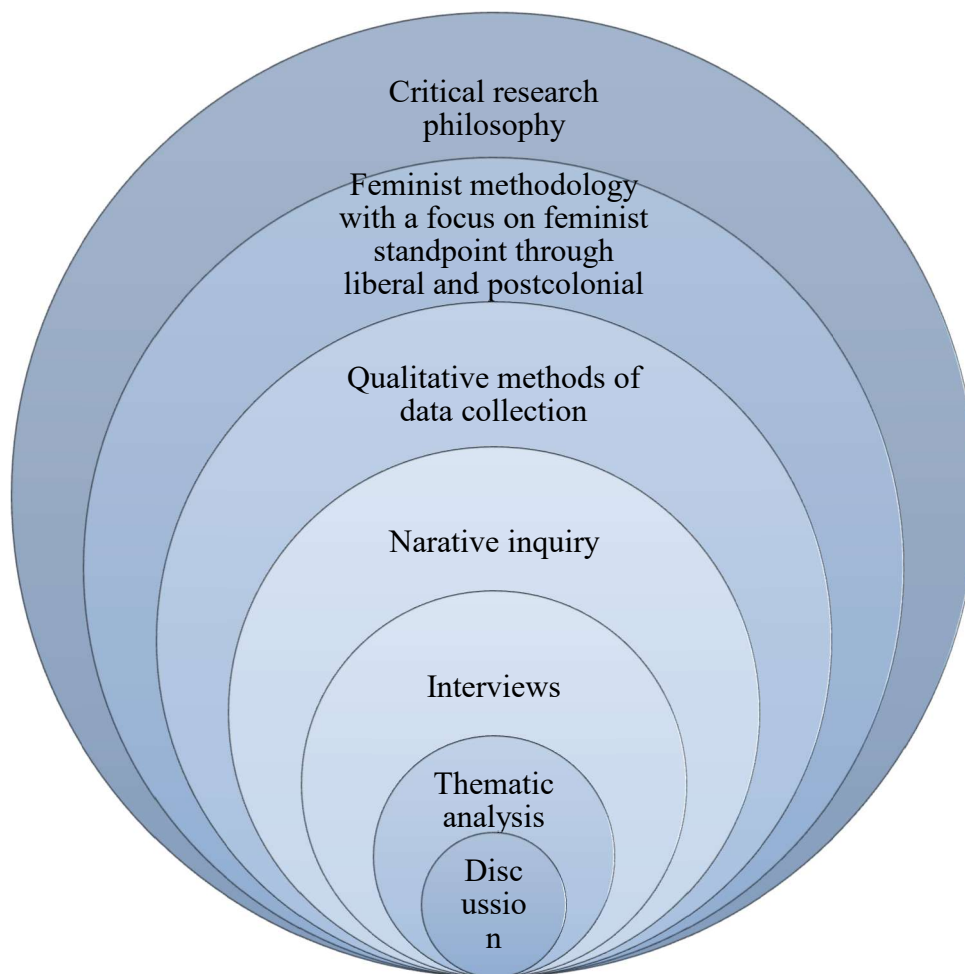


Figure 7.1: My research onion

7.2 Contrasting qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection

I chose the qualitative method of data collection with a view to gaining insights into how social reality is produced and reproduced (Myers, 2013). Bryman (2016) defines qualitative research as “a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (p.374). As discussed in Chapter Six, the qualitative method fits my ontological position as my focus is to examine the way women interpret the unequal labour market outcomes through the construction and performance of gender, to gain in-depth understanding about aspects of their social life, and to explore new or under-researched areas and search for connections between individuals/groups and institutional/cultural contexts (Leavy, 2014). The qualitative method also aligns with my epistemological assumption in the sense that it considers the interactions between individuals as a source of knowledge production (Bryman, 2016; Leavy, 2014).

Qualitative methods are different from quantitative methods which emphasise the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Data collected by the qualitative methods is richer and deeper than the numerical data collected by the quantitative methods (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Qualitative researchers study humans in their natural settings, get closer to their perspectives, pay their attention to the specifics of particular cases and are concerned with the rich description of the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). As a result, qualitative studies can provide unique and valuable insights into the social world that other methods cannot access (Barbour, 2014). Quantitative research is done from within a value-free framework while qualitative researchers stress the intimate relationship between the researcher and the researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). As a part of its rigor, my qualitative research includes the disclosure of qualitative analyses (Attride-Stirling, 2001) and my self-disclosure and reflexivity (Wertz et al., 2011).

On the whole, the qualitative method of data collection aligns with my ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological assumptions presented in Chapter Six. The specific approach to the qualitative methods I adopted for my research is narrative inquiry (Riessman, 2008) as I am interested to learn about the way Vietnamese academic women construct and perceive their world (Bruner, 1996).

7.3 Narrative inquiry as a method to study women’s experience

Narrative inquiry was selected for this study to explore Vietnamese academic women’s experience of unequal labour market outcomes. Although the term “narrative” may carry

different meanings to scholars in different disciplines, it is often used synonymously with “story” (Riessman, 2008). Narrative in social science research is defined as “a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004, p. 27). A narrative research approach is one of the five approaches to qualitative research together with phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study (Creswell, 2013). The important feature which distinguishes narrative inquiry from other qualitative approaches is that narrative inquiry “focuses closely on particular cases and the various contexts of production of data” (Riessman, 2011, p. 310) while the other approaches focus on the concept/phenomenon and the essence of the lived experiences of persons about that phenomenon (phenomenology), developing a theory (grounded theory), describing a culture shared by groups (ethnography) or examining an issue with a case to illustrate the complexity of the issue (case study) (Creswell, 2013). Bochner and Riggs (2014) also argue that “in the human sciences, we are supposed to be studying people, observing their lived experiences, and trying to understand their lives, and narratives come closer to representing the contexts and integrity of those lives than do questionnaires and graphs” (Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 198).

The main claim for the use of narrative inquiry is that the “human condition is largely a narrative condition” (Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 195); as a result, narrative inquiry can illuminate real-life experiences through the stories of the research participants. Following this line of thought, narrative inquiry from a feminist perspective can reveal unequal conditions women experience due to gender, race and class (T. Miller, 2017). Meanwhile, humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006).

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477).

Another reason for the use of narrative approach, as noted by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), is the rich description of human experiences and an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences. However, Czarniawska-Joerges (2004) suggests that we are not the sole authors of our own narratives. She illustrates this position by using an example of an introductory meeting in which a new head of department introduced herself to her collaborators. Czarniawska-Joerges (2004) argues that the way the new head of department

talked about herself was the way she wanted to be perceived by her collaborators. Their reactions told her how much of her narratives was accepted or rejected, and how the members of the group wanted to be perceived by the new boss. This is called “positioning” and this positioning will continue as long as these people work together (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004). Similarly, in the research context, both the researcher and the participants co-construct the stories (Riessman, 2011) or in Bochner and Riggs’s (2014) words, “the teller and listener collaborate in sense-making” (p.203). In addition, narrative inquiry recognises the researched as agentic and performative narrators and allows their voices to be heard (Chase, 2005; D. West, 2013). Frank (2000) notes that the narrative researcher illuminates the underlying narrative that the storytellers may not, themselves, be able to give voice to themselves. The figure below summarises the procedures of the study under narrative inquiry.

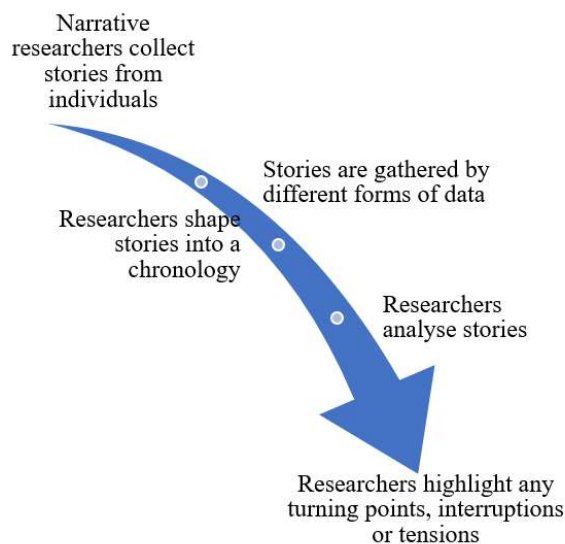


Figure 7.2: The procedures of narrative study

Note: Adapted from *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* 3rd ed. (p.71-72), by Creswell (2013), Thousands Oak, CA. SAGE Publications. Copyright (2013) by John W. Creswell.

Firstly, the narrative researcher collects stories from individuals (or from documents and group discussion) about individuals’ experiences, through which the researchers might understand the individuals’ identities and how they see themselves. The stories emerge not only from the participants but also from the interaction between the researchers and the participants. The researcher then organises the stories chronologically even if they are not told that way by the participants (Creswell, 2013). Narrative stories, as noted by Creswell (2013), often contain

turning points or specific tensions or interruptions that are highlighted by the researcher in the telling of the stories. The turning points are often meaningful moments or experiences that have either positive or negative effects on the research participants' life (Denzin, 1989). Context is important to narrative researchers and it includes the social context of the interview itself (Miller, 2003).

The narrative approach is consistent with the feminist standpoint epistemology which acknowledges the standpoint of women. It fits the study's objectives of eliciting the Vietnamese academic women's self-perceptions and examining their experience of gender inequalities preventing them from progressing in their career. Data collection that focuses on narratives and stories enables me to portray and render research settings and contexts in a vibrant and lively way that illustrates the lived experience of the Vietnamese academic women and my interpretations in terms of reflexivity (Stokes, 2015). As a method, the narrative inquiry also allows me to attend to the disruptions and contradictions of my research participants' stories (for example, their contradictory perceptions of gender inequalities in the Vietnamese academia), the turning points in their stories (for example, their moments of resisting unequal treatments due to their gender) and the deconstruction of stories (how I "re-story" their accounts) (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Therefore, it can be argued that the narrative inquiry provides me with a richer description of Vietnamese academic women's experience of gendered labour market outcomes and adds another layer to my data analysis (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004).

To obtain narrative data in my research, I used interviews although I am aware that narratives appear in everyday settings, not just in research interviews (Riessman, 2011). I adopt the definition of E.E Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) of interview as "a face-to-face verbal exchange, in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons (p.449). I now describe my research process.

7.4 Research processes

7.4.1 Selecting participants

Unlike a quantitative study which employs the standardisation of procedures and random selection of participants to remove the potential influence of external variables and ensure generalizability of results (Sargeant, 2012), the participants in this qualitative study were chosen based on some criteria which could inform the research questions (see Chapter Five) and enhance an understanding of the phenomenon under study. Firstly, they were academic

staff or academic staff who held both teaching and administrative positions from Vietnamese universities and institutes. Secondly, the age of participants ranged from 23 years old (newly graduated) to 55 years old (official retirement age in Vietnam). In addition, the level of education of participants varied from a bachelor's degree to a doctorate. The diversity of participants in position, age and education background enables me to gain a wide range of perspectives and the level of subordination women experienced at various stages of their career. It also allows "various voices" (Myers, 2013, p. 123) to be represented which fits the methodological approach that I take – the feminist standpoint as discussed in Chapter Six.

7.4.2 *Sampling strategy*

Based on the appropriateness of the study, my target population was academic staff from public universities in Vietnam so academic staff from private or foreign-owned universities were not included in this research. First, public universities which account for 72 percent of HEIs (MOET, 2019a) have stronger ties with Vietnam's social and economic development in terms of governance, curriculum and funding (M. T. Ngo, 2019; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2020). Meanwhile, private and foreign-owned universities which constitute 28 percent of HEIs in Vietnam, have weaker links to Vietnam's history. Both private and foreign-owned universities were only founded in the late 1980s and early 1990s due to the implementation of Doi Moi reform in 1986, which aimed to build a socialist oriented market economy, as discussed in Chapter One. Therefore, the influences of the colonisation periods on private and foreign-owned universities might not be as visible as those on public universities, many of which were first founded during the French colonisation period and developed under Soviet influences. Furthermore, in terms of academic staff, many of foreign-owned universities' faculty members, for example, those at RMIT Vietnam, are non-Vietnamese (RMIT Vietnam, n.d.). For these reasons, public universities were considered to be a better site for me to explore the way Vietnamese academic women experience unequal labour market outcomes today due to the multiple waves of colonisation in Vietnam.

I began the study with convenience sampling (Saunders et al., 2016). Because I had worked in Vietnamese academia for eight years, I had access to a professional network of academic staff in my own university as well as those in different universities that I met through conferences and training workshops. Then other participants were identified through a snowball sampling method (Saunders et al., 2016). The initial participants were asked to recruit other people and they were made fully aware of the confidential and voluntary nature of the research project. When the potential participants agreed to take part in the interviews, they responded directly

to me as the primary researcher through the contact details provided in the invitation letter which was passed to them by initial participants.

I sent my invitation to Vietnamese academic women from different ethnic groups because as discussed in Chapter Two, Vietnamese society is diverse with 54 ethnic groups with Kinh people constituting 87% of the country's population. However, I managed to identify only one academic woman from a smaller ethnic group in my network and did not receive her response to my invitation. Therefore, all participants in my study, 28 Vietnamese academic women, were from the Kinh group. The recruitment of female academic staff from ethnic groups other than the Kinh people was challenging because few of them are working in academia or obtain the required qualifications for academic jobs. For example, the K'ho and Co-tu communities, two ethnic minority groups in the middle of Vietnam, only had their first Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) holder only in 2017 and 2019 respectively (VTV News, 2017, 2019).

The sample size in this study, 28 in-depth interviews with Vietnamese academic women working in various fields including language teaching, economics, accounting, and natural sciences, was not predetermined. The number of participants depended upon the number required to inform fully important facets of the phenomenon being studied. Once there was no new insight generated and the point of saturation was reached, no further interviews were conducted (Myers, 2013). However, I am aware of the dangers of premature closure. Therefore, careful data analysis and active identification of negative, extreme, or deviant (an exception or variation and does not fit into existing categories or support relationship statements) were carried out to increase the trustworthiness of the findings (Powers, 2010). The negative, extreme, or deviant cases in this study were participants who (a) never experienced gender inequalities (b) experienced an extreme level of gender inequality.

7.4.3 Pilot study

The purpose of the pilot study is to test the feasibility of the study plan, look for potential problems and issues in the research methods and approaches and enable them to be modified before using them in the main study. This can limit the waste of time and resources (Stokes, 2015). A pilot study was carried out before the large-scale study was undertaken. It involved an individual face-to-face interview with five respondents. The number of the pilot study participants was approximately 10 percent of the number of respondents in some published qualitative studies on gender discrimination in the academia (Chesterman, Ross-Smith, & Peters, 2003; Johansson & Śliwa, 2014). The pilot study was carried out one month before the

large-scale interviews to allow me sufficient time to conduct the interviews, transcribe the data and do some preliminary analysis.

The pilot study in this research brought my attention to the need to clarify the aim of my research to the participants before the interview even though I had already provided them with the information sheets. For example, in one of my pilot interviews, my interviewee referred to some questions as “difficult”. For example, she responded that she had no right answers to the question about formal or informal criteria to gain promotion in her organization. She shared concerns with me that she might not be the right research participant for the study as she was a novice teacher with three years of experience; as a result, she had little experience in career progression. I reassured her that my aim was to learn about the perspectives of academic staff at different stages of their career and I was interested in hearing what they think, not a search for the ‘right’ answers. Furthermore, the pilot interviews also provided me as a novice researcher an opportunity to be trained on interview techniques including the appropriate wording in the interview and the ways to create rapport with research participants. I learnt to use more question words such as “What do you think”, “Why”, “How” instead of the yes/no questions as the interviewees during the pilot study tended to give short answers especially with the yes/no questions. I noticed the need to add the questions for clarification and elaboration such as “Can you tell me about ...?”, “What was it like?”, explain jargons clearly and use clear definitions of terms such as “glass ceiling”, “mentor”, “equal opportunities”. I also learnt how to encourage participants to talk more by creating more rapport and showing more positive body language such as nodding or giving a smile of understanding.

The pilot study participants were not re-interviewed in the main study because of the concern that they had already been exposed to an intervention and, therefore, may respond differently to those who had not previously experienced it (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). The data from the first interview of the pilot study were discarded due to the loss of data richness. However, data from the rest of the pilot study were retained for final analysis.

7.4.4 Individual interviews

7.4.4.1 Co-construction of knowledge through narrative interviews

The next step was to carry out in-depth narrative interviews with academic women from five public universities in Vietnam. E.E Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) define interview as “a face-to-face verbal exchange, in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons (p.449). The employment of

interviews in this research allows me to “understand the world from the subjects’ points of view and to unfold the meaning of their lived world” (Kvale, 2006, p. 481). Furthermore, Vietnamese academic women’s lives, their experience in academia, and their career paths could be known through interviews (Weiss, 1994).

In-depth interviews are considered as a method of collecting accounts and providing “culturally embedded normative explanations” of human experience (Orbuch, 1997). However, interviews not only provide information on subjective meanings but also are a base for knowledge production. J Miller and Glassner (2016) comment:

Yet we argue here that they [interviews] do more than provide information on cultural and subjective meanings. Rigorous analysis of accounts provides two intertwined sets of findings: evidence of the nature of the phenomenon under investigation, including the contexts and situations in which it emerges, as well as insights into the cultural frames people use to make sense of these experiences. Combined, they offer important insights for theoretical understanding (p.56).

Although there are several ways of collecting the information such as face-to-face, telephone, e-mail and MSN messenger (Opdenakker, 2006), I chose face-to-face interviews because I could have synchronous communication with my participants in time and place. Furthermore, I could gather not only their stories but also social cues such as voice, intonation and body language (Opdenakker, 2006). The social cues revealed extra information about the interviewees’ behaviour and opinions, which made my data set richer.

The interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes to give the interviewees sufficient time to “reconstruct their experience, put it in the context of their lives, and reflect on its meaning” (Seidman, 2013, p. 24). If the duration of the interviews had been less than 60 minutes, I would not have been able to achieve “deep” information and understanding. The “deep understanding” I sought is the understanding about the nature and the contextual boundaries of my participants’ experience (J. M. Johnson & Rowlands, 2013).

The language of the interviews was Vietnamese as I was inspired by an anthropological perspective that language is associated with culture and the social system which are conceptualised in language (Evans-Pritchard, 2004). As a result, when my participants and I communicated in our mother tongue, Vietnamese, we could have a better understanding of the meanings of the words in the conversations.

The interviews in this study were semi-structured for its advantage of being able to “make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee” (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 21). It is essential to make the interviewees comfortable to open up and talk as the more interesting the story is, the better it is (Myers, 2013). Therefore, at the start of the narrative interview, I encouraged the research participants to talk about themselves, and shared their stories about the reasons they chose an academic career. Interview questions were developed from key themes in the literature review on the construction and performance of gender and gendered labour market outcomes as discussed in the previous chapters. A similar set of questions for participants was provided but new questions emerged from the interview (Myers, 2013). The new questions focused on the elaboration of their experience or the reasons for a specific career choice. As a result, the use of semi-structured interviews made the co-construction of narratives by both the participants and me possible and allowed me to be visible as a knowledge-producing participant in the process (Brinkmann, 2013).

The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. While I was conducting the interviews, I kept a record of participant demographic characteristics to ensure I had a range of participants at different stages of their career. A brief example of participant demographic features is given in Table 7.1 (See Appendix B for the full list).

Table 7.1: Participant demographic characteristics

Participant	Experience in academia (years)	Marital status	No. of children	Partner’s job	Qualification	Job title
1	12	Married	2	Lecturer	MA	Lecturer
2	2	Married	1	Engineer	PhD candidate	Teaching assistant
3	Over 20	Married	1	Self-employed	MA	Senior lecturer
4	17	Married	2	Businessman	MA	Lecturer
5	22	Married	2	Lecturer	Assistant Professor; PhD	Vice president

I adopted D.C.Jack’s (1999) *open listening* within interviews to help me understand the interviewee’s stories from her perspective. Using an open listening approach, I attended to the factors that influence us both such as the social realities of power, economic, race and privilege (D. C. Jack, 1999). Furthermore, I paid attention to fleeting impressions such as a participant’s eyes, and tone of voice. In addition to open listening, I adopted *focused awareness* by attending

to the interviewees' words, asking for clarification of words and phrases when necessary and taking none of the meaning for granted (D. C. Jack, 1999). I embraced *reflexive listening* by attending to my body's response when the stories entered my body as part of conscious reflexivity.

7.4.4.2 Rapport with the participants through the insider status

My insider status as a Vietnamese academic woman in my thirties provided me with opportunities to create rapport with my research participants and consequently access valuable knowledge which might be more difficult to reach from outside, thus bringing authenticity to my project (Griffith, 1998).

Since I started working in Vietnamese academia in 2008, I have developed close friendships with women in my workplace and networked with other academic women through conferences, and formal training. My insider status provided me with ease when approaching the potential research participants as noted in the previous section.

Also, it was less challenging for me to connect to my research participants because my participants often assumed that we had a shared understanding of Vietnamese academia. For example, when I asked a research participant, a senior lecturer with eight years of experience as an academic staff, six-year as a professional staff and three-year in a non-academic industry, her answer was:

This is not my first job. When I graduated from University [A], I worked in company [A] for three years. I accumulated some industry experience. Salary outside academia is quite high, *you know*. But lots of pressure.

When we moved to the conversation on changes she wanted to see in her workplace, she commented:

Salary, of course. *As you know*, lecturers have fixed income only, unlike the other researchers who do not work in universities.

In her response, she used 'you know' and 'as you know'. Had I not worked in the Vietnamese academia, she might have been less likely to assume that I knew the salary range.

In addition to employment background, age might be one of my advantages to create rapport with my participants. Age is an object that shapes social relations and influences the interview dynamic and interaction (Vasquez-Tokos, 2017). As a woman in my thirties, I had no difficulty

connecting with the youngest participant (in her mid-twenties at the time of the interview) and the oldest participant (in her early sixties at the time of the interview).

However, being a Vietnamese female academic did not guarantee immediate access to all my participants as there are sub-groups within my community. Within my participants, there are groups of working parents, single parents with children, and unmarried professionals. Griffith (1998) illustrated the complexity of the insider/outsider debate by quoting Zinn (1979). Zinn (1979) carried out research on the Mexican American community and she claimed her insider status thanks to being a Latina. However, she had difficulties in gaining access to the mothering group who recognised her shortcomings – the inability to sew.

Therefore, in order to promote rapport with my interviewees, I shared with them my personal information about my relationship status and my experience as an academic staff. I agree with (Oakley, 1981, p. 49) that there is “no intimacy without reciprocity”. When I discussed the expectation that Vietnamese parents have of their daughters, I shared with my participant who was single and in her mid-twenties about my own parents’ expectation:

Me: I remembered when I told my parents about my plan to pursue my Ph.D., they were not that thrilled. They really wanted me to have children, then I could do whatever I wanted. What about your parents? Have they put any pressure on you?

Interviewee: Neither my father nor my mother puts any pressure on me. But I am 27 years old now. My mom is a bit worried. She told me, “you are going to be 30 soon, you can study further but you should also focus on your personal life.”

Although we had an age gap and different marital statuses, my self-disclosure to her might have made her view me as the kind of person who had similar experiences to her own and feel more comfortable talking about her personal matters.

Self-disclosure also helped me to create rapport with another participant, a single woman in her fifties. I invited her to participate in my study through another connection. Therefore, it was difficult for me to connect to her in the beginning because we did not know each other. However, our exchange of experiences and frustration about how single women are stereotyped created our connection.

Me: I met my partner late in my life. When I was still single, my colleagues always told me, “You have free time, you should take part in those activities”. I was not lazy, but sometimes I wanted to concentrate on my other plans. For example, I needed to spend

a lot of time working on my Ph.D. proposal. However, people thought that if I were single or if I didn't have any children, I would have more free time than others. I felt I was assigned too much work because of that stereotype.

Interviewee: I was in the same situation. Sometimes I get frustrated. I said there is no need to mock me for not having a husband. Sometimes they told me to do a certain task because I am single; thus, I am free.

After the phase of data collection finished, I transcribed the interview tapes. Although each recorded conversation took me from six to eight hours depending on the length of the interview, I found that listening to them several times and transcribing them manually allowed me to recall what had happened during the interviews and avoid neglecting interviewees' emphasis and tone. For example, when I listened to and transcribed the narrative interview of a single female academic, I noticed her voice trembled during her discussion of the family pressure on her career choice and marriage. Noticing the variations in her voice created spaces for me to "excavate meaningful stories to (re)tell" in data analysis and interpretation later (J.-H. Kim, 2016, p. 185). Furthermore, the manual process also increased my closeness with the data. The time spent on transcribing data enabled me to develop a more thorough understanding and prompt early thoughts on preliminary analysis.

Once data were transcribed, they were sent to participants to check whether any mistranslation arose. A member-checking technique was employed after the preliminary analysis stage to confirm my interpretation of participants' experience and allow them to expand on an idea or explain the thought process behind their statements. It is considered to be the most critical techniques for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The member-checking technique helps me to examine the experiences of Vietnamese academic women in the most accurate way (Creswell, 2013).

7.4.5 Thematic analysis as my way of analysing narrative data

Mason (2018) refers to the process of organising and interpreting data as "practising a craft, the craft of knowledge" (p.216). Thorne (2000) considered data analysis as the most "complex and mysterious" phase of a qualitative study (p.68). A study's credibility can be achieved if data analysis is conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). However, the researcher in a qualitative research project is the instrument for the analysis. She or he will make judgements about coding, categorising, decontextualizing and recontextualising the data (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Therefore,

methods of analysis and the assumptions made by the researcher should be disclosed so the reader can evaluate the trustworthiness of that study (Nowell et al., 2017).

I chose thematic analysis as a foundational method in this study to make sense of the meaning of my participants' narratives. V. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (p.79). Thematic analysis used to be considered “a poorly demarcated, rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic method within psychology” (V. Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77) but now it “has been recognised as a method in its own right” (Joffe, 2012, p. 210).

I chose this method due to its flexibility in application across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step framework to approach my data.

Table 7.2: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: V. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87)

Firstly, the familiarisation process already started when I transcribed the verbal data into written form, as discussed earlier. I subsequently read, re-read and re-re-read the transcripts and my field notes to actively search for narrative meaning. The next phase was the production of initial codes from the data. I conducted coding manually as I believed I could capture the meaningful stories better than using a software programme. The decision for my manual transcribing and coding processes was also based on my axiological assumption that a researcher does not stand in an objective and neutral position to present what was said (J.-H. Kim, 2016).

I then assigned labels, either a word or a group of words, which summarise a sentence, a paragraph or a piece of text (Myers, 2013). Coding is a part of the analysis (Myers, 2013) as it

helped me to organise my data into meaningful groups. I highlighted various phrases in different colours corresponding to different codes. Each code describes the idea or feeling expressed in that part of the text. An example of my initial coding is given in Table 7.3 below.

Table 7.3: Initial coding

Excerpt from interview transcript for participant 13	Codes
<i>Q: Could you please tell me what makes you choose academia?</i>	
A: I chose academia because I think teaching benefits the society. It equips students with knowledge and help them grow. And I think I can contribute partly to that growth. Also, becoming a teacher is following my family’s footsteps. Both my mom and dad are teachers, so I become a teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching benefits the society • Parents’ strong influence on children’s career choices.

After that, I created a code book with a list of codes, their description, and the examples from the transcripts. The table below shows a brief example of my list of codes.

Table 7.4: Examples of the list of codes

Code	Description	Example
1. Teaching benefits the society	Participants refer to their perception of teaching as a profession serving noble causes.	<i>Participant 13</i> : I chose academia because I think teaching benefits the society. It equips students with knowledge and help them grow. And I think I can contribute partly to that growth.
2. Parents’ strong influence on children's career choices	Participants discuss the influences of their parents in choosing their career.	<i>Participant 8</i> : My parents were teachers, so they already had a plan for me. When I was in high school, my parents chose X for me because it provided me with the foundation for the Pedagogical University later.
3. Career-personality fit	Participants refer to the fit between their personalities and a career in academia	<p><i>Participant 3</i>: I think teaching really fits my personality. I’m not an aggressive and competitive person. Instead, I’m hardworking. So I think it is the right fit.</p> <p><i>Participant 8</i>: When I was in Pedagogical University, I started teaching and I thought that it really suited me. That’s why I continue with this career path.</p>

My prototype themes were built on the codes generated from the second step.

Table 7.5: Examples of prototype themes

Theme 1 Gender roles based on primary relationships	Theme 2 Power motivation	Theme 3 Experiences of gender inequalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents’ strong influence on children career choices • Husband’s strong influence on wife’s career choices • Flexible work arrangements preferred to suit family needs • Structured identity around motherhood • Intensive mothering practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent career goals • Prefer teaching and doing research to managing people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No experience of gender discrimination • Preference for male leaders • Negative perception of female leaders • Unequal task distribution due to being single

However, the process of constructing themes is not static but a continuous one as themes were constantly reviewed.

I then formed meta themes, themes, and subthemes from the prototyped themes. My choices were informed by my review of literature on gender construction and gender inequalities in the labour markets in Chapter Three and Four and research lenses in Chapter Six.

I utilised Braun and Clarke’s (2006) recommendation to identify the story each theme tells and consider how it fits into the overall story that I told about my data. The stories which I identified and told reflected the “individual package” that I brought to the data analysis (Barbour, 2014, p. 221). Drawing from the feminist standpoint, my stories focused on power relations and presented Vietnamese academic women as marginalised groups. As a feminist researcher, my personal, lived experience and situated perspective influenced how data were analysed and reported.

During the data analysis phase, I adopted Keating’s (2010) suggestion on listening with raw openness. Keating (2010) argues that we can be very quick to judge each other – often in negative, extremely harsh terms. “Yet these judgements are driven by overly simplistic, status quo thinking based on stereotypes that invite us to look at a person, label her, and categorize her based on these labels” (p.93). Therefore, it is vital that everyone’s “complex personhood” is acknowledged. “Every person we encounter has a specific, highly intricate history, an upbringing and life experiences that we cannot fully know. We don’t know the forces that shaped her and, at best, we can only partially ascertain her intentions and desires” (Keating,

2010, pp. 93-94). Additionally, I did not build themes on the number of people with similar answers. I'm sensitive to the inconsistencies and variations among the narratives to have deeper look into the data. Finally, I presented themes in my interviewees' narrative stories based on my research lenses: liberal and the postcolonial feminist.

7.5 Research politics and ethics

The next aspect of the research process is the politics and ethics of the study. Politics refers to "the overall motivations, objectives, impact and outcomes of research" (Wickramasinghe, 2010, p. 47). Social research by nature is political. Clough and Nutbrown (2012) comment:

All social research sets out with specific purposes from a particular position and aims to persuade readers of the significance of its claims. These claims are always broadly political (p.4).

Clough and Nutbrown (2012) add that worthy research must bring about some change. They argue that research which changes nothing, not even the researcher is not research at all. The change can be in the researcher herself/himself, the researched or the user of the research (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012).

This research project on women's careers in the Vietnam academia is carried out in the hope of making a difference to policy and to the professional development of myself as a researcher and of the research participants. The study on the underlying causes of gender inequalities among Vietnamese academic women may be useful in policy development at both organizational and governmental level to tackle gender inequalities in the Vietnamese society. My interaction with the participants might influence their attitudes and perceptions towards gender issues, and career development. This research might become a stimulus for future research in gender inequality and strategic human resources management in Vietnam with various methodological approaches. For me as the primary researcher, it allows me to have a deeper understanding of self.

While the purpose of social research in general is to search for new and better knowledge, which is regarded as a social good or benefit (Jupp, 2006), the research process creates tension between the aims of the research and the rights of the participants (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Therefore, "judgements about power, justice and transformation of what is unjust have to be balanced against tolerance of contradiction and respect for differences" (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 21). Harm to the stakeholders of the research can be prevented and reduced if researchers follow codes of ethics which provide rules, standards or

guidance on what is and is not acceptable in practice (Jupp, 2006). Therefore, I obtained approval from the Waikato Management School's Human Research Ethics Committee prior to collecting data from the participants. Approval for Ethics Application WMS 18/44 was granted on the 13th of April 2018.

Among the ethical concerns of social researchers are the informed consent and the rights to privacy (Jupp, 2006). Obtaining consent involves informing the subject about their rights, the purpose of the study, procedures to be undertaken, potential risks and benefits of participation, expected duration of study, extent of confidentiality of personal identification and demographic data, so that the participation of subjects in the study is entirely voluntary (Nijhawan et al., 2013). It is a process not just a form (Nijhawan et al., 2013). I am fully aware of the importance of informed consent; thus, before prospective participants participated in the research project, they were provided with all information relevant to their decision to participate. This included the participant information sheet which outlined the research project, what each participant was expected to contribute, their ability to refuse to answer questions or remove themselves from the study, and how the findings would be distributed following the conclusion of the study (see Appendix C).

The Participant information sheet together and the list of interview questions (see Appendix E) were sent to the participants before the date of the interview. When they agreed to the interview and signed the consent form for participants at the end of their interview. They could choose not to answer some, or all the questions during the research interview. They had the option to withdraw from the study at any time before the data were analysed. The transcripts of the interviews were provided to the participants after I finished transcribing, so they could verify as well as correct any information if they wish. The preliminary analysis and the summary of the findings were sent to participants upon request.

The other way of resolving ethical issues is the employment of anonymity in social research. Anonymity refers to “the process of not disclosing the identity of research participants” and is one way to apply confidentiality (Vainio, 2013, p. 687). To achieve confidentiality, the researcher must not discuss any information provided by research participants with others and present findings in such a way that research participants cannot be identified (Vainio, 2013). During the data collection of this study, the names of the participants and the organisations were recorded for the researcher's usage; however, their identity was presented anonymously in the written thesis or any presentations or journal articles. However, Brinkmann and Kvale

(2017) note that in some cases interviewees who have spent their time and provided valuable information to the researcher might wish to be credited with their full name. Some non-anonymity advocates argue that non-anonymity would give “voice” and empower the participants. Vainio (2013) refutes this argument and argues that “stigmatized groups are devalued in the society also because other members of society interpret negatively the messages of those who have been labelled as members of stigmatized groups and can even use them as a means for social control” (p.688). She adds that instead of negating the power of the research participants, anonymity gives them more freedom to express their opinion. Given the topic of gender inequalities might be sensitive to some participants due to their different levels of experiencing gender inequalities, the application of anonymity in this project is appropriate. In addition, participants were made fully aware that by voicing their experience, better human relations with each other and with the natural world were revealed (Hartsock, 1998); hence, better insights were gained, and participants could choose whether or not to enact the new insight into their own life.

Ethical issues in this research project have been clearly addressed in order to achieve “objectivity”, which means “letting the subjects object to what we do to them and say about them” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2017, p. 269). The treatment of ethical concerns as a part of the practice of research and the demand to be objective in research will synchronously be conducive to good knowledge production (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2017).

7.6 Research trustworthiness: My commitment to reflexivity

Feminist researchers have recognised the role of the researcher in the process of knowledge production (Wickramasinghe, 2010). Wickramasinghe (2010) suggests that reflexivity can give validity, methodological rigour, and credibility to a research study. Reflexivity also fits well with my ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological assumptions discussed in the previous chapter.

7.6.1 Notion of reflexivity

Cunliffe (2016) defines reflexivity as the act of “questioning what we, and others, might be taking for granted – what is being said and not said – and examining the impact this has or might have” (p.741). Lykes and Hershberg (2012) argue that individuals’ self-reflection and their reactions to others can reveal diverse types of knowledge. For example, it can “unmask complex political/ideological agendas hidden in our writing” (Hertz, 1996, p. 7). However, that

self-reflection should be placed within the personal, social and cultural contexts as they impact how one views and interprets the world (Etherington, 2004).

The act of reflexivity should start from the formulation of the research ideas to the publication of the outcomes (Jupp, 2006). However, reflection usually stays at a conscious level (Etherington, 2004), but the researcher's unconsciousness does affect the research outcomes; hence, the researcher needs to engage critically with all aspects of the research process (Wickramasinghe, 2010).

A researcher can reflect consciously during the research process in several ways. Individual reflexivity of the researcher writing herself/himself on the text calls for the researcher to highlight the personal feelings involved in the research project, and the time and energy devoted to writing up (Wickramasinghe, 2010). Although it does not allow the researcher to access her/his unconsciousness, it can reveal the "hesitancy, uncertainty and caution arising from researchers' understanding of the theoretical complexities of a particular topic" (Wickramasinghe, 2010, p. 57).

Conscious reflection can also be achieved through collective reflexivity, in which the researcher and participants reflect on the meaning of the experience under investigation, on feedback on research methods, and the encompassment of readership reactions and on the meaning of the research after being published (Wickramasinghe, 2010). Etherington (2004) discusses the significance of enabling other people and ourselves to give voice to our experience by quoting her participant "a kind of circulating energy between context of researcher and researched ... so we both got agency in this" (p.32).

Reflexivity is not only a methodological but also a moral issue (Etherington, 2004) as it allows the researcher to develop an awareness of the moral dilemmas and share them with the readers (McLeod, 2001). The use of reflexivity at all stages of the research process can enhance the trustworthiness of the findings and the outcome of the research (Etherington, 2004). Bishop and Shepherd (2011) suggest that researchers should be encouraged to be reflexive and provide these reflections to public scrutiny.

7.6.2 Reflection on the formation of the research ideas

As mentioned in Chapter Six, my gendered being as a Vietnamese woman, my family, and my professional life as a Vietnamese academic attracted me to my research focus upon Vietnamese women's experience of inequalities in academia. In addition, my education background, Bachelor of Business and English and Master of Business provided me with knowledge in

management, and research methods in general. My masters thesis on examining the existence of glass ceilings in the Vietnamese banking sector made me familiar with the topic of women's unequal labour market outcomes. Hence, my choices of research field and methods were guided by my training and reading on the topic. Moreover, the training in different knowledge traditions and ideologies has also helped to form my methodological standpoints. In addition to different aspects of my identity, personal incidents also play a role in shaping my interests in and sensitivities to certain theories in literature.

7.6.3 New emergent identity and the influence on the interest in the theoretical lenses

During my doctoral study in New Zealand, I had to find a part-time job to cover some of my living expenses. I remembered vividly my friend's advice when I applied for several jobs and failed. She told me to change my name to an English name. "With your Vietnamese name on the CV, they will not want to hire you because they don't want to hire someone whose name they can't pronounce", she said. Although my failure in job application could be attributed to various factors except for my name, that incident made me more conscious of my social location. From being in the dominant group in my own country (Kinh group, the majority ethnic group of Vietnam, comprising 86% of the Vietnamese population), I have become the 'others' in this country. My new social location has brought me a new perception of marginalisation and increased my sensitivity to the notion of the "otherness" (Beauvoir, 1953).

7.6.4 Dilemma during my data collection: "Objectifying your sister?"

My commitment to the feminist approach and my intuition guided me through a challenge during my data collection. It was when I interviewed a female academic in her thirties who was holding both academic and middle management positions in her faculty. When I asked her a demographic question about how many children she had, she said none. I had to make a quick decision whether to ask her if being childless is by choice or not. I might acquire rich data about the relationship between choosing to have children and advancing in her career. However, I chose not to ask her. I had the intuition that being childless was not her choice. Therefore, if I asked her such a question, it might have deeply saddened her if she had faced infertility or the loss of an unborn child. My intuition comes from me being a Vietnamese woman who chose to have children later in my life, I have been asked again multiple times by my family, friends and even colleagues about my plan to have children. I understood the frustration those questions might cause; thus, I decided not to pursue that further. In addition to my intuition, my choice of not pursuing the matter was based on my commitment to the feminist approach that the researcher should be "mindful of hierarchies of power and authority in the research

process” (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 3) and my disagreement with one viewpoint that the interviewee is an object or data-producing machine (Oakley, 1981). If interviewees are considered only data-producing machines, interviewing might become an exploitative practice and objectify the interviewees.

7.6.5 Data analysis and interpretation: The problem of speaking for others

During my data analysis and interpretation, I attempted to increase the trustworthiness of my research by reviewing two aspects of my methodology: legitimate authority and representation.

Feminist research is “a set of representations, both in ways in which research is communicated and, in the tendency to represent the experiences and situations of individual women, identifiable interest groups, and general populations” (Roof, 2007, p. 425). Researchers have made attempts to “let voices speak for themselves”, “to give voice” or “to make voices heard” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 1). As a feminist researcher from a non-Western context, my ambition was to make the voice of Vietnamese academic women heard.

However, there is a doubt among researchers about the trustworthiness of speaking for others. The doubts arise from the social location of the speaker (Alcoff, 2009). Alcoff (2009) argues that the social location/social identity of the speaker affects both the meaning and the truth. She also acknowledges the risks of certain privileged locations. “In particular, the practice of privileged persons speaking for or on behalf of less privileged persons has actually resulted (in many cases) in increasing or re-enforcing the oppression of the group spoken for” (Alcoff, 2009, p. 118).

However, the privilege experienced by virtue of membership in certain groups in society might sometimes be overlooked. McIntosh’s (1988) essay on privilege perceptions resonate strongly with me. McIntosh (1988) observes that her male colleagues acknowledged the disadvantage experienced by women in comparison with men, but they were hesitant to admit the advantage they experienced as male. Her observation made her consider the privileges she might enjoy but fail to recognise. Her essay leads me to think of certain privileges that I might have. As a Vietnamese woman from the biggest ethnic group in Vietnam – the Kinh group, which takes up more than 86 percent of the Vietnamese population, I have the privileges of being in the dominant group.

To a certain extent, the story of privileged white feminists challenged by women of colour, lesbians and women from formerly colonised areas repeats itself. I adopted Borland’s (2007) suggestion to cultivate humility by “acknowledging our privilege within the research

encounter, by ceasing to claim our research improves the lives of those we study, and by recognising the gap between a researcher's intention and the actual consequences of her work" (p.622). I was cautious not to make a claim that my study speaks for all the women in Vietnamese academia or all academic staff in formerly colonised countries. Otherwise, my study only reinforces the status quo between women from the privilege and the subordinated groups.

However, the acknowledgement of my social location and privilege allows me to interrogate prevailing representations rather than reproducing them (Bhavnani, 2007). I took Bhavnani's (2007) idea of the researcher being aware of the "limited location" and analysing the micropolitics of the research situation. I am also aware that the intellectual foundation of my research has been significantly based on the Western world's theorisation. I found Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) discussion on the positional superiority of Western knowledge and the production of indigenous elites by colonial education relatable because I can relate it strongly to my own context. The colonisation period and then the globalisation of knowledge reaffirms the view of the West itself and by the formerly colonised areas as the source of legitimate knowledge. As a researcher who pursues my postgraduate degrees in the Western world, I might sometimes find my cultural interests and values more aligned with the Western knowledge rather than those of my own society.

In summary, being reflexive has given me chance to retrieve and articulate different forms of knowledge, rediscover myself and experience personal growth. It not only allowed me to take an inward journey to rethink the past, present and future (Hamdan, 2012) but also provided me with insights into the interconnections between myself and others, between different structures that shape my personal identity and my worldview. Reflexivity gave me chances to rethink my political agendas (Bishop & Shepherd, 2011) when choosing and pursuing the topic. I found Collins' discussion of the Black feminist thought relevant to my agenda - to rearticulate a pre-existing Vietnamese women's standpoint and "recenter the language of existing academic discourse to accommodate these knowledge claims" (Collins, 1989a, p. 772).

7.7 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that the qualitative method of data collection fits my ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological assumptions as discussed in Chapter Six. It is also the appropriate method to answer my research question as my goal is to gain in-depth understanding about how waves of colonisation have impacted the way Vietnamese academic

women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes at work. I then gave reasons for the specific approach to the qualitative methods I adopted for my research, narrative inquiry which could provide rich description of Vietnamese academic women's experiences and explore meanings that they derive from their experiences. In section 7.4, I described the research process including sampling strategy, the conduct of in-depth interviews and finally thematic analysis to analyse narrative data. In the final section of Chapter Seven, I demonstrated my commitment to reflexivity as my way to maintain research trustworthiness. I reflected on every aspect of my research from the formation of the research ideas to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Such reflexivity shows that both the research participants and I as the researcher participated in the co-creation of knowledge, which is an inherent part of qualitative research. In the next chapter, I will analyse the data using the liberal feminist lens.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE LIBERAL FEMINIST INTERPRETATIONS OF VIETNAMESE ACADEMIC WOMEN'S CONTRUSCTION AND PERFORMANCE OF GENDER AND WORK

8.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter was largely concerned with the steps in the research process including the use of narrative inquiry as my method of data collection, sampling strategy, my conduct of semi-structured interviews and my employment of thematic analysis to analyse narrative data. I also discussed the ethical considerations for my study as well as my commitment to reflexivity to increase research trustworthiness.

In this chapter, I analyse Vietnamese academic women's experiences from the liberal feminist lens. Key concepts of liberal feminism relevant to this research include used in analysis are freedom, choice, rights, equality, rationality (Zalewski, 2000). As seen in Chapter Six, the themes of liberal feminism have always focused on barriers to women's education and economic opportunities, women's access to citizenship rights and equal treatment outside the family and freedom of opportunities in the public sphere (Munson & Saulnier, 2014). Therefore, my analysis from the liberal feminist lens has a strong focus on women's choices and rights to equal treatment and access to opportunities in the public sphere.

I begin this chapter with a description of the demographic characteristics of my research participants to contextualise their perspectives. Data analysis reveals two meta themes in relation to individual and organisational factors. Therefore, I then present the themes concerned with the construction and performance of gender at an individual level. Finally, I discuss themes associated with organisational factors which hindered or facilitated women's career.

8.2 Demographic characteristics of research participants

My research participants include twenty-eight female academics from five public universities in Vietnam (see Appendix B for a detailed description of the demographic characteristics). Most of my participants (56%) were married and have one to two children. Five were single and three were either divorced or widowed.

In terms of age, the biggest group aged between thirty-five to forty-four accounted for 42 percent of all academic staff. The number of participants aged from twenty-five to thirty-four and from forty-five to thirty-four made up approximately a quarter of the total interviewees. Only one interviewee was more than fifty-five years old. Although the age of retirement in

Vietnam is fifty-five years old (Castel, 2009), this participant was included because she still worked as a visiting lecturer at the time of the interview.

With regard to education background, almost half of my participants had a master’s degree, and more than half (57%) were either Ph.D. candidates or already earned a Ph.D. The dominance of academics either holding or going to earn a Ph.D. reflects the growing rate of Ph.D. holders in Vietnamese academia which only requires the attainment of a master’s degree to enter academia (T. K. A. Le, Hayden, & Nhan, 2019; Ngoc Linh, 2021). One-fifth of female academics in my study were associate professors but none of my participants held a professorship.

As regards job titles, approximately two-third of participants were either junior lecturers, lecturers, or senior lecturers. A quarter of them were holding middle-management positions such as head of department, vice dean, dean. One female academics used to be the Vice President and one was the Vice President at the time of the interview. No participant held the highest level of management position, president.

8.3 The construction and performance of gender at an individual level

This meta theme is associated with the construction of gender and the performative acts in the workplace among my participants that either facilitated or hindered women’s career as J. McDonald (2016) suggests that gendered performative acts are strongly linked to occupational segregation. The key concepts used in this section is freedom of choices which is associated with liberal feminists’ concepts of personal autonomy - “living a life of one’s own choosing” and political autonomy - “being co-author of the conditions under which one lives” (Baehr, 2020, p. 1). The themes from my participants’ narratives are summarised in the table below.

Table 8.1: Performative acts from liberal feminist perspectives and their impacts on women's career

<i>Enhancers to women’s career</i>	<i>Barriers to women’s careers</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of women’s abilities • Support from colleagues • Personal efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction of managerial and leadership positions as undesirable • The construction of managerial and leadership positions as unfit for women

8.3.1 *Enhancers to women’s career*

Data analysis reveals that the academic women in this study linked their career success to women’s similar abilities and knowledge to men’s and their personal efforts.

8.3.1.1 Acknowledgement of women's abilities and skills to be in the management positions

Despite the dominant view that women were unfit for managerial and leadership position as presented in the previous section, a theme emerging from my participants' narrative is that women were competent in management positions, which reflect what others have found in relation to changes in gender stereotypes for women in management (Badura, Grijalva, Newman, Yan, & Jeon, 2018; Duehr & Bono, 2006). The acknowledgement of women's competence shows in my participants' observation of women's and men's similar capacity to reason (Jaggar, 1983) and the appreciation of women's traits.

The similar capacity to reason between women and men was illustrated in Participant 28's narrative who was in her mid-career. She felt that women were as visionary as men and sometimes even outshone men in envisioning which is defined as "the ability to recognize new opportunities and trends in the environment and develop a new strategic direction for an enterprise" (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2009, para.1).

I think this perception [men are more competent in leadership roles because women focus too much on details while men are more visionary] is very common among people around me. Men are often chosen for leadership roles than women. But do you know that nowadays many women are excellent. They are as visionary as men. I have met some women who even exceed men in terms of envisioning.

As women were perceived to have similar capabilities as men or in some cases, even better than men at organisational skills and envisioning, their chances to advance to management roles were *equal* according to some participants' observation.

There are both male and female leaders in our organisation. The president is a man, but the vice president, the head of labour union or the head of many departments are women. I think there are equal opportunities (Participant 2).

There is no gender discrimination in promotion criteria (in my university). When we vote for some positions, we always need to maintain a certain ratio of men and women (Participant 5).

Furthermore, Participant 23, a novice lecturer at the early stage of her career, observed no differences in the leadership style of her previous dean (a man) and her current dean (a woman). She even appreciated her current dean better due to her perception of her female dean as 'understanding'.

Both of them [the previous dean and the current dean] are strict and pay attention to details so I see no differences ... But I think my female dean is more understanding. When I just got married, she understood [my need to spend time with my husband as newlyweds] and did not assign me with too many tasks.

Participant 2, 23 and 28's narratives highlight some noteworthy points. First, even though they acknowledged women's traits, abilities and skills, their appreciation of their leaders appeared to generate from their female leaders' performance of the typical ideals of femininity (e.g., caring, communal) described in prior research (Bosak et al., 2008; Moss-Racusin, 2014; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). The appreciation of this gendered act might contribute to the (re)production of normative gendered social expectations about how men and women should and should not behave (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012). Second, male leaders were perceived to be the standard image of leadership, as illustrated in Participant 28's use of the expression 'as visionary as men'. Thirdly, Participant 2 and 5's interpretation of 'equal opportunities' was men in top positions (president) and women's in middle management positions (heads of departments, vice president) and the maintenance of a certain ratio of women in leadership positions. These interpretations, which appeared to mirror the Vietnamese government's effort in ensuring a certain percentage of women in leadership positions (Nhan dan, 2021), might put women academics in my study under the risk of being "tokens" (Chesterman & Ross-Smith, 2006, p. 540) instead of having actual "political autonomy" as interpreted by liberal feminists (Baehr, 2020).

8.3.1.2 Support from peers

A less common factor reported by participants is the importance of support from their peer. This kind of support is different from formal mentoring, a practice that a mentor is assigned to the mentee by the organisation (Desimone et al., 2014). Similar to formal mentoring, participants perceive the support from peers beneficial to their career experience especially when they first started their career (Participant 2) or joined a new workplace (Participant 1). The benefits of support from peers are illustrated in the extract as follows.

When I first joined the faculty, I asked several colleagues to let me observe their classes. The ones that I asked are those who had strong academic knowledge and ready to share their knowledge to everyone else. When I stayed in their classes, I noted down what I observed and reflected on my teaching style. I learnt from them through the lens of a student. I also learnt the way they communicate with their students as well as the

materials they used in their lessons. I highly appreciate those who let me observe their classes as I know, not everyone is willing to do so (Participant 2).

I'm very happy to meet my new colleagues who not only become my friends but also encourage me to join research groups with them. Had I not had them, I would have stayed the same (Participant 1).

The benefits of peer support have been confirmed by various studies in academic settings (Bayfield, Colebrooke, Pitt, Pugh, & Stutter, 2020; S. Lee, 2017; Merga & Mason, 2021; T. V. H. Vu, 2018). Similar to prior research, participants in this study gained skills and be more confident on their ability to pursue a career. While peer support is advantageous to academics, narratives from Participant 1 and 2 shows the support came from personal initiatives rather than being initiated and moderated by institutions.

8.3.1.3 Personal efforts

The final theme emerging from the work domain at an individual level is my participants' perception of success as a result of the individual abilities and efforts they made during their career from education attainment to organisation of tasks. Personal efforts are also reported by other research in the Vietnamese academia (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012; T. V. H. Vu, 2018) and other contexts (Meyer et al., 2019; Twombly, 1998). For example, Participant 12 the hardship she had to overcome in order to be able to go overseas for her higher education.

My journey to attain higher education overseas was very challenging. I had to put much effort and be very persistent.

Likewise, Participant 15 attributed her career progress, the attainment of the title of associate professorship, to her hard work and her abilities to multitask after childbirth.

I worked until the day I delivered my daughter. I returned home from the hospital only after two days. After ten days, I returned to work and marked a hundred assignments. I think there was nothing extraordinary about it. Everyone [in country X where she pursued her higher education] did the same. Six months after birth, I worked on research projects, and wrote journal articles. It was a common perception that women could not complete anything [after childbirth], but it [the common perception] was my motivation to work.

While prior research has confirmed a positive link between hard work, and perseverance and career success, my participants' performance of working hard, and multitasking highlights that

in order to become successful, women had to follow a Western concept of an androgynous worker who has few domestic responsibilities and can devote her time to work (Bailyn, 2003a; Górska, Kulicka, Staniszevska, & Dobija, 2021). The experience of successful women in this study also might legitimate and normalise this practice (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2014) and prevent other women from progressing in their careers.

8.3.2 *Barriers to women's career*

This section discusses the construction of managerial and leadership positions as undesirable and unfit for women (Bosak et al., 2008; Moss-Racusin, 2014; Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Rudman et al., 2012) among my research participants. This construction appeared to be associated with their low career aspiration and disinterest in career advancement.

8.3.2.1 The construction of managerial and leadership positions as undesirable

Narratives from my participants suggest that they constructed managerial and leadership positions as undesirable, which was shown in the fact that they appeared to be 'less determined' and 'make less effort' than men in their career (Participant 13). Furthermore, they had no career goals (Participant 6, 10) and had no interest in being promoted to a managerial or higher level of managerial positions (Participant 1, 3, 4, 9, 18, 24, 28). This finding is in consonant with prior research in Vietnam (Dang, 2017; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012) or in Asian settings (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Luke, 1998; Morley & Crossouard, 2015). Two main reasons for the construction of managerial and leadership position as undesirable include (1) the conflict between my participants' family commitments and the time and energy needed to facilitate their career advancement and (2) my participants' preference of other academic tasks to management and leadership.

The first reported reason among my participants was the conflict between their family commitments and the time and energy needed to facilitate their career advancement. Due to their family responsibilities, they had limited time to spend on activities to facilitate their career such as attending events, meeting, or conferences to build networks and increase their visibility. Meanwhile, a leader's visibility is crucial as the subordinates can observe the leader's behaviours and effectiveness (Nevicka, Van Vianen, De Hoogh, & Voorn, 2018). Extract from the interview with Participant 9 demonstrates this clearly.

A leader needs to be visible [to subordinates, peers, and higher management] very often by attending events, meetings, or conferences. First, she can make herself known to others and second, she can show off her abilities and skills and create trust. However,

women are busier than men because they must pick up the children from schools, cooking for them and helping them with school assignments.

Furthermore, the absence from work from three months to six months after childbirth and the first five years to care for young children slowed down women's career advancement, as observed by Participant 5.

Vietnamese women are busier than men. Often, women only have time to invest in their career when they reach 30 or 35 years old. Before that, they need to focus on their children.

Data analysis suggests that my participants seemed to uphold the essential view of gender discussed in Chapter Three. Gender essentialism interprets women's biological characteristics (chromosomes, hormones, and other physical features) as their essences which distinguish them from men. Their essences dictate the way they behave and interact with the world (Ellis, 2002) as well as the roles they take in society (Hesselbart, 1981). From a liberal feminist critique, my participants' essentialist view of gender is associated with the construction of managerial and leadership positions as undesirable, which had a negative impact on their career aspiration and choices. My finding supports the assertion of prior research that childbearing years and the child-related tasks after childbirths disrupt women's career (Ackah & Heaton, 2004) and women's lives continue be shaped by their perceived roles and responsibilities (Clarke, 2011).

The second reported reason was the characterisation of managerial and leadership positions as 'time consuming' and distracted them from their 'main' tasks (Participant 1, 18). For example, when Participant 18 was offered to the head of department upon her completion of her Ph.D., she declined the promotion. Her reason for the rejection of the position was her preference of teaching and researching to managing people.

I do not want that position [head of department] because it is too time-consuming. I only want to teach and do research.

Participant 18's use of words like 'time-consuming' implies her negative attitude towards leadership. She also perceived teaching and research as her main role and viewed leadership as a burden.

My participants' view of teaching and research as their primary professional responsibilities appeared to resemble the Western view of an academic job as knowledge production and

knowledge-intensive activities (Bagley & Portnoi, 2014; Marginson, 2006). This finding fits well with those of Morley and Crossouard (2015). Like my participants, academic women from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka perceived leadership as “a diversion from research and scholarship” and leadership positions brought “no benefit” to them (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). As a result, both Morley and Crossouard’s and my participants viewed leadership as unattractive and undesirable.

8.3.2.2 The construction of managerial and leadership positions as unfit for women

While some research (Duehr & Bono, 2006) debate that there has been a change in the traditional gender stereotypes which dictate how men and women should and should not behaved (Rudman et al., 2012), data analysis from this study suggest there has not. A theme arising from the work domain is the negative perception of subordinates towards female leaders which is in consonant with findings of prior research (Broder, 1993; Hoffmann & Musch, 2019; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012; Olekalns et al., 2011).

First, male leaders were described by my participants to be more ‘competitive’ (Participant 1, 3), more ‘decisive’ (Participant 6, 7), more ‘open’ and ‘less attentive to details’ (Participant 8), and more ‘determined’ (Participant 9). Meanwhile, female leaders were described as ‘paying too much attention to details’, ‘indecisive’, ‘not having a broad vision’, or ‘irrational’ (Participant 3, 13). Therefore, women leaders through my participants’ view were considered inferior to men in leadership roles. For example, participant 8 expressed her preference of men being leaders.

From my experience, I prefer men being leaders. Female leaders often pay too much attention to details. I guess it is due to their lack of confidence in their quality of work.

When I communicate with male leaders, I feel more comfortable.

Likewise, Participant 15 preferred men to women and expressed doubt towards her female supervisors’ competence.

People might wonder why gender discrimination exists, but even I discriminate against women. The more I go, the more work I do, the more I feel women are ... slow and irrational. Their minds are not sharp. When I have to wait for unnecessary procedures, I feel annoyed. Personally, I prefer to work with men.

My participants’ expectation of leadership seemed to be aligned with gendered leadership stereotypes reported across contexts (Ellemers et al., 2012; Harmer et al., 2017). The abilities

to manage and lead is more associated with masculinity (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019). Therefore, my participants perceived characteristics such as ‘paying too much attention to details’ to be associated with female leaders and be an indicator of incompetence.

Secondly, when women perform gender-inconsistent acts, they will be considered cold, unlikeable and unfeminine (Wood, 2013). The label for them will be “ice queen” - a term used for Hilary Clinton when she ran for the US president (Curnalia & Mermer, 2014) or “iron maiden” (Wood, 2013) or Queen Bee (Derks et al., 2016; Faniko et al., 2017; G. Staines et al., 1974). Similar evidence was found in this study’s data. For example, Participant 3 expected her female president to be ‘gentler’; therefore, the president communicated in a more assertive way, she was more negatively judged.

Among four presidents [during my career], she was the only female president. She was very tough. People often called her manly. She belonged to the other side. Decisive and straightforward... When someone did a task in a way which did not meet her expectation, she spoke her mind. You should not be that straightforward. You should give feedback in a gentler manner... Mr. A [the current president] is closer to his subordinates. I like to work with people like him and to keep a distance with people like her ...

The negative attitude towards gender-inconsistent acts also becomes an impediment to access to opportunity to career advancement among my participants, which is consistent with findings of prior research (Frear, Paustian-Underdahl, Heggstad, & Walker, 2019). For example, Participant 15 described herself as a ‘masculine/manly’ person and her style had a negative impact on her prospects of being in a supervisory role.

I am agile and straightforward ... I always keep my words. I’m also a very straightforward person. I like to let things out rather keep them for myself. Even everyone says that I’m more like a man. I think that style suits me. Even the way I speak is also clearly and loudly. I’m a woman with men’s qualities. In addition, everyone says I have the potential and leadership qualities although I’m currently not in any managerial position ... Being straightforward has both the advantages and disadvantages. If you get on well with other straightforward people, you have the freedom to develop [your career]. If you don’t, you are forever an outsider. When I first started [the job], I was in that [being an outsider] situation. I do not get on well with my

supervisors. Now I feel that my supervisors start to trust me more and back me up. But I'm not their right-hand person. They have already had their right-hand people.

It is noteworthy in the finding that Participant 15 associated all her traits with 'a man's style' and presented it as desirable qualities. Being a non-conformer herself, she also conformed to the typical ideals of masculinity and femininity described in prior research (Bosak et al., 2008; Moss-Racusin, 2014; Prentice & Carranza, 2002) and once again demonstrated the taken-for-granted feature of hegemonic function, endorsed masculinity's position of superiority in relation to femininity and therefore, legitimised the hegemonic masculinity. Meanwhile, she chose to distance herself from femininities.

This finding shows that the deeply ingrained gender stereotypes continue to dictate how women see themselves and others (David, 2013) including how women judge female leaders. Narratives of my participants illustrate that they were actively involved in the stigmatisation of women leaders. While participant 15 was alienated by her colleagues because of her 'masculine/manly style', Participant 3 and 8's female leaders were demonised by their subordinates as both of them did not behave in gender-specific ways. In this regard, the experiences of Vietnamese academic women are similar to that of other women of diverse backgrounds (Frear et al., 2019; Kitzinger, 1995; Lundström, 2006). This study has insufficient evidence of men engaging in the stigmatisation of women like Khanikar's (2016) research on Indian policewomen whose 'masculine' aggressiveness was stigmatised by men as those behaviours pose a threat to male dominance. This result may be explained by the fact that the perspectives of academic men were not explored in this research.

8.3.3 Summary

In summary, women's career progression was a result of personal choices through the performance of acts which either hindered or facilitated their career. The performative acts of constructing managerial and leadership positions as undesirable and unfit for women resulted in the fact that the academic women in study *chose* not to plan, or search for opportunities to advance their career to managerial and leadership positions. They even *chose* to decline the offers to promotion. Meanwhile, other acts like performing typically feminine traits, supporting peers, and working hard had positive impacts on their career advancement. Their acts appeared to be associated with the global influences on career concepts like the leadership attributes and qualities and the concept of an ideal and androgynous worker. The impacts of indigenous or Confucian ideals on leadership were not visible in this study.

8.4 Organisational factors that affect women’s career development

In addition to personal factors, organisational factors also contribute to the hindrance or facilitation of academic staff’s career advancement (Williams, 2014); therefore, this section discusses the meta theme at organisational level. Key concepts used in this section is equality of opportunities which means opportunities should be given to both men and women at their level of social hierarchy through a liberal feminist perspective (D. M. Ashcraft, 2013). The themes from my participants’ narratives under this meta theme are summarised in the table below.

Table 8.2: Organisational factors that affect women's career development

<i>Enhancers to women’s career</i>	<i>Barriers to women’s careers</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective mentoring and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of mentoring• Unfair practices in performance appraisal• Lack of transparency in promotion• Unfair workplace delegation

8.4.1 Enhancers to women’s career

Data analysis from the liberal feminist perspective shows my participants were provided with equal opportunities in the form of effective mentoring and training. The access to effective mentoring and training was shown to be beneficial to their careers. This finding is consistent with prior research on the positive impacts of mentoring and training on employees (D. C. Braun et al., 2017; Bullough & Draper, 2004; I. H.-s. Chow & Ng, 2011; Jacobi, 1991; Palmer & Jones, 2019; Steele & Fisman, 2014).

Effective mentoring and training

Mentoring and training play a crucial in one’s academic career (Curtin, Malley, & Stewart, 2016; Levy-Tzedek, Moran, Alon, & Sal-Man, 2018; Nolan, Buckner, Marzabadi, & Kuck, 2008). Mentees can benefit from an effective mentoring and training program in several ways such as increasing their confidence in their ability to pursue an academic career (Curtin et al., 2016) and getting advice for setting career goals or coping with challenges of academic life (Levy-Tzedek et al., 2018). Data from the interviews demonstrate several success stories from both cross-gender (Participant 12 and 17) and same-gender mentoring relationships (informant 31) which accords with the aforementioned studies. For instance, Participant 17 received tremendous professional help from her male mentor who was the manager of the research

centre she worked upon her return from overseas study received at first and then her academic supervisor for her master and doctoral degree.

He knew at that time my two children were still very young, so he supported me tremendously. Therefore, I could successfully do the job at the centre and at home. He also closely monitored my progress. He was the one who referred me to officially become a lecturer in my university. Then he became my supervisor for my master, then Ph.D ... There were days when we did not see from eyes to eyes professionally. I think there was nothing unusual about that. Disagreements and discussion helped people to understand others' viewpoints better and hence, increased the empathy for others.

Participant 17 interpreted the support she received from her manager/supervisor as “sheer luck” which stemmed from the fact that both her supervisor and she graduated from the same school abroad, majoring in the same field. Another similar story comes from Participant 12, an associate professor who used to be the vice president at her university. Her mentor, also from her alma mater, trained her professionally to become a lecturer by showing her how to prepare lesson plans, supervising students, working on research projects, then provided her with valuable advice when she was unsure about which career paths to follow.

I submitted all the lesson plans I prepared to him. He read them very thoroughly and then commented on what was good, what was missing and what needed to be fixed. He also attended my mock teaching demonstration. When I became a mentor, I asked the novice lecturers to do a couple of teaching demonstrations. I commented even on their body language, and the ways they lead their lectures. I learnt a lot from his [and others'] supervision style.

Unlike both mentors of Participant 12 and 17 who were male, Participant 25 had a female mentor. Similar to Participant 12 and 17's experiences, Participant 25 received enormous support from her mentor who was her dean and her former supervisor for her undergraduate thesis. As Participant 25's former supervisor, she knew Participant 25's introvert personality. As a result, she encouraged Participant 25 to participate more actively in universities activities, work on research projects and publishing.

All the three stories indicate a professional and personal fit between mentors and mentees (same field of teaching and research and same alma mater). All three participants' access to support can be explained by the similarity-attraction effect which refers to “the widespread tendency of people to be attracted to others who are similar to themselves in important respects”

(Reis, 2007, p. 876). Participant 25 was at the early stage of her career so the benefits of effective mentoring might not be as visible as the cases of Participant 12 and 17.

8.4.2 Barriers to women's career

While some participants in my study benefited from access to effective mentoring and training, analysis also revealed that not all participants had equal opportunities in accessing mentors, performance appraisal, transparency and job assignments that can facilitate their career.

8.4.2.1 Lack of mentoring

In contrast to the success story of Participant 12 and 17, narratives from some participants show a lack of or ineffective formal mentoring and training programs at early stages of career, continuous professional development and lifelong learning, which reflects the findings of (Dang, 2017). Participant 13 recalled when she first started.

When I first started the job, they interviewed me, looked at my qualification and carried out a mock teaching demonstration. When they saw that I met all the criteria, I was allowed to teach. Then I was given just the curriculum with no explanation. No one showed me how to deal with different groups of students.

Many participants shared the experienced of being assigned to senior colleagues for guidance and feedback. However, the practice has nominal rather than actual values to professional development. Participant 26 discussed the mentoring and coaching program of her workplace.

At that time, I was assigned to an experienced colleague who was at management position. She was responsible for providing guidance for me for one semester. I didn't know if I was in the same situation with others or not, but I thought her mentoring had minor values. When I first started, after some time, I needed to demonstrate a mock teaching session which would be attended by senior colleagues. She did help me by going through the teaching plan for the mock teaching, but her comments were general. She said it was fine. But I didn't know whether it was actually fine or not. Apart from that, there was no further guidance or help.

She also commented on the ineffectiveness of the feedback from the mock teaching demonstration.

I think the period of time when a new lecturer was observed (in my university) was too short. In order to have a comprehensive view about the performance of a lecturer, you needed to attend at least a 45-minute session. Then you can see the opening, the middle

and the final part of the lesson. However, in my workplace, they only attended for 20 minutes. It was just a snapshot; you could not see the whole picture. During the lesson, all attendees were given a criteria sheet to give feedback. After that, a meeting was held, and attendees gave oral feedback to the observed. However, not all attendees showed up for the meeting. Among 6 or 7 people who attended the mock teaching demonstration, only 3 or 4 people went to the meeting to give feedback.

Very few participants benefit from the mentoring or coaching program. Participant 15 was assigned a mentor when she first started her job, but she never received any mentoring from him. However, she did not consider the lack of mentoring as a disadvantage as she considers herself to be an 'independent' person.

It [the mentoring program] is just nominal. I was assigned a mentor, but he has never provided any mentoring. I guess he did not like me, or he was just reserved. I think he was not confident to mentor me because I have just come back from studying abroad. Some people who return from overseas tend to show off. Some of them return to get promoted. Therefore, people at home do not like them. Moreover, I have been away from Vietnam for too long [11 years] so they [mentors & colleagues] do not like to interact with me. So, mentoring for me is just on paper.

Participant 13, 15 and 26's negative mentoring experiences shows that the access to effective mentoring was not equal among my participants. However, the poor mentoring experiences were not exclusive to my participants. Prior research (Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000; Limeri et al., 2019; Tolar, 2012). The reasons for problematic mentoring and training among my participants seemed to originate from unsuccessful pairing of mentor-mentee in the cases of Participant 15 and 26 and the overall lack of opportunities for employees to give feedback about the effectiveness of the mentoring programmes by HEIs in my study. My participants appeared to be frustrated and dissatisfied with the mentoring programmes; however, none of them raised voices or challenged those who were in charge. Instead, they resolved by seeking career advice and encouragement, from their informal networks like families and friends or from their observations of other successful professionals. Furthermore, as mentors in HEIs in my study were often academic staff who had more experiences in the organisation than the mentees and in most cases, were more senior than mentees in terms of age, the lack of challenges to problematic practices might be attributed to Confucian's respect for authority even "when those with authority do not merit respect and deference" (Rappa & Tan, 2003, p.

92). From the liberal feminist perspective, the unequal access to effective mentoring and training created constraints to my participants' career and limited their access to significant information and opportunities for career advancement (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012).

8.4.2.2 Unfair practices in performance appraisal

Fair and effective performance appraisal practices by reviewing employees' performance can be beneficial to both organisations and employees (Harrington & Lee, 2015; Roberts, 2003), data analysis unveils the lack of access to fair and transparent practices in performance appraisal among my participants. Participant 4 described the performance appraisal process in her university, which she perceived as 'not transparent' and unfair.

The process of assessing performance and contributions in my faculty is not properly conducted. Every year there is a vote for the best performers; however, the process is not transparent. For example, sometimes I nominated several young lecturers for the title of "the best performers". They had new energy and made real contribution to the faculty. Their names were added to the list which was submitted to higher management level for approval. However, at that stage, they would be rejected. The persons who often received the title were often people in power.

Similarly, Participant 26 was unclear about the criteria her university used to evaluate, reward, or penalise staff. She commented on the awards given to academic staff with outstanding achievements.

I do not care about these awards and titles because I think they have no values. I believe it is not just me, but many others agree with me. Those titles and awards seem out of reach for me. And the number of people awarded is very minimal. And you don't understand why they are given such awards and titles. I do not see any outstanding achievements of them. So, as a lecturer, I do not care about them and the criteria to achieve them.

There appeared to be a feeling of resentment in her characterisation of the awards and titles as having 'no value' and 'out of reach'. There was also a sense of mistrust and doubt about the appraisal process from Participant 26. As reported in a number of global studies, the bias in performance appraisal also exists and is deeply embedded in social, interpersonal and organizational relations (Kjeldal et al., 2005; Määttä & Dahlborg Lyckhage, 2011). From Participant 4 and 26's point of view, unfair practices in their HEIs might be related to the institutional power structure, which favoured a certain group of people. In this sense, this

finding not only fits well with those of other research like Rowland and Hall (2012) which linked poor performance appraisal practice to the reinforcement of dishonesty, mistrust and inequality. From a liberal feminist perspective, this finding reveals another constraint to women academics' career in this study as it resulted in staff's dissatisfaction and discouraged them from looking for chances to be recognised and be 'visible', as discussed in section 8.3.2.

8.4.2.3 The lack of transparency in promotion process

Promotion decisions in academia have been reported to be influenced by both visible and hidden processes (Carr, Gunn, Raj, Kaplan, & Freund, 2016; Sabharwal, Henderson, & Joseph, 2020; Zinovyeva & Bagues, 2015). As discussed in Chapter Four, researching, teaching and academic service are known to be crucial in tenure and promotion decisions (Adams, 2003; S. M. Park, 1996; Wiley et al., 2016) but less visible factors including candidates' gender (Carr et al., 2016), connection between candidates and evaluators of candidates (Zinovyeva & Bagues, 2015), or micropolitics (Ahmed, 2012; Sabharwal et al., 2020) are equally important. Likewise, among HEIs in my study, both visible and hidden criteria for promotion, particularly to managerial and leadership positions, played a crucial role; however, sometimes the hidden criteria were more important than the visible criteria. The lack of transparency in promotion process, from the liberal feminist perspective, created barriers to my participants' career advancement.

First, fixed criteria among HEIs in my study included having the right qualification. For example, promotion to deputy or head of department required a master's degree while a doctoral degree was needed for vice dean/dean and senior management positions like vice president/president. The quality of teaching mattered in advancement in both management and academic promotion, but my participants' narratives reveal research outputs were becoming increasingly important, which reflects what others have found (T. N. Pham, 2015; T. V. H. Vu, 2018) about Vietnamese academia. The increasing importance of research in Vietnamese academia also reflect the Vietnamese government's focus on research and development as a key element of its growth strategy in the present days (Harman & Le, 2010). However, in contrast to the European and other Asian contexts, some visible requirements like being a member of the CPV, the only political party in power, were quite distinctive in Vietnam. Meanwhile, in case no staff met all the required criteria for promotion, other factors were considered, as observed by Participant 2.

However, these criteria are quite flexible. For example, if your faculty has no staff with a doctorate, a person with the highest qualification and membership of CPV will be considered.

In addition to the visible criteria for promotion, the hidden factors like having ‘trust from your colleagues’ (Participant 2), and ‘knowing the right person’ (Participant 1) were sometimes more influential. Those hidden criteria appeared to create a sense of mistrust and dissatisfaction among my participants. Both participants raised doubt about the eligibility of the ‘chosen’ one and felt discomfort with the lack of control and voice in the process.

I have participated in several elections in my faculty. But I do not think they were transparent. Sometimes the nominees [for the managerial position] were pre-chosen. Some people have demonstrated their credibility, ethical values, and their ability, but they are not in the nominee list. That is my doubt about “having trust from your colleagues” as a criterion (Participant 2).

Among two newly graduates, the one with lesser knowledge and skills might get the job. The one with better knowledge and skills but no connection will not have a clear career path like the other one. The one with the right connection knows where he is heading. Therefore, their journey is shorter... I think the most important factor now is right connection, then economic power (Participant 1).

In addition to having trust from colleagues and knowing the right person, being a member of some ‘interest groups’ (Participant 20) improved a staff’s chance to be promoted among HEIs in my study. Special interest groups refer to a form of organisational politics, established for non-organisational reasons, and operating within the organisational environment (Adamski & Kleiner, 1992). Being a member of these interest groups provided their members with potential important information which benefited them in their work. However, non-members were excluded, alienated, and marginalised. Participant 20 reflected on her isolation at work due to her non-involvement in such groups.

In our working environment, from my observation, there is an existence of interest groups. If one person in your group gets ahead, the other group members benefit. I do not belong to any groups in my faculty. I am often the last one to know any pieces of information. I do not care much. My view is that I can do whatever interests me. I do not do anything for the sake of showing off or proving myself.

Her alienation might explain the reasons why she did not advance to any managerial positions despite her work performance. Participant 2 believed the main reason for the existence of such groups was financial gains.

In a society like a Vietnam, everyone works in group, and it is a norm ... Some use money, others use their network [to gain access to these groups]. Some earn the access through their family connection. Generally speaking, [members of these groups] must have mutual financial benefits.

While similar findings were not reported by prior research on Vietnamese academia (T. V. H. Vu, 2018), the existence of organisational politics were also found in studies on Indian or other South Asian academia (Morley & Crossouard, 2015; Sabharwal et al., 2020). Unlike those studies, there was no concrete evidence that female academics in my studies were more marginalised than men due to the hidden criteria. However, the finding about hidden criteria might explain my participants' construction of managerial and leadership positions as undesirable in section 8.3.2 because of the negative connotation attached with managerial and leadership positions.

8.4.2.4 Unfair workplace delegation

The unfair workplace delegation among HEIs in my study was shown in the allocation of particular types of work to female academic staff. The work that my participants did like administration tasks or social service added little values to their career and even a negative impact on their career progress in the long run.

When Participant 13 first began her academic career, she noticed men tended to do the “man” work while women tended to do the housekeeping work, which was often undervalued. Moreover, she observed that while female lecturers devoted their time to teaching, male lecturers took extra projects which provided them with more career choices and opportunities.

When I first started my work, there were some male colleagues, but the percentage was small in comparison with their female counterparts. When it comes to task assignment, I think gender equality was still an issue. Gender discrimination still existed. However, it is not that explicit. For example, men never did some cleaning tasks such as cleaning up the used cups in the faculty office. It is always women's job. However, they would do some tasks which required physical strengths.

In terms of professional work, male lecturers were not as devoted as female. Female lecturers did more teaching while male lecturer took more extra projects outside. One proof is that all the male lecturers who started at the same time with me are not here anymore. They develop their career in different directions. We stood at the same starting lines but moved in different directions.

Although cleaning task does not emerge in the reviewed studies on the description of academic tasks, and my intention is not to argue that this task is done by my research participant in Vietnam only, this finding confirms the replication of a “gender factory” (Berk, 1985) at work, in which the cleaning task in the workplace replaces the household work to be a “symbolic enactment of gender relations” (South & Spitze, 1994, p. 327).

Among my participants, single and childless female academic appeared to suffer from a more intensified unequal task delegation. This finding is not in line with the “motherhood penalty” phenomenon for working mothers (Gough & Noonan, 2013), who are in a more disadvantaged position than single and childless women. Extracts from Participant 2 demonstrates this clearly.

I haven't observed the impacts of marital status on promotion between single and married women, but in my organisation, marital status is a factor taken into consideration when a task is given. People often say, “you are single, you have more free time, so you need to take more assignments”. The tasks you are assigned will double those of married women. I see this is what happening in my workplace. I understand when you have a small child, you might need to spend more time on your child, but it does not mean someone else will have to do your job. If someone is single, she still has her own life. She has other relationships, not to mention boyfriend-girlfriend relationship. It is not a good reason to give her extra work.

Similar to participant 2, participant 20 also suffered from the pressure of having to take on additional workload as a result of her single status. She complained:

... there are two single women in my faculty, and everyone always think we have more free time. Some colleagues were on my side and defended me. They said, “she needs to have time to go out and meet people [potential partners]. However, some people always use their children as an excuse to avoid some tasks. I know one co-worker who is always late and always uses her children as an excuse.

However, it was not just younger unmarried participants who were more exploited by corporation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011), senior women faced similar situation. When participant 14 was asked if she was ever discriminated as being a single woman, she expressed frustration.

Sometimes I get frustrated. I said there is no need to mock me for not having a husband.

Sometimes they told me to do a certain work because I am single; thus, I am free.

The finding in relation to the exploitation and alienation of single and childless female academics is in line with the finding of Luke (1998) on Singaporean female academics. Her assertion that “remaining single in a family-oriented society carries a price” (p.250) could be applicable to describe the experiences of Vietnamese female academics as well.

8.4.3 Summary

Organisational practices contributed to both the positive and negative experiences of Vietnamese female academics in my study at work. While effective mentoring had positive impacts on women’s career, the lack of effective mentoring programmes, unfair practices in performance appraisal and promotion, and unfair workplace delegation led to participants’ dissatisfaction and production of inequalities. However, organisation practices in this study which negatively impacted participants’ career appeared to be hidden and unchallenged by participants.

8.5 Chapter conclusion

In summary, the liberal feminist lens demonstrates how a gender system in the Vietnamese academia with men in power violates both the liberty and equality of opportunity principles (Munson & Saulnier, 2014). Vietnamese academic women in my study appeared to interpret their experience through a dichotomous and essentialist understanding of gender, which led to their construction of managerial and leadership positions as undesirable and unfit for women and the biased judgement of women leaders who showed masculine behaviours. Furthermore, while some participants had access to effective mentoring and training programmes which were beneficial to their careers, many participants did not have access to effective mentoring and training programs, performance appraisal and promotion criteria. Their career progression was even restricted due to unfair workplace delegation. Additionally, while analysis through liberal feminist lens shows some distinctive features of Vietnamese HEIs, it also demonstrates that my participants had a common experience with women living in both Eastern (Dang, 2017; Luke, 1998, 2001; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012) and in the Western societies (Eagly, 1987; Eagly &

Mladinic, 1989, 1994; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000; Gershuny et al., 2014; Milkie et al., 2009).

On the other hand, the focus of liberal feminism on the public sphere has diverted the attention from my participants' construction and performance in the domestic sphere particularly under the impacts of the Chinese and French colonisation and contemporary influences. Furthermore, the local power dynamics in relation to organisational factors has not been addressed fully (Yousfi, 2014). The liberal lens also has not offered any tailor-made measures for a 'non-ideal' context (Baehr, 2020) like Vietnam. Therefore, in the next chapter, I turn to a postcolonial feminist lens to examine my participants' career experience in relation to the "historical processes that have produced systemic inequities and oppression" (J. M. Anderson & McCann, 2002, p. 15). A postcolonial feminist lens can also help me to examine my participants' strategies of resistance against imposed practices through multiple waves of colonisation (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017).

CHAPTER NINE: WOMEN'S CONSTRUCTION AND PERFORMANCE OF GENDER FROM THE POSTCOLONIAL LENS

9.1 Introduction

In Chapter Eight, analysis from a liberal feminist lens unpacked the individual and organisation facilitators and barriers to my participants' career. At the close of this chapter, I am still concerned with the impacts of multiple waves of colonisation on my participants' construction and performance in the domestic sphere, the local power dynamics in relation to organisational factors (Yousfi, 2014), and my participants' resistance acts against the imposed values (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017).

Therefore, this chapter seeks to introduce the analytical prospects that postcolonial feminism can offer liberal feminist thought. Liberal feminism has provided an insight into the Vietnamese women's experiences; however, there is a need for a more critical insight into "the social and historical conditions that block – or enhance – social and economic opportunities" (J. M. Anderson & McCann, 2002, p. 22).

The assumptions of postcolonial feminism are (1) the acknowledgement of the current world shaped by the historical process of imperialism and colonisation, (2) the embrace of a perspective from the embodied experiences of the "non-Western" women. Key concepts taken up in postcolonial feminist analyse include marginality, resistance, and agency (Asher, 2010; Hooks, 2015). Therefore, incorporating feminist analyses with postcolonial theory can offer insights into how my participants responded to intersecting oppressions and the accompanying complex social relations (Anderson, Kirkham, Browne & Lynam, 2007).

This chapter is structured around three meta themes – the impacts of colonisation on the construction and performance of gender at an individual level, the impacts of colonisation on organisational practices and resistance to imposed values, as summarised in the table below.

Table 9.1: Recurring themes from the postcolonial feminist perspective

<i>The impacts of colonisation on the construction and performance of gender at an individual level</i>	<i>The impacts of colonisation on organisational practices</i>	<i>Resistance to imposed values</i>
The filial daughters, dutiful wives and nurturing mothers	The embrace of Western education	Resistance to Confucian essentialism of women's gender roles
The liberal women	The mimicking of Western academia's focus on research and publication	Resistance to the mimicking of Western academia's practices
The virtuous women	Economic deprivation of an academic career	
	The expectation to conform to seniority	

I begin this chapter with the analysis of the impacts of colonisation on the construction and performance of gender. Then I discuss themes associated with the impacts of colonisation on organisational practices. While multiple waves of colonisation have remarkably impacted both individuals and organisational practices in contemporary Vietnam, those who are constructed as inferior are not passive recipients of imposed hierarchy. Therefore, in the last section of this chapter, I present the acts of resistance emerging from data.

9.2 Impacts of the waves of colonisation on the construction and performance of gender

The impacts of post-colonialism are not homogenous in different societies because of the interaction between the colonialisng powers and the colonised structures and institutions (Fasakin, 2021; Catherine Hall, 2002). Analysis from a postcolonial feminist lens reveals three main themes including Vietnamese filial daughters, wives and mothers, the liberal women and the virtuous women with multi-layers of Confucian, Western and contemporary global influences. The first two themes are associated with the construction and performance of gender in domestic sphere while the last theme deals with the construction and performance of gender in the workplace.

9.2.1 *Filial daughters, dutiful wives and nurturing mothers*

This theme addresses how the profound influence of the Confucian family system, which was also supported by the current Vietnam communist state, impacts the way my participants

constructed their roles as the filial daughters, dutiful wives and nurturing mothers and demonstrates how familial relations is an important source to maintain the gender system among my research participants (N. T. Tran, 2018). This section also includes the discussion of the way the construction of such roles influences my participants' career experiences.

9.2.1.1 Filial daughters

The influence of parents on children's career choices and prospects have been reported across contexts (Hartung et al., 2005; Lent, 2013; Liu & McMahon, 2017; Watson et al., 2015; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Indeed, my participants conveyed this parental influence; however, this also seemed to be reinforced further by the profound influence of the Confucian family system on the construction and performance of Vietnamese filial daughters who felt obliged to obey their parents' wishes (Hui, Yuen, & Chen, 2018). The performance of Vietnamese filial daughters illustrates one layer of influence within the multiplicity of Confucian, Western and contemporary global influences on the construction and performance of my participants.

Parental influence on education attainment

The influence of parents on their children's education attainment emerged as subtheme with the domain of family influence on the construction of filial daughters. Narratives from ten participants (Participant 1, 7, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21) shows that they considered their parents as having a key role in their educational attainment particularly in inspiring and encouraging them to pursue higher education in accordance with earlier research (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012; T. V. H. Vu, 2018). However, a postcolonial lens also reveals a sense of obligation to meet parents' expectations which indicates participants' conformity to the filial daughter role, reflecting the findings of earlier studies on contexts heavily influenced by Confucian values (Fouad et al., 2008; M. Tang, 2002). However, my participants' performance of Vietnamese filial daughters took their own forms.

First of all, academic women in this study stressed the importance of their parents in their education attainment, which was positively linked to the development of their career later in life. Their parents provided emotional support during their school years and encouraged them to pursue higher education including higher education in foreign countries. A typical illustration from the narratives of this group is presented by Participant 12. Her parents encouraged her to go overseas for her higher education when she was having a difficult time deciding whether she should stay in Vietnam or go at the risk of ending the relationship with her boyfriend.

My parents are my source of motivation. They said, “We won’t accept if you stay for your boyfriend. You have made much effort for this opportunity. You need to convince your boyfriend to wait for you. If you stay now, you will lose a whole career ahead. You are our and our extended family’s pride”.

Narratives of my participants also suggest that their educational attainment was driven by their family reputation. For example, Participant 12 used the word ‘pride’ to refer to their family positive attitudes towards their education achievement. Similarly, Participant 11 described her education attainment as ‘a source of family pride’. There appeared to be a hidden pressure for them to perform filial daughters whose responsibilities, under the teaching of Confucianism, is to uphold to the family values, and enhance the ‘face’ of their families (T. Q. T. Nguyen, 2017) by obtaining knowledge to become a noble person (Hung, 2015). Furthermore, similar to the findings of M. Tang (2002), there appeared to be an expectation of upward social mobility among participants’ parents. However, unlike the narratives in the study of Cubillo and Brown (2003) which shows the seminal influence of fathers or the finding of Do and Brennan (2015) which emphasises the dominance of mothers, female academics in this study also did not differentiate between fathers and mothers in terms of inspiration and motivation.

Parental influence on career orientation

Another subtheme relating to parental influence reflects what other researchers from both Western and Eastern contexts (Do & Brennan, 2015; Grusec, Hastings, & Anderson, 2015; Liu & McMahon, 2017) have found in relation to the tendency to make career choices favoured by their parents. Altogether seven narratives (Participant 3, 6, 7, 9, 18, 21, and 25) fit into this group. Participants 6, 7, 9, and 25 were ‘guided’ to the teaching profession by her parents while Participants 18 and 21 considered their respective mothers as role models who sparked their interest in an academic career.

Most of my family members are in the teaching profession. When I was a small child, I followed my mother to her workplace. I saw her lecturing in front of her students. I thought this [her mother’s act of lecturing] was so interesting (Participant 18).

All the above participants’ parents acted as one of agencies of socialisation (Connell, 1987) and transmitted the social skills (e.g., taking care of students), social understanding (e.g., teaching is a noble job; teaching is a suitable career for women) to their daughters (Grusec et al., 2015). It is interesting to note that five participants’ parents in this subtheme were in the teaching profession. The observation of their parents’ engagement in their occupations

strengthened their choice of an academic career later in life, which is consistent with the analysis of Liu and McMahon (2017).

A postcolonial lens shows the traces of Confucian values in my research participants' narratives in relation to the pressure to perform the filial daughter role. For example, Participants 6, 9 and 25 used the word 'guided' to explain how their parents influenced their decision to be in a teaching profession. Participant 21 described her parents' response to her career choice as 'very happy'. Meanwhile, Participant 3 used 'very happy' to describe her feeling when she passed the entrance exam to University X [a university specialising in teacher training programs] with her father's approval. The use of the word 'guided' and 'happy' illustrates a subtle pressure for them to be obliged to their parents' wishes to follow their parents' favoured profession. This finding also accords with findings of prior research whose contexts were heavily associated with Confucian values (Fouad et al., 2008; Hui et al., 2018; Leong & Chou, 1994; M. Tang, 2002) even though the strong familial pressure to conform to parents' wishes despite children's career aspirations reported by Fouad et al. (2008) was only reported by Participant 15 and Participant 23.

Furthermore, the reasons why my research participants' parents found the teaching profession a lucrative career choice for their daughters appeared to be generated from the concern over their "marriageability" (Cubillo & Brown, 2003, p. 286). A teaching profession, which was perceived by Participant 9 to be 'flexible' as 'a teacher/lecturer does not have to stay in the office from 8 am to 5 pm'; consequently, she 'has more time to spend on taking care of her family' fit with the gendered construction of the domestic status. The construction of an academic career among my research participants appeared to resemble the construction of femininity with stereotypic characteristics such as communal, nice, caring, and nurturant (Eagly et al., 1995; Eagly et al., 1992; Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Rosette & Tost, 2010). For example, Participant 3 perceived teaching as a good fit for her personality – 'hardworking but neither ambitious nor aggressive'. Additionally, Participant 9 thought of teaching as a profession which required 'an attention to details' and she believed that 'a teacher's job involves teaching not only knowledge but also manners and ethical values to students'. As a result, 'teaching suits a woman more than a man'. This extends to the construction of the dutiful wife, which is discussed in the next section.

In sum, performing filial responsibilities in this study takes different forms from findings of other studies like Luke (1998) which links filial responsibilities to the provision of emotional

and social care for aged parents and kins. Instead, my participants' performances take the forms of following parents' wishes in career choices and education attainment. Parents' support for the pursuit of a teaching profession in this study might be credited with their perceived fit between the teaching profession and their daughters' future domestic role. As a result of fulfilling that filial responsibility, my research participants who followed their parental wishes perceived parents support to be beneficial to academic women's career, similar to findings of earlier research (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Do & Brennan, 2015; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012; C. S. V. Turner, 2007). Parental support is available and beneficial to both single and married academic women (Luke, 1998).

9.2.2.2 Dutiful wives

Together with parents, Vietnamese academic women's career choice in this study was affected by their spouses, husbands, or boyfriends, which is in line with findings of previous research (Cooke, 2007; Girod, Gilmartin, Valentine, & Schiebinger, 2011; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012; Vohlídalová, 2017). However, data analysis through a postcolonial feminist lens also shows some female academics in this study (Participant 7 and 24) were under the pressure to perform the role of dutiful wives who prioritised their husbands' and family's needs and sacrifice their individual interests (W. N. Duong, 2001; N. T. Tran, 2018). This dutiful wife role resembles the Confucian ideals of a wife's role discussed in Chapter Two.

First, like parents in the previous section, my parents' spouses, husbands, or boyfriends also considered an academic career a 'suitable' choice for women. The perceived fit between an academic job and the role of women as homemakers was based on the 'flexibility' of an academic career (Participant 21 and 24) which enables women to spend more time on family responsibilities. Therefore, men usually prefer a wife in the teaching profession and an academic woman is considered a 'hot commodity' (Participant 21) in terms of marriage prospects. However, similar to the filial daughter role, the dutiful wife role was not always *imposed* to women, but the role was also willingly performed by some participants. An illustration from the narratives of this group is presented by Participant 24 who did not recognise her parents' influence on her career, but her boyfriend, then husband instead. She spoke of how he affected her decision to choose a career path and how she took the role of being a dutiful wife who treated taking care of family as the most important aspect of her life.

My boyfriend at that time wanted me to work in academia. I also felt that the job suited me. My family did not influence my career choice, but my boyfriend did. He would like

to have a wife working in academia because she will have more time to take care of families.

The story of participant 24 illustrates her act of *doing gender* (West & Zimmerman, 2002) or *performing gender* (Butler, 1988, 1990). The dutiful wife roles taken by participant 24 was accomplished, reproduced, and legitimised through her interactions with her boyfriend (West & Zimmerman, 2002).

Another facet of the dutiful wives is to commit to the development of their spouses and even make sacrifices for their family (Li, 1995). Sacrifices by women has been held up, praised, and glorified by individuals, families, and the state throughout Vietnamese history from Chinese colonisation period, the socialist movements, and the contemporary Vietnam (W. N. Duong, 2001; Li, 1995; Shohet, 2017). While the notion of sacrifice is not exclusive to Vietnam, or Confucian societies, my participants' performance of sacrifices involved "giving up" their benefits "for the ultimate well-being of others" (K. Huynh, 2004, p. 7).

The notion of sacrifice was demonstrated clearly among my participants through their decisions to give up opportunities to advance in their career to keep their family physically intact. For example, Participant 24's husband strongly objected to her pursuit of a doctoral degree overseas but did not stop her from doing her Ph.D. in Vietnam. Therefore, she chose to complete her postgraduate qualifications in Vietnam although she perceived having postgraduate qualifications from reputable universities overseas was more beneficial to her career.

Participant 7 chose to stay in Vietnam, take care of her children and complete her postgraduate study in Vietnam. Meanwhile, her husband, who was also an academic staff, did his four-year doctoral study overseas. His decision was supported by both her and their family as an overseas education could boost his career and his family's economic and social wellbeing. Participant 7 also shared her observation on women's willingness to withdraw from certain position to support their husbands' career. She normalised and legitimised that withdrawal by attributing it to Vietnam's cultural characteristics.

Cultural characteristics also affect because it is difficult for both partners from the same family to develop their career. It is even more difficult if they both work in the same place. For example, if the husband thinks his wife has more chances than, he will step down. Meanwhile, some women may think their career development will affect their

husbands' career prospects. It is a cultural characteristic. Both can't develop in the same organisation.

While Participant 7's observation and her own choice to stay in Vietnam and let her husband go abroad appeared to generate from the dwelling notion of sacrifice, her sacrifice was not "necessarily exploitative" (K. Huynh, 2004, p. 10) as her decision seemed to be motivated by the fact that her husband's education in the long run could boost their family's economic prospects and social status. However, the long lived tradition of sacrifice might make her believe that sacrificing for the family is "the way things are", "is the way they have been" and "is the way they must be" (Keating, 2010, p. 83).

Unlike the Chinese women in the study of Maggy Lee, Chan, Bradby, and Green (2002) and Cooke (2007) who moved abroad with their husbands to keep their family together and felt frustrating and stressful when they sacrificed for the sake of the family, Participant 7 and 24 did not express any resentment. The difference might stem from the fact that both Participant 7 and 24 remained in the teaching profession which is valued and respected in the Vietnamese society (T. Q. N. Nguyen, 2016), and therefore they could maintain their social status. Meanwhile, research participants of Maggy Lee et al. (2002) and Cooke (2007) had to sacrifice their high-profile jobs and engaged in unskilled jobs, which intensified the feeling of underachievement and unfulfillment. However, both cases in my research (Participants 7 and 24 and Chinese women), their family life was organised in ways that suited their husbands' career prospects but not their own.

In summary, the construction and performance of the dutiful wife among my research participants was significantly associated with a woman's role in Confucian thoughts. However, my participants' performances of the dutiful wife did not fit neatly among traditional Confucian thoughts, as illustrated by Participant 7's narratives. However, as the dutiful wives' main responsibilities included taking care of family matters and prioritised husbands' needs, this role prevented academic women in this study from making use of career opportunities. As a result, their career advancement was negatively impacted.

9.2.2.3 Nurturing mothers and absent fathers

Another significant theme within the domestic sphere is the construction and performance of the nurturing mothers and the absent fathers. Similar to academic women in prior research in Western context including Thun (2020), McCutcheon and Morrison (2016), Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2015), in Asian context like Dickson (2018) or Vietnamese context such as T. V. H. Vu

(2018), Funnell and Dao (2013), T. L. H. Nguyen (2012), my participants take primary responsibility in child-related tasks and other domestic chores (e.g., cooking, grocery shopping and cleaning). Among the domestic tasks, participants perceived child-related tasks (e.g., taking care of children's daily needs, educating children) to be the most 'time-consuming' which required a 'high commitment'.

While this finding is in line with those of prior research on academic mothers (Dickson, 2020; Thun, 2020), participants' narratives contribute to the understanding of academic motherhood by revealing the extreme cases of nurturing mothers which resembles intensive mothering, a well-researched theme among the middle and upper-class Western mothers (S. Elliott, Powell, & Brenton, 2015) and absent fathering practices. These practices refer to the fact that the mother spends a tremendous amount of time, energy and money on her children and even places her child/children's needs before her own (Ennis, 2014; Hays, 1996) while the father takes limited or no responsibility in childrearing and caring.

Nurturing mothers

A common subtheme under the nurturing mother is the participants' devotion to child-related tasks. Vietnamese female academics in this study were both the primary caregivers of their children and prioritised childrearing and caring above other tasks, which resembles the "intensive mothering" ideology (Ennis, 2014; Hays, 1996). This theme is best captured by Participant 8.

When I first started my work as a lecturer, my child also started primary school. I needed to spend a huge amount of time especially during the transition period from kindergarten to primary school on helping my child to study. I needed to be with him/her until 11pm almost every day. After he/she finishes his/her study, I could start my work.

Participant 8 was an early career academics at that time, the phase of career which is often characterised by heavy workload and stress (Hollywood, McCarthy, Spencely, & Winstone, 2020; K. Ward, 2012); however, she still prioritised her child's study over her own work. The quote also infers that she might not have sufficient time for her self-care or emotional and physical well-being, given she spent almost her entire evening engaged in child-rearing and work-tasks. Participant 8's silent choice to give up her well-being was echoed in Participant 24 story's narrative: 'The time when I can start doing my own work is mid-night. If I want to do any extra reading or doing anything for myself, I have to sacrifice my own sleep'.

While this intensive mothering practice is not performed only by Vietnamese academic mothers, the tasks Vietnamese academic mothers reported in this study differed from previous research. For example, while Western and other Asian academic mothers in prior research (Dickson, 2020; Thun, 2020) often focused on tasks like picking up children from daily care, cooking for them and playing with them, my participants' narratives highlighted time spent on tasks associated with children's education. In this sense, Vietnamese academic mothers were more similar to Chinese working mothers who were found to place an emphasis on supervision of homework and preparation for examinations (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). A noteworthy example is found in Participant 4's dedication to her sons' education.

When my sons were four, I had to start paying attention to educating them. The tasks I found the most time consuming is to go online and find out what other parents are doing for their children. Then I joined the parenting groups. It is equally time-consuming and takes me around one hour per day. If I want to apply some [learning] methods for my sons, I need to spend at least one night, which means after dinner, I need to sit down with my sons, spend around 2 hours studying with them.

I love reading, so when my sons read, I also read my own books. I often have no [free] time in the evening. Others [colleagues] might go home and spend time on their research till 12am or 1am, but I can't do it. I need to teach my sons. "Teaching" here means teaching them how to behave and how to build good habits. In order to do that, you have to repeat everyday – sit down in your own table at the same time. When they grow up, I have to be their friends. If they read, I will hear what they read, then discuss with them. To have meaningful discussion, I need to spend one hour researching in advance because we do not have knowledge about all the topics.

In addition to placing children's education as a priority, participants were not hesitant to change the workplace to a location with better schooling. Participant 1 admitted her main motivation to move to another university to work was that 'a better school for her children' was located near the new workplace despite feeling 'comfortable' in her former workplace. Moreover, 'salary and opportunities for professional development were only minor factors' to the decision to move workplace for Participant 1. Similarly, Participant 28 demonstrated her "intensive mothering" practice when she chose her children's interests over her own professional development. When I asked her about her plan to pursue a doctorate, she displayed hesitance.

My immediate goal is to do a second degree and learn English to meet the entry requirement for the doctoral program. After one or two years, if I have the opportunity, I will pursue my [doctoral] study. If I don't, I will stop there. After all the ups and downs in my life, I know I don't have many chances. If I am persistent, I might be able to. But my priority is my children.

Other participants also considered flexible working arrangements in HEIs an advantage and sometimes the central factor which motivated them to pursue a career academia as these arrangements allowed them to accommodate their children and family's needs. Participant 11 commented.

People in other professions must spend 8 hours at work but lecturers only need to be present at the workplace when they have classes [to teach]. Therefore, I would have more time to spend with children and family.

A common view among participants was that their mothering practices and other household responsibilities were barriers to their career advancement. Although they described those responsibilities as 'a God-given assignment' (*thiên chức*) (Participant 5, 17) or a 'woman's responsibilities' (*chức năng của người phụ nữ*) (Participant 9), they perceived being married with children as 'time-consuming', and a 'barrier', a 'burden', a 'distraction' which need 'high commitment'. In the meantime, being single was perceived to equate with 'free' and single academics were believed to have more time and more 'advantages' than married academics in career progression. However, participants' use of the words like 'barrier' or 'burden' also seemed to express a sense of opposition to this 'God-given assignment' (Participant 5, 17). Therefore, this finding suggests the rigid Confucian system of gender role, which domesticates women, might not be "immune to cracks over time" in the contemporary Vietnam context (Hennekam & Shymko, 2020, p. 800). Due to the discomfort with the domestic arrangements, my participants felt a need to 'balance' their work and life. However, they considered the initiatives for work-life balance an individual responsibility rather than their spouses' or institutional responsibility. This finding is consonant with those of previous research (Chandra, 2012; T. V. H. Vu, 2018).

The absent fathers

Another subtheme under nurturing mothers is the little involvement or absence of fathers in domestic responsibilities including childrearing and caring, which reflect what others have found (Craig & Mullan, 2011; Dickson, 2020; Nakazato, 2018).

Some participants (Participant 6, 13, 20) constructed their spouses' limited contribution to domestic work as a result of the male breadwinner and female caregiver model – men are responsible for earning for the family and women care for the young and the old (Lewis, 2001). However, it is worth noting that the male breadwinner and female caregiver model found in this study was not 'pure' (Lewis, 2001, p. 153) as participants were engaged in paid employment.

The justification for fathers' limited involvement in domestic chores was expressed in an extract from Participant 13 whose husband was the primary breadwinner, only spent weekends with their family, and engaged in childcare to a much lesser extent than his wife due to his work obligations.

My husband takes full responsibility of my family's expenses. The money that I earn is only enough for my personal use. It is not sufficient to cover the costs for my children, household and other expenses. Therefore, the main responsibility is my husband's.

The role of the husband as the primary breadwinner was reinforced in narrative of Participant 24 whose husband was more responsible for high expense items such as providing the family with a house but less responsible for domestic chores or child-related tasks.

I think it is quite unfair for Vietnamese women in general when it comes to division of labour. Generally, my husband does not help me much in household chores and childcare because he constantly has to go on business trips. Recently, my husband must go on business trips far away from home. He comes home on Friday night and leaves on Monday morning. But even when he is not on any trips, he often comes home late at night because he has to entertain business partners. This is the working styles of Vietnamese companies. Business deals are made but through relationships. Relationships can be built through entertainment activities. Therefore, my husband doesn't help much in assisting our children's study or shaping their personalities. Meanwhile, I still go to work, and I am not financially dependent on my husband.

However, participants also revealed the extreme case whereby men were not responsible for covering family expenses nor doing domestic work and childcare. The following extract from Participant 28's narrative shows this very clearly.

My husband is a policeman. He spends very little time at home. We have been married for more than ten years, but I have never handled his salary. He also has never handed

me his salary ... I handle most of the domestic chores. Sometimes he comes home and stays with family for a couple of evenings. He also helps me with picking up the kids from the school, doing household work or cooking. He helps with grocery shopping. He never cleans the house or does the laundry.

It is interesting to note that while all wives above were either significantly or fully responsible for domestic responsibilities due to husbands' work arrangements, their attitude towards this gender-based allocation of domestic chores were different. In the first case, Participant 13 stressed the inevitability of her family's traditional work and family arrangements while there was an implication of discomfort from Participant 24 and 28. In the latter part of Participant 24's quote, she emphasised that like her husband, she worked and was not financially dependent on her husband. As a secondary earner in this relationship, she still contributed to their family's expense. Her discomfort with the male breadwinner and female caregiver model was demonstrated by her use of the word 'unfair'. Meanwhile, the story line of Participant 28 implies an element of choice. Participant 28 seemed to face a subtle and hidden demand to take care of her family while her husband did not seem to have the same obligation. Furthermore, even if he *chose* to do some of the chores, he seemed to have a choice in the types of household chores he wanted to do while his wife had no choice over what she wanted to do.

Participant 24 and 28's discomfort with the absent fathers invites a reflection of what 'fair' or 'equal' entails in gender-based arrangements although interpretations of equality and fairness might vary from individual to individual (Dyer & Hurd, 2018). Even in the case of Participant 13 whose husband contributed significantly to the family, the relationship is only considered 'fair' provided that both parties in the relationship reasonably accept the distribution of costs and benefits in the arrangements and arrangements should be informed and unforced (Baehr, 2020).

Another reason that participants gave for their spouses' limited involvement with domestic work includes the belief that fathers are subordinate to mothers as parents. This finding supports that of previous research on maternal gatekeeping, the practice that mothers take control of both minor and major parenting decisions and "push daddy away" (Hauser, 2012, p. 34; Reddick, Rochlen, Grasso, Reilly, & Spikes, 2012). Participant 4 described her child-related tasks as 'time consuming' but she still took over these tasks as 'fathers do not have enough patience [like mothers do]'. Similarly, Participant 9 perceived men as 'not as good as

women in organising household tasks' and admitted feeling nervous if she needed to go on business trips far away from home.

In summary, the dominance of childcare and domestic arrangements in my participants' narratives can be interpreted as a manifestation of Confucian essentialisation of women's gender role in relation to marriage, family and domesticity (L. A. Hoang, 2020; Rosenlee, 2006). However, participants' situation of nurturing mothers and absent fathers goes beyond the discussion of men and women's placement in the family hierarchy where women perform much of the domestic labour while men provide financial support. Their construction and performance of the Vietnamese nurturing mothers as means to legitimise the household division of labour. Both women in my study (and men) actively *did* (C. West & Zimmerman, 1987) and *performed* (Butler, 1988, 1990, 2007) their gender and contributed to the production and reproduction of gender hierarchy. Moreover, there was a hegemonic pattern of masculinity which provided men with more power. The subtheme "the absent fathers" showed that since men had more control over the division of labour than women, their collective choice not to do childcare, reflects the dominant definition of men's interests, and in fact helped them keep predominant power (Connell, 1987, p. 106). However, there were some signs of cracks in the gender hierarchy, which was demonstrated through my participants' discomfort with the traditional gender roles and the construction and performance of the liberal women, discussed in the next section.

9.2.3 Liberal women

Spousal support has been considered an important source for working women to manage stress (Rosenbaum & Cohen, 1999) and has been closely linked to women's positive career experience and outcomes (Heikkinen, Lämsä, & Hiillos, 2014; K. Ward, 2012). Spousal input can be in the form of hands-on or practical support like cooking, cleaning and childcaring, psychological support like being supportive of their significant other's pursuit of higher education or career (Dickson, 2020; Heikkinen et al., 2014), or practical career support such as helping with CV and job application (Heikkinen et al., 2014). Similar to findings of previous research (Dickson, 2020; Heikkinen et al., 2014; T. V. H. Vu, 2018), analysis reveals a theme of *liberal* women who enjoyed some equitable arrangements in domestic sphere and received different forms of support from spouses. I first discuss the arrangements between husbands and wives among my research participants and then critically analyse whether these arrangements originate from purest form of egalitarian or liberal thoughts (Deutsch, Kokot, & Binder, 2007) upheld by the contemporary communist Vietnamese government discussed in Chapter One.

The most common forms of support highlighted by participants were hands-on support such as doing household tasks and taking care of children (Participant 1, 2, 8, 10, 15, 16), psychological support such as supporting the pursuit of higher education (Participant 8, 12), supporting the completion of work at anti-social hours like weekends (Participant 5), and career assistance such as providing career advice or technical support to research activities (Participant 1). Participants perceived these supports to be crucial in their positive career experience and outcomes. The following extracts illustrate the forms of support provided by participants' spouses.

We have never formally discussed the task delegation ... My husband fulfils his domestic responsibilities without me asking. Whenever he comes home, he does all the household tasks which I have not completed (Participant 2).

He helped me to run some data analysis when I did my research. Secondly, sometimes he gave me some ideas from the viewpoint of the learners or colleagues, which helped me to see the problem. I think it was attributed to the fact that we followed the same career. But most of the time, he helped me with the schedule. For example, when I'm busy, he helps me with housework and childcare. I think it is a great advantage. As for contributions to family expense, we are in the same kinds of jobs, so we contribute equally (Participant 1)

A shared feature among many participants with high spousal input is that they either had spouses as academic staff (Participant 1, 16) or spouses with similar educational background (Participant 2, 16). This finding supports the assertion of Girod et al. (2011) that having academic partners is a predictor of productivity. One reason might be that academic partners have a better understanding of the nature and the demands of academic job than non-academic partners. Additionally, they might share the work problems and be able to provide helpful professional advice to their spouses from the viewpoint of an insider. In all three examples above (Participant 1, 2, 16), spouses took turns doing housework and taking care of children when their significant others were not available. However, it is unclear if taking-turns model disrupted quality time of the whole family together (Forsberg, 2009).

Another frequent explanation for spousal support is participants' description of their husbands as having progressive mindset in terms of household division of labour. For example, Participant 16, who met her husband when they were both studying abroad, described her husband as 'open-minded', and 'not bound by traditional Vietnamese thoughts'.

We were fortunate that we both studied in X [a Western country], so my husband is not bound by the traditional Vietnamese thoughts. He is very open-minded. I'm very lucky. We support each other in both our study, our work and our job. When I studied, he did the housework. If one cooks, the other does the dishes. Now we are both holding managerial positions, so we understand the nature of the other's job (Participant 16).

Similarly, Participant 2 perceived her husband who studied and worked in a Western country for the last ten years as having little knowledge of Vietnamese norms; therefore, he voluntarily shared the household work with her.

My husband does not interfere with my work. He has little knowledge of Vietnamese norms, particularly in relation to work ... He supports me to follow my passion.

Narratives from Participants 2 and 16 exemplify the association of gender-egalitarian attitudes with Western values. By describing their husbands as 'supporting' (Participant 2) and 'open-minded' (Participant 16), they positioned Vietnamese men as backward and tradition-bound (Mohanty, 1988) in opposition to the Western men with gender-egalitarian attitude. This presentation of the Vietnamese masculinity appeared to originate from a sense of self-imposed inferiority (Said, 1994) from a postcolonial feminist perspective. This finding is in consonant with the findings of Pyke and Johnson (2003) on Vietnamese and Korean American.

Furthermore, while spouses of many participants in this study were perceived to be liberal and actively shared the domestic work with their wives, the motivation for support was condition specific. For example, the motivation for Participant 8's husband to take an equal or even a bigger part of household chores was her health condition.

I'm lucky that my husband is not hesitant in doing household chores. We share the housework and sometimes he even does more than I do because my health is not good. He can do everything even the types of work that I can't. There were days when I did not even do any chores. Especially when I prepared for my Ph.D application. If I stay late at night to work, he will take the kids to school and let me sleep longer. I'm lucky that I have a husband who shares the work with me and sympathises for me. If I had to do the housework, everything must have been harder.

It is worth noting that Participant 8 repeatedly used the word 'lucky' when she talked about her husband's willingness to share the household tasks. Likewise, Participant 8 also used 'lucky' to describe her husband's open-mindedness. Their use of the word 'lucky' implies that the

expectation of women as a homemaker, which mirrors Confucian essentialisation of women's gender role in relation to marriage, family and domesticity (L. A. Hoang, 2020; Rosenlee, 2006) is still dominant. Participants in this study construct their husband's share of domestic responsibilities as luck brought about by chance rather than aligned to the liberal values promoted by the Vietnamese government in Chapter One. In this sense, this finding contributes to the discussion on egalitarian form of marriage from a Confucian context heavily dominated by gender essentialism.

A less frequently cited reason for the reduction of domestic responsibility academic women in this study took is the availability of paid household help from domestic helpers. Domestic helpers in Vietnam often cover domestic chores like grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning and these roles are often filled by women and girls from rural areas, who sometimes do not finish their schooling (Do & Brennan, 2015). The employment of domestic helpers in the household was perceived to reduce both the husband and wife's involvement in domestic work, and from Participant 23 and 25's perspectives, helped to reduce the tension in household division of labour. This finding in line with prior research on Vietnamese women (Do & Brennan, 2015; T. V. H. Vu, 2018), which highlighted different classes of women with some in a dominant position (academic women) and some in a subordinate position (domestic helpers). These two classes of women in my study suggest that there is some continuity in the legacies of Chinese and French colonialism which created "a class of women inferior to other women" (Leshkovich, 2011; Marr, 1976, p. 373) in the contemporary socialist Vietnam.

In summary, a surface reading of the extracts from interviews with Vietnamese female reveals some forms of egalitarian marriages with equal shares of domestic chores between wives and husbands. A postcolonial feminist lens highlights the legacies of Confucianism, French colonisation and contemporary influences on these arrangements and casts doubt on whether my participants were truly liberal. However, my participants perceived these arrangements to be beneficial to their career.

9.2.4 *Virtuous women at work*

The dwelling Confucian values in the Vietnamese society govern relationships not only at home but also in the workplace. Narratives from several participants shows that the Confucian ideals of dutiful wives within domestic sphere spill over into the workplace, which is in line with previous research on academic women in Confucian societies (Dang, 2017; Luke, 1998).

As presented in the previous section, Confucian values alongside legacies of French colonisation, and contemporary communist influences still provide guiding principles for appropriate female behaviours in contemporary Vietnam. Some of my research participants were under pressure to perform the dutiful wife role who took primary responsibilities for childcaring and rearing and other domestic responsibilities, made sacrifices and prioritised their husbands' career over their own career. Therefore, in the workplace, as observed by Participant 14, some women were hesitant in making career progress because their husband "will not be happy about it". Their husbands' unhappiness in relation to their wives' career development might stem from the assumption that their wives would neglect their domestic responsibilities if they had to fulfil the heavy workloads of senior management positions (Dang, 2017). Her observation fits Confucian essentialisation of women's gender role in relation to marriage, family and domesticity (L. A. Hoang, 2020; Rosenlee, 2006).

Moreover, dutiful wives need to maintain their virtues both at home and at work. Confucian precepts like 'men and women should remain physically distant' are still relevant in today's society (Rydström, 2006). Socialising with men even for the purposes of work is deemed undesirable in a decent woman (T. N. B. Ngo, 2004), as illustrated by Participant 14's narratives.

If a woman gets a management position, she might need to join certain activities with others at management level, many of whom are men. It might make her husband jealous and mistrust her.

Similarly, Participant 16 struggled to maintain "appropriate" behaviours by keeping distance from other men including those at senior management and preserve their reputation due to her gender.

The interaction between me and that person [president of university] does not benefit us both, especially when our genders are different. I am always worried about being judged by other people, especially if we meet in an office with only two of us. When and where the meeting takes place is a sensitive matter. The newly appointed president will be judged. I will be judged. People will spread rumour that she meets him in order to move up the rank. If both are female, it is not a big issue. But if a man and woman meet, people will wonder what happens behind that closed door. Often people at high management ranks have a closed office. Therefore, I am hesitant to be in touch with

them. If I have to, it will be in an open space. Some meetings require personal space, but they are very rare.

Although it is not unusual that women and men's interactions in the workplace carry the risk of being negatively judged by colleagues due to the assumption of potential sexual issues (Bushardt, Fretwell, & Holdnak, 1991; Young, Cady, & Foxon, 2006), Participant 16's narratives shows the extreme view of that issue. Her use of the word 'always' indicates that her fear of 'being judged' is an inherent problem. Her fear might be linked to not only the accusation of infidelity but also her integrity and her competence in her job. While she mentioned that both her and the male president might be judged by colleagues, her narratives implied that she would suffer more greatly from the misjudgement than the male president would. Furthermore, her narrative shows the legitimisation and naturalisation of sexual exchange between men and women, and the legitimisation of men's control over their wives' career (Schippers, 2007).

Furthermore, Participant 16's failure to establish interaction with others, especially people in positions of power, due to her fear of being misjudged might negatively affect her career prospects as it limits her ability to build alliances and to gain power (Huczynski, 2013). Furthermore, she might face work disruption and decrease the smooth workflow due to her lack of influence (Baturu & Elkink, 2017). Influence used in this context is "the ability to affect another's attitudes, beliefs or behaviours – seen only in its effect – without using coercion or formal position, and in a way that influences believe that they are acting in their best interests" (Huczynski, 2013, p. 7). This finding supports those of Mate, McDonald, and Do (2019) and Maheshwari and Nayak (2020) that the lack of interaction in both formal and informal meetings creates barriers to Vietnamese academic women's career progression.

Overall, the invisible barrier to my research participants' career progression arose from their pressure to conform to the virtuous women at work. Similar to the role of filial daughters, dutiful wives and nurturing mothers in domestic sphere, they actively performed the virtuous women role in fear of penalty (i.e., doubt on their integrity and competence) for the failure to perform.

9.2.4 Summary

In summary, the liberal lens in Chapter Eight shows that women in this study were less committed to their career progress but the postcolonial lens shows they were not free of social regulations and constraints (Dillabough, 2005) resulted from the legacies of colonialism in the

Vietnamese society. The construction and performance of gender in both domestic and public sphere by female academics were predominantly characterised by the Confucian essentialism of gender roles in relations to family and domesticity although there were traces of the liberal ideas arising from the Western colonisation and contemporary global influences.

9.3 Impact of waves of colonisation on organisational practices

More than three quarter of the world's population is living in a postcolonial condition (Colignon, 2004); therefore, there is no doubt that colonial practices are still having significant impacts on organisational thinking and practices (B. S. Long & Mills, 2008). An analysis from the postcolonial feminist lens reveals four themes in relations to the impacts of Confucianism, French colonialism and contemporary global influences on HEIs' practices in Vietnam.

9.3.2 Embrace of Western education

The number of Vietnamese going overseas, particularly Russia, United States, United Kingdom and Australia, to pursue international education has increased for the last few decades due to the common perception that a foreign credential brings more job opportunities and is beneficial to one's career progress (L. H. N. Tran, 2019). Similar to the trend, more than half of my research participants (54%) gained their bachelor or postgraduate qualifications overseas. While this trend can be explained as a characteristics of global integration (C. H. Nguyen, 2013), a postcolonial feminist lens interprets this embrace of Western education as a hegemonic relation (Scholz, 2008) which view Western education as superior and Vietnamese education as inferior.

As aforementioned in the previous section, narratives from Participants 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17 illustrate that their parents saw their daughters' attainment of scholarships to go overseas and study as a family pride. To academic women in this study, studying abroad helped them to be more 'confident' and 'have a strong base of knowledge' (Participant 12), offer them 'new perspectives and approaches' to their teaching practices, have 'a more professional style' and 'critical and insightful thinking' (Participant 13, 27) and 'be more compassionate towards students' (Participant 15). All Participants 12, 13 and 15 considered their overseas education as a 'life-changing' experience which had a positive impact on their professional development. Because of a sense of prestige attached with Western education, many participants actively searched for opportunities to further their study overseas. For example, at the time of the interview, Participant 23 was doing research on a doctoral programme overseas and her workplace strongly supported her to do so.

The embrace of Western education among my research participants appeared to illustrate a sense of self-imposed inferiority (Said, 1994) in relation with the Vietnamese education. Although no participants openly criticised Vietnamese education, none of them spoke highly or described Vietnamese education in positive light. This finding supports that of Thondhlana, Abdulrahman, Chiyevu Garwe, and McGrath (2020) that colonialism still operates on contemporary beings and the impacts of colonisation is maintained in our self-image (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

9.3.3 Mimicking of Western academia's work structures around research and publication

The education reform in Vietnam, as mentioned in Chapter Two, has brought about changes like the increase in enrolment at tertiary level but also pressure to produce research. Similar to prior studies on the Vietnamese academia (T. V. H. Vu, 2018), a recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst most research participants that research and publication was becoming increasingly important, which mimicked the Western academia's focus on research and publication along with teaching (Altbach, 1989, 2004). Within this process of mimicking Western academia's practices by Vietnamese HEIs, female academics with less research outputs were disadvantaged in their career progression.

First, research is a compulsory task in all participants' universities. For example, in participant 26's university, any academic staff are required to spend some compulsory time on researching. If they did not meet the minimum requirement of spending a certain number of research hours annually, their income would be reduced. Because of the importance of research, some participants (Participants 1, 4, 18, 19) aligned research outputs with their professional development and career advancement.

Furthermore, research outputs were used as a criterion for promotion decisions either to higher academic or to managerial positions. To participant 24, a lecturer with roughly ten-year experience, her lack of publication was a barrier to the progress to a managerial position in her workplace. Meanwhile, participant 15 credited her strong research record to her associate professorship. This finding reflects the deep involvement of Vietnamese government in encouraging public universities to become major scientific centres and increase their income through the commercialisation of research activities (Martin Hayden & Le-Nguyen, 2020), discussed in Chapter One.

Moreover, among research activities, publication in international refereed journals in English was encouraged the most by HEIs, which reflects the Vietnamese government's focus on

research and development as a key element of its growth strategy in the present days (Harman & Le, 2010). A range of strategies were taken by the Vietnamese HEIs in this study to promote conformity to newly imposed government requirement. For example, participant 10's workplace provided financial rewards to academic staff published in international refereed journals. Participant 16's faculty held weekly meetings for academic staff to discuss their research and get feedback from their colleagues. The development of research groups was also supported by the university's management board.

While my research participants might interpret this finding as the Vietnamese governments, HEIs and individuals' effort in meeting international standard, there appeared to be uncontested adoption of the Western academia's model which focuses on research and publication (Altbach, 1999, 2004). Furthermore, similar to the findings of Boussebaa and Brown (2017), public universities in my study acted as a system of control through organisational practices of rewarding or punishing the (non)conformers. Additionally, like participants of other research on HEIs in postcolonial contexts (Thondhlana et al., 2020), my participants were unreflexive of the legitimization of research outputs including publishing in international journals as a criterion for academic performance and promotion. This finding demonstrates the continuity of the "unequal relations of power" (Buckner & Stein, 2020, p. 151) between the Western practices and the postcolonial contexts' practices found in other research (Adebisi, 2016; Mullen, 2020; Sinha & Bathini, 2019).

9.3.4 Economic deprivation of an academic career

An academic profession across contexts is generally characterised as competitive in salary (Plashing Vole, 2017) or mid-scale in comparison with other professions (Coates et al., 2009; Neely, 2020). However, narratives from my research participants showed Vietnam's economic deprivation in the form of low wages which fits well with the findings of (Martin Hayden & Lam, 2009; McCornac, 2012; T. V. H. Vu, 2018) and the lingering impacts of the French education system introduced to Vietnam during the colonial period in the form of non-negotiable national salary scale (Angermuller, 2017).

Despite heavy workloads, narratives from my research participants showed Vietnam's economic deprivation in the form of low wages. As all my research participants were from public universities, their monthly salaries were based on a non-negotiable national salary scale, which ranges from 3.4 million Vietnam Dong (roughly 200 NZD) per month for assistant lecturers to around 11 million Vietnam Dong (approximately 700 NZD) for senior lecturers,

assistant professors and professors (MOET, 2020). Vietnam's salary scale resembles France academic system which is regulated by the national bureaucracy and lacks market mechanism and has no space for academic staff's salary negotiations (Angermuller, 2017). This finding implies the continuity of French colonial legacy in Vietnam's academic system, similar to other academic systems in former French colonies like Laos (St George, 2020).

In accordance with findings of prior research on the Vietnamese academia (Martin Hayden & Lam, 2009; McCornac, 2012; T. V. H. Vu, 2018) and international contexts like Cambodia (Maxwell et al., 2015) or Arab (Ensour, Al Maaitah, & Kharabsheh, 2017), the fixed salaries generated from the academic job were perceived to be low in comparison with salaries from an industry career (Participant 8) and to be insufficient to cover the cost of living (Participant 1, 4, 13, 20, 24, 25). Some of my participants had to take extra jobs to meet financial obligations. Participant 4 opened her own business; therefore, she must play two roles: being an academic staff and being a manager for her business. The extra job has shifted her focus from teaching and researching to managing her business and now her extra job has become her main job. Participant 24 did not take any non-academic jobs, but extra classes. She shared her hectic schedule:

There is no day that I am completely free. There are days when I must teach 4 classes. I rarely have any day with only one class. The average number of classes I teach is from 2 to 4 classes. Each class has three period and each period lasts 45 minutes ... In order to be able to live with the teaching job, in addition to the main work, I also take joint-program classes in both my university and other universities. I do not do any other non-teaching jobs.

Gender differences in the types of extra job was observed by Participant 13. In her workplace, female academics often took extra teaching hours while male academics often worked on projects outside the academic world. Participant 13 observed that some male academics after working for businesses chose to quit their teaching career and focus on a more lucrative career in industries.

Meanwhile, those who did not have to take the financial burdens have considerable financial supports from their family including their husbands and parents. For example, Participant 13 who held a middle management role thought of her husband as the breadwinner. Other participants were dependent on their parents' support to fund their higher education and living expenses. For example, Participant 1 received financial help from her parents to fund her higher

study as her income went to supporting her own family. Similarly, Participant 20 lived with her parents and had her parents pay for her living expenses, except for personal items like self-care products as most of her income was spent on her higher education.

This finding has several implications. First, the non-negotiable national salary scale for academic staff through a liberal reading can be interpreted as non-discriminatory between women and men and free from gender pay gap widely reported in many contexts (Barbezat & Hughes, 2005; Momani, Dreher, & Williams, 2019; Takahashi, Takahashi, & Maloney, 2018). However, an alternative view from the postcolonial feminist lens shows the practice of low non-negotiable national salary scale in the Vietnamese academia is deeply gendered as it emphasises women's dependence on men's economic resources (Raymo & Iwasawa, 2005).

Secondly, this finding helps to explain the movement of women into the teaching profession which was traditionally reserved for men in a Confucian society (London, 2011). The characterisation of an academic career in public universities as low-paid made the profession become less lucrative for men and paved the way for women to enter the profession (Cortina & San Román, 2006). In this sense, the movement of women into teaching in Vietnam recalls early communist Vietnamese women's role during the Vietnam war when they entered traditionally male occupations in large number (Fahey, 1998), replaced their husband and assumed control of the family to free their husband for combats (Turley, 1972).

Thirdly, the increase in parents' financial support might reflect the changes in the Vietnamese society in relation to the trend in the smaller family size thanks to the implementation of the two-child policy in Vietnam since 1988 (Goodkind, 1995; A. P. Ngo, 2020). The smaller the family size, the easier it is to help the children (Henretta, Van Voorhis, & Soldo, 2018). While receiving financial help from parents and co-residence with parents are not restricted to Vietnam only, the low labour income set by the government suggests the state's weak welfare system (García-Andrés, Martínez, & Aguayo-Téllez, 2021) in which the government withdrew from providing support and ensuring social security to its citizens (X. Nguyen & Tran, 2010; S. Park & Morash, 2017).

9.3.5 Expectation to conform to seniority

As aforementioned in Chapter Two, Vietnam society under the influence of the teaching of Confucianism places an emphasis on the respect for authority in both domestic and public spheres (D. Y. F. Ho & Ho, 2008; Rappa & Tan, 2003). A theme emerging from my research participants' narratives is the expectation to respect for authority and the discouragement of

challenge and question of authority. This theme, which illustrates that the core values of Confucianism is deeply rooted in social relationships in contemporary Vietnamese HEIs, supports the findings of Thang Dinh Truong et al. (2016).

Narratives from four participants (Participant 15, 19, 23, 25) show senior academic staff's high expectation for junior colleagues to conform to their professional opinion and the challenge and question of authority considered disrespectful in a Confucian society (Hallinger, 2010). Seniority in a Confucian context refers to both age and length of service in an organisation (G.-M. Chen & Chung, 2002). A typical illustration from narratives of this group is presented by Participant 19. When participant 19 finished her master's degree, returned to her workplace and attempted to update the teaching materials, she received strong opposition from her senior colleagues.

When I returned from [country X] upon finishing my master's degree, I had so much energy and enthusiasm and expected that I would make some changes ... However, all my energy and enthusiasm quickly went away after the first six months. I redesigned the teaching materials for my paper. The colleague who teaches the same paper strongly opposed to it. She used to teach it in a very simple manner. I redesigned, added many practices weekly. At that time, I didn't realise weekly assignments are too much for my students. When my students started to show their opposition, she told me, "You see, when you change things, students will hate you". In my university, students will register for their favourite teachers. If no students register for my class, there will be more class. I am shocked.

The use of the word 'hate' by Participant 19's senior colleague to oppose to Participant 19's changes in paper design denoted a sense of frustration and resentment. The senior colleague's seniority in this case was challenged because Participant 19 initiated an idea, which was often a freedom enjoyed by senior staff in contexts influenced by Confucianism (G.-M. Chen & Chung, 2002; Hallinger & Truong, 2014). This finding supports the assertion of Shin and Jang (2012) that when junior academic staff are more proactive in changes, conflicts between senior and junior staff are more likely to happen.

The high expectation for junior academic staff was perceived by my research participants to be both advantageous and harmful to their career development. Participant 25's Dean, who was also her supervisor during her undergraduate years, expected Participant 25 to follow her career advice in relation to boosting research outputs. This expectation became a push factor for

Participant 25 to progress in her career. On the other hand, this expectation made her feel ‘pressured’. Furthermore, the expectation to conform to seniority tends to silence junior staff’s voice. For example, Participant 23 felt she did not ‘dare’ to raise her own opinion, particularly when her opinion went against her senior’s. The norm of non-confrontation to maintain harmonious relationships at work has also been reported by studies on the Vietnamese HE sector (Thang Dinh Truong et al., 2016) or other Asian contexts (Hallinger, 2010). This finding also indicates the naturalisation and legitimation of the unequal power distribution between junior and senior academic staff in this study (Thang Dinh Truong et al., 2016, p. 87).

9.3.6 Summary

The power of colonisation as a social, political, and historical process has influenced and even transformed HEIs and their practices. A postcolonial feminist lens has unveiled the continuities of colonial legacies in HEIs’ practices in my study. The most feasible trace of colonial legacies is the structure of Vietnamese academia which mimicked the French education system and the contemporary American and European universities’ focus on research and publications. My research participants appeared to internalise the superiority of Western academia practices. Meanwhile, they had to navigate their career in a work culture influenced by Confucian values which pressured them to conform to seniority. Generally, the impacts of waves of colonialism on organisational practices limit their career opportunities and consequently negatively influenced their career experiences.

9.4 Resistance to imposed values

Postcolonial theorists have argued that those who are constructed as inferior are not passive recipients of imposed hierarchy and their resistance can be found in their social interactions (Thomson & Jones, 2015). A theme emerging from my participants’ narratives shows that while they conformed to the imposed values on the construction and performance of gender and organisational practices, they also resisted to those values by displaying non-submissive behaviours and actions (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017; Sinha & Bathini, 2019).

9.4.2 Resistance to Confucian essentialism of women’s gender role

Section 9.2 illustrated the powerful impacts of Confucian essentialisation of women’s gender role in relation to marriage, family and domesticity on my research participants. To varying extent, my research participants demonstrated their conformity to the role of filial daughters, dutiful wives and self-sacrificing mothers at home while maintaining the role of virtuous women at work. However, my participants’ resistance to the imposed roles by Confucianism

was observed in their questioning of the unequal division of labour, the way they construct themselves as financially independent and contesting to the patriarchal power within the domestic sphere. While I could not locate any other empirical research conducted on the contemporary Vietnamese academia through the postcolonial feminist lens with which I could directly compare this finding, the resistance strategies against Confucian patriarchal power were reported in studies on Vietnamese immigrant women (Nazli, 1990) or other Asian groups (Gu, 2019).

First of all, my participants accommodated their resistance to the Confucian essentialisation of women's gender role by questioning the unequal division of labour in the domestic sphere. In Participant 9 and 24's narratives, they emphasised their hectic schedule and high workloads. For example, Participant 9 who was in a middle management position took extra projects in addition to her usual workload in her workplace and Participant 24 took up extra teaching hours from other universities. They both highlighted their contribution to the family expenses and demonstrated their economic independence from their husbands and partners.

My family expenses are shared between both of us. The amount contributed is not strictly 50-50, but each of us takes half of family responsibilities (Participant 9).

I still go to work, and I am not financially dependent on my husband (Participant 24).

Therefore, both Participant 9 and 24 characterised the unequal allocation of domestic work as 'unfair'. The characterisation of the allocation of domestic work as unfair and the way they constructed themselves as financially independent from their husband and partners suggest that the domestic sphere became their resistant space (Gabriel, 1999). Within that space, they contest to the Confucian ideals of women's economic dependence on men and women's domesticity (L. A. Hoang, 2020). While Participant 9 and 24's form of resistance was "covert" and "nonconfrontational" (Mumby, 2005, p. 32) and might not result in large-scale changes in material conditions (Murphy, 1998), there is a potential for change that lies in the multiplicity and inconsistency of their gender construction and performance (Butler, 1990).

In addition to the questioning of normalised practices in Confucian society, narratives from participants in my study also displayed a resistance to the Confucian patriarchal power within the domestic sphere in a more explicit manner, as demonstrated by Participant 18 and her mother in her narratives. Section 9.2 demonstrated that women's career development was undervalued in the Vietnamese society, and my research participants were expected to orient their life towards marriage and a happy family. Finding a husband is a constant concern for

young women and families with unwedded daughters. The appropriate age for a woman to marry is before thirty (Soucy & Tanabe, 2017); otherwise, she is considered “*é*”, which literally means unwanted goods in a store/shop. This theme is reflected strongly in participant 18’s narratives. Her family put much effort in finding a husband for her when she reached her late twenty.

When I was around 25 to 27 years old, my family tried to find a husband for me. I had to meet one guy in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening to decide on a suitable match. Meanwhile, I was still waiting for updates on my scholarship application [for my Ph.D overseas].

When she was offered a scholarship to pursue her Ph.D. overseas, the patriarch of her family - her uncle who had the most powerful voice in her family, opposed to her decision. The only support for higher study she received was from her mother.

When I was granted with the scholarship, my family didn’t want me to go. My mother was convinced to let me go, but my uncle was not. He was powerful. He gathered the whole family, then asked my mother to travel all the way from my hometown to meet the whole family [to talk me out of it]. I was very unhappy. My uncle told my mother, “Look at your daughter, she is not that good looking, her communication skills is not that good. This is a perfect age to get married. Her qualifications are fine now; the master’s degree is enough. Why Ph.D?”.

Participant 18’s father was not mentioned, but both she and her mother were expected to conform to the decisions of the most powerful person in her family – her uncle. Finally, her mom convinced her uncle to let her go and pursue her education.

Of course, my mother wanted me to stay at home and get married but she understood my desire for learning. She told my uncle, “She [Participant 18] has made up her mind, let her go”.

Similar to the stories of Participant 9 and 24 above, Participant 18 and her mother struggled against a powerful patriarchal structure that defined women’s roles and actions. However, as demonstrated by Participant 18’s narrative, they challenged the reified gender hierarchy while their strategies were different. Participant 18 fought for her “individual autonomy” (K. E. Ferguson, 1984, p. 157) while her mother used the mother’s love to convince her uncle. Participant 18’s mother still had her own voice in the patriarchal system although it was unclear

in the narrative where the source of her voice was originated from. This finding illustrates that even though Confucian has been a powerful and dominant force in the Vietnamese society, the practices of Confucian in Vietnam is not a replica of traditional Confucianism which “fosters respect for authority to such an extent that individuals are trapped in submissive positions and attitudes” (Rappa & Tan, 2003, p. 92). This finding also supports the assertion of Kondo (2009) that resistance should be framed as contextual and dynamic and should be analysed within a political, economic and historical context.

9.4.3 Resistance to the mimicking of Western academia’s practices

Chapter Eight shows that Vietnamese public universities in this study do not distinguish between teaching-focused or research-focused academic staff and narratives from my research participants show research activities including publishing in journals, presenting in conferences and participating in research projects were a part of their responsibilities at work. As discussed in section 9.3.2, this practice mirrors the focus of Western academia HEIs in this study implemented several strategies to promote conformity to institutional norms including giving financial rewards and encouraging academic staff to involve in intellectually stimulating conversations, and meetings. Nonetheless, narratives from some of my participants also demonstrated resistance to the mimicking of Western academia’s practices.

While my participants conformed to the Western academia’s practices which emphasised the importance of research and publication along with teaching (Altbach, 1989, 2004), some of them displayed their resistance to their universities’ emphasis on research and publication by identifying themselves as more teaching focused. They positioned the critical aspect of their jobs as bringing knowledge to the students. A typical comment was from Participant 3.

My only wish is that my students find my lectures helpful. I have been trying to achieve that by helping them to understand the lectures and best prepare well for the exams.

They understood that the lack of research would negatively impact their career prospects, but they stressed their career goals were not aligned with promotion to higher ranks.

Teaching is my prime focus. I have no intention to develop a research-based career. ... [my lack of publication affects my chances to progress to managerial role] but I have no ambition to climb the ladder (Participant 24).

Both participants 3 and 24 represented a group of academic staff who “have not internalised the superiority of the new practices or have not adjusted to new reality” (Sinha & Bathini, 2019,

p. 328). In Participants 3 and 24's narratives, their workplace was not only their site of resistance but also their site of control and discipline for non-conformers (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017). Their resistance process which operated at an individually level was not accommodated by their colleagues or their supervisors; therefore, their resistance did not necessarily result in the weakening of authority (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017; Sinha & Bathini, 2019; Yousfi, 2014).

9.4.4 Summary

This section presents various acts of resistance among my research participants against the imposed values on the construction and performance of gender as well as against the imposed Western values on organisational practices. Their acts were sometimes explicit (e.g., Participant 18's mother convinced the extended family to let her daughters to pursue higher education) and sometimes subtle (e.g., participants' discomfort with unequal division of labour). Therefore, findings from this section echoed Prasad and Prasad's (1998) claim that "it is important to avoid essentialising routine resistance and treating it as an established set of actions or behaviours" (p. 251) and feminists' conceptualisation of resistance as local and contextual (Trethewey, 1997).

9.5 Chapter conclusion

Postcolonial feminism provides a lens to challenge gender oppression within the Vietnamese context and avoids the generalisation of the Vietnamese academic women by putting their experience at the centre of analysis (J. M. Anderson & McCann, 2002). From both individual and organisational level, data analysis reveals the constraints my participants met in their career due to the "historical processes that have produced systemic inequities and oppression" (J. M. Anderson & McCann, 2002, p. 15). The interpretation in this chapter highlights that the concentration of women in certain professions and underrepresentation of women in senior and high management level should not be credited to women's low career motivation, as analysed from the liberal feminist lens. Furthermore, providing women with career opportunities as advocated by liberal feminist response is not sufficient without understanding the difficulties caused by patriarchal structures in combination with colonial/neo-colonial systems (Spivak, 1988). Furthermore, although the large-scale changes in material conditions (Murphy, 1998) might not be visible from my participants' acts of resistance to the imposed values on their construction and performance of gender and on the organisational practices due to the lack of accommodation and cooperation from various actors within HEIs, the multiplicity and inconsistency of their performances gives me hope for potential changes (Butler, 1990). In the next chapter, I discuss the main findings from the liberal and postcolonial feminist lenses with

regards to how they answer the research questions and the implications for the future of feminism.

CHAPTER TEN: A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF THE SHARED AND CONTEXT-SPECIFIC WOMEN'S ISSUES

10.1 Introduction

In this study, I have used the liberal and the postcolonial feminist lenses to explore how waves of colonisation have impacted the way Vietnamese academic women construct and perform gender and experience unequal outcomes at work. In previous chapters, the findings from interviews with twenty-eight Vietnamese academic women were presented. These findings revealed the diverse and complex gendered processes and experiences these women navigated in their careers.

This chapter connects the findings in Chapter Eight and Nine to the literature discussed in Chapter Three and Four and provides a bridge between the study's findings and the contributions, implications, and conclusion in the final chapter. First, I present the interplay between Vietnam's social, economic, and historical context and the construction and performance of gender. I then discuss organisational practices which either constraint or facilitate women's career in relation to gender performativity against the backdrop of multiple ways of colonisation. The discussion of the first two sections serves as the basis for my arguments for an alternative understanding of equality in the Vietnamese context and the need for a re-articulation of women's issues in the last two sections.

10.2 Interplay between Vietnamese social, economic, and historical contexts and academic women's construction and performance of gender

The main purpose of this study is to explore the way Vietnamese academic women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes at work against the backdrop of multiple waves of colonisation. Chapter Eight and Nine show that my participants' process of doing or performing gender was not unitary. In contrast, it had multiple performances or multiple forms of femininities which were complex and sometimes contradictory and affected their career experience in different ways. While those femininities resemble Connell's (1987) description of emphasised femininities and Schippers' (2007) notion of pariah femininities, they also show the impacts of Vietnam's social, economic, and historical context in shaping an alternative femininity. In my discussion of different forms of Vietnamese femininities, I join other scholars (Godec, 2020; Hennekam & Shymko, 2020) in challenging the "relative stability of gender performance" within a particular space (Godec, 2020, p. 156). This section responds to sub-questions (1), (2) and (3).

10.2.1 Emphasised femininities

As described in Chapter Three, ‘emphasised femininity’ is “the pattern of femininity which is given most cultural and ideological support ... patterns such as sociability ... compliance ... [and] sexual receptivity [to men]” (Connell, 1987, p. 24). The findings in Chapter Eight and Nine suggest that the construction and performance of Vietnamese academic women fits well with the subordinate characteristics of Connell’s (1987) emphasised femininities. While Connell’s (1987) notion of emphasised femininities is based on white, heterosexual, socially elite, feminine women, my study contributes to the understanding of emphasised femininity in grounded on heterosexual, socially elite, feminine women whose ideals of femininity were influenced by Confucianism as a dominant social ideology.

The finding with “the most cultural and ideological support” (Connell, 1987, p. 24) and fits well with Connell’s (1987) notion of emphasised femininities among my participants is the construction and performance of the nurturing mothers who was the primary caregivers of their children and prioritised childrearing and caring above other tasks. This role of nurturing mothers is aligned with Confucian essentialisation of women’s gender role in relation to motherhood (Rosenlee, 2006) and fits the ideals of femininity who “accomplished at work and adept at housework” by the Vietnamese socialist state (L. A. Hoang, 2020, p. 297). My participants’ mothering roles defined not only their actions but also their expectations for behaviours in others. They safeguarded and limited their husbands/spouses’ involvement in child-related tasks. They alienated and isolated single and childless women. Furthermore, they internalised and seldomly challenged the assigned gender roles. This finding supports a considerable body of previous research which places motherhood at the core of femininity in a variety of geographical locations like the UK (Choi, Henshaw, Baker, & Tree, 2005), Canada (Malacrida, 2009), and the UAE (Dickson, 2018, 2020). This finding also endorses the feminist position that motherhood and mothering behaviours continue to be an important site to examine women’s lives and gender inequality (Averett, 2021) regardless of contexts.

While my participants conformed to the performance of the mother roles like women in other contexts, my study uncovered a more nuanced picture. Participants’ processes of reinforcing and contesting the nurturing mother role happened simultaneously. There were signs of “rupture” (Renold & Ringrose, 2008, p. 313) or “cracks” (Hennekam & Shymko, 2020, p. 800) which were demonstrated through my participants’ use of ‘time-consuming’ or ‘burden’ (Participant 5, 9, 17) to refer to child-related tasks and their attempt to find work-life balance. However, while participants contested to the nurturing mother role, their performances might

still be regarded as acceptable, which maintained their intelligibility (Butler, 2004). In this sense, my study contributes to the nuanced understanding of how powerful Confucian as a dominant ideology governs gender intelligibility despite signs of cracks over time.

Another part of the Vietnamese femininity which matches with Connell's (1987) notion of emphasised femininities is my participants' compliance to Confucius' teachings at work. At home, my participants constructed and performed their roles as filial daughters, dutiful wives, and nurturing mothers while at work, they performed virtuous chastity by avoiding socialising with men, keeping physical distance with men and maintaining *appropriate* behaviours. Furthermore, some of them chose to sacrifice their career by staying in Vietnam and supporting their husbands to pursue an overseas education which could boost his career. Similar to the conformity to the role nurturing mothers in domestic sphere, participants' performance of the virtuous women role appeared to be motivated by gender intelligibility. They performed virtuous women in fear that their failure to perform might trigger negative social responses (i.e., doubt on their integrity and competence). This finding demonstrates that the overarching impact of Confucianism starts at home, extends to the public domain and governs my research participants' behaviours at work. Although most recent studies on Vietnamese academic women's experience at work in Vietnam (Dang, 2017; Do & Brennan, 2015; Funnell & Dao, 2013; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012; T. V. H. Vu, 2018) acknowledge the pervasive impacts of Confucianism on contemporary Vietnamese social life, none of them focuses on women's moving across the traditional image of Vietnamese women into the public realm of work. In this sense, my study highlights how professional life and family life affect one another (G. L. Staines, 1980) and expands the understanding of how femininities are enacted between places and spaces (Paechter, 2003).

In summary, Vietnamese femininities which endorses the subordinate characteristics of Connell's (1987) emphasised femininities were shown through the construction and performance of the nurturing mothers and the virtuous women at work. The commitment of Vietnamese academic women in my study emphasised femininities was motivated by gender intelligibility which was governed by Confucianism as a dominant social ideology. The examination of Vietnamese emphasised femininities contributes to the nuanced understanding of how emphasised femininity are shaped and enacted within a particular space and between places. My next section critically discusses my participants' performances of pariah femininities which is often positioned as the opposite of emphasised femininities in gender hegemony.

10.2.2 Pariah femininities

Another performance of femininities is Schippers' (2007) pariah femininities, which is regarded as socially undesirable and contaminating the relationship between masculinity and femininity (Khanikar, 2016; Schippers, 2007; Stone & Gorga, 2014). While findings in Chapter Eight and Nine suggest that Vietnamese academic women in my study embodied is Schippers' (2007) pariah femininities, the "locally defined" pariah femininities (Schippers, 2007, p. 96) in Vietnam context revolve around being authoritative, assertive, aggressive, tough, and straightforward, which is opposite to the conventional Confucian ideals of femininity (e.g., submissive, compliant) presented in the previous section.

Examples of this enactment is the demonisation of female leaders and the alienation and isolation of academic staff who did not conform to the ideals of femininity in the Vietnamese context. Firstly, women who demonstrate behaviours which are perceived to be masculine like being critical, assertive, or aggressive were demonised, or in other words, viewed negatively by their female subordinates. The narratives of Participant 3 show her negative perception of her female leader as her female leader enacted masculine behaviours such as being authoritative, aggressive, tough and straightforward. Another indication of Vietnamese academic women's embodiment of pariah femininity is the alienation and isolation of those who contradicted or detached themselves from practices defined as feminine and demonstrated typical characteristics of masculinity. A notable example was Participant 15 who used 'straightforward', 'agile', 'clearly' or 'loudly' to describe her communication style in the workplace. However, her masculine communication style alienated her from other colleagues and her supervisors, and consequently made her an outsider in her workplace. While this finding is in line with prior research (Khanikar, 2016; Schippers, 2007; Stone & Gorga, 2014). which shows the exclusion of "undesirable" women who embodied pariah femininities, those who demonstrated pariah femininities did not "constitute a refusal to complement hegemonic masculinity in a relation of subordination and therefore are threatening to male dominance" (Schippers 2007, p.95). They did not threaten the economic power, an essential part of the Vietnamese masculinities (Thai, 2012). Instead, in case of Participant 15 who demonstrated undesirable qualities, she also conformed to the Vietnamese ideals of masculinity and femininity and the taken-for-granted feature of hegemonic function. She endorsed masculinity's position of superiority in relation to femininity and therefore, legitimised the hegemonic masculinity. In this regard, this finding both confirmed and extended current

understandings on Schippers' (2007) pariah femininities and their dynamics with the social, economic and historical contexts.

10.2.3 An alternative femininity

Another form of femininity which does not align with Connell's (1987) emphasised femininities or Schippers' (2007) pariah femininities but constitutes a space in which resistance can take form is alternative femininity (Budgeon, 2014; Fernandez-Lasa, Usabiaga Arruabarrena, Lozano-Sufrategui, & Drew, 2021; McGinty, 2007). The findings in Chapter Nine show the Vietnamese academic women in my study constructed an alternative femininity by constructing themselves as financially independent and resisting the hierarchical and patriarchal system in both domestic and public sphere. The facilitators of my participants' resistance strategies were drawn from the context specific factors as follows. This section responds to the sub-question (3).

First, one enactment of a Vietnamese alternative femininity is that my research participants destabilised the gender norms, which have been predominantly influenced by Confucianism, by displaying the discomfort with the unequal division of labour and constructing themselves as financially independent. For example, both Participant 9 and Participant 24 highlighted their contribution to the family expenses by taking extra work and demonstrated their economic independence from their husbands. Here the ease to take extra work in the context of an increasing presence of female participation in the Vietnamese labour market (Banerji et al., 2018), which can be attributed to Doi Moi Policy and becoming financially independence is the key to facilitate the construction of alternative femininity among my participants. This form of femininity might threaten the economic power, which was an essential part of the Vietnamese masculinities (Thai, 2012), as discussed in the previous chapter.

Another form of alternative femininity among my participants was their struggle against a powerful patriarchal structure that defined women's roles and actions like Participant 18's objection to the pressure from her uncle to stay and home and find a husband instead of pursuing her PhD overseas. The source of resistance was derived from both her awareness of "individual autonomy" (K. E. Ferguson, 1984, p. 157) and her mother's support. Meanwhile, the origin of her awareness was not made explicit in her narrative. It might either come from her personal desire for education, her exposure to another culture during her postgraduate studies or her socialisation with her peers and colleagues. Nonetheless, her strategy echoed the resistance strategies of Basque's women in the study of Fernandez-Lasa et al. (2021) who had

a network of relationships. These networks created space for them to feel supported and encouraged and escaped stereotypes.

Furthermore, while my participants conformed to the Western academia's practices which emphasised the importance of research and publication along with teaching (Altbach, 1989, 2004), a practice which benefits more men than women as illustrated in Chapter Four, some of them displayed their resistance to their universities' emphasis on research and publication by identifying themselves as more teaching focused. This group of participants' resistances originated from the conceptualisation of their jobs as bringing knowledge to the students. This conceptualisation, which resembles the Confucian understanding of teachers' role (T. Q. N. Nguyen, 2016), might "emphasise their dignity" and "create a sense of belonging" they have in their HEIs (Fernandez-Lasa et al., 2021).

A noteworthy point from these findings is that their resistance against the Confucian and Western-mimicked system was done individually rather than collectively, unlike the research participants of prior studies (Bäckström, 2013; Fernandez-Lasa et al., 2021; Mattsson, 2015). The lack of collective resistance among participants in this study might prevent them from creating "a safe place in which (in)equality became a non-issue" (Mattsson, 2015, p. 697). Similar to Bangladeshi women in the study of Nahar and van der Geest (2014), they might resist to "survive" rather than to challenge and transform a system of domination ((Nahar & van der Geest, 2014, p. 394)

While the collective resistance strategies of women in other contexts (Bäckström, 2013; Fernandez-Lasa et al., 2021; Mattsson, 2015) might be somewhat effective, I argue that caution must be applied if my participants or women in any other contexts attempt to replicate them. For example, the unanimous embodiment of an emphasised femininity and capable and diligent researchers by nursing researchers on a medical faculty in Mattsson's (2015) study made gender issues non-existent. However, participants in Mattsson's (2015) study who were middle-class, white, heterosexual were in a more privileged position than some groups from other contexts. The replication of such strategies might even replicate "a patriarchal institution" and "adds some twists of its own" (Cummins, 2005, p. 224).

The discussion of resistance strategies among my research participants highlights the complications involved with the examination of femininities (Budgeon, 2014), particularly when the performance of femininities is multi-layered with elements of Western, Confucian and contemporary global influences overlaid into women's construction and performance of

gender. The discussion of resistance strategies among my research participants demonstrates the ongoing negotiations of multiple forms of femininities (Schippers, 2007) and is beneficial to further the understanding of gender hegemony (Connell, 1987).

In summary, the construction and performance of gender among my participants both contested and reinforced the gender relations. A dynamic of oppressions and the (re)production of inequality revolved around the relational construction of emphasised femininities and pariah femininities while the performance of the alternative femininity created space for resistance and changes. The performance of diverse femininities in my study fits well with the multiplicity, fluidity and dynamics of gender identity as conceptualised by Butler's (1990) theory of performativity of gender. Furthermore, the diverse performative acts of femininities among my participants and the various resistance strategies with multi-layers of Western, Confucian and contemporary global influences highlight the situatedness of gender relations and advocate for the need to examine relations between different types of femininities and forms of resistance strategies at the site of everyday interactions and within socio-historical arrangements (Budgeon, 2014). The unresolved issues emerging from the findings and data analysis include "Why are the resistance strategies done individually rather than collectively?" and "What can be done to create significant changes?".

10.3 The interplay between Vietnamese social, economic, and historical contexts, Vietnamese academia as gendered organisations, and gender performativity

HEIs are the sites of gendered market outcomes, and institutional factors have been reported to be the root cause of women's unequal treatment (Fotaki, 2013). As discussed in Chapter Eight and Nine, institutional factors impacted by multiple waves of colonisation way significantly influenced the way Vietnamese academic women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes at work. This section discusses the complexities of HEIs as gendered organisation that dictate the way gender was performed and the way they limited or facilitated women's career. In this sense, my study contributes to the conceptualisation of gender performativity in organisations as contextually dependent and highlights "relational specificities and the mechanisms through which gender, and gender trouble, occur" (Morison & Macleod, 2013, p. 567) in a specific location.

This section responds to sub-questions (1), (2) and (3).

10.3.1 Vietnamese HEIs as gendered organisations

J. Acker (1990) suggests that organisations are gendered through five dimensions (1) construction of divisions along lines of gender, (2) construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce or sometimes oppose those division, (3) workplace interactions that enact dominance and submission, (4) the manifestations of gendered organisations, and (5) the implication of gender in the ongoing processes of creating and conceptualising social structures.

Analysis shows Vietnamese HEIs in this study bore the characteristics of gendered organisations. First, there was evidence that tasks were divided along the gender lines. For example, Participant 13 observed that women tended to do the housekeeping work such as ‘cleaning up the used cups in the faculty office’, but her male colleagues always tried to avoid those tasks. Moreover, she observed that while female lecturers devoted their time to teaching, male lecturers took extra projects which provided them with more career choices and opportunities. Second, leadership and management were perceived by my participants to be more aligned with masculine characteristics (agentic, assertive, competitive); therefore, male leaders were more appreciated than female leaders. Thirdly, promotion criteria were based on the ideas uninterrupted career and an ideal academic staff who has few domestic responsibilities and can devote her or his time to work. When women took career break for childbirth and childcare, they ‘must reject the opportunity [for career advancement]’ (Participant 5).

On the whole, Vietnamese HEIs in this study could be conceptualised as gendered organisations in which “advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine” (J. Acker, 1990, p. 146). While this conceptualisation has been utilised by various studies across contexts (Conesa Carpintero & González Ramos, 2018; Cree, Morrison, Mitchell, & Gulland, 2020; Kantola, 2008), my study is the among the first which employed gendered organisations to demonstrate how the gendering practices in work setting feed into women’s experience of inequalities in Vietnamese academic settings. To this end, my study also contributes to knowledge about the nature of Vietnamese academia, which has seldom been subjected to gender analysis.

10.3.2 Vietnamese HEIs as gendered organisations against the backdrop of multiple waves of colonisation

In addition to the contribution to knowledge about the gendered nature of Vietnamese academia, my study also offers a nuanced understanding of the way multiple waves of colonisation as a social, political and historical process shape and transform HEIs and their practices. Higher education systems, particularly in former colonised regions, are often a hybrid model with features informed by their former colonisers and the contemporary social, economic, and political factors (Altbach, 1989, 2004; Oyedemi, 2020; Shin & Jang, 2012). Analysis shows that colonial legacies interwoven with Vietnam's contemporary social, economic, and political factors significantly impacted the practices of HEIs in my study. For example, HEIs tended to mimic Western academia's work structures and practices, which was demonstrated through the adoption of research outputs as a key criterion for promotion decisions either to higher academic or to managerial positions. This practice was supported by the Vietnamese government's emphasis on research and development as a key element of its growth strategy. Also, Western education was embraced and the attainment of qualifications from Western countries were perceived to have positive impacts on my participants' professional development. Besides, Vietnam's salary scale which granted academic staff a fixed amount monthly implies the continuity of French colonial legacy in Vietnam's academic system. At the same time, organisational culture based on seniority indicates the heritage of Confucian values in Vietnamese academia.

Meanwhile, my study also shows that the impacts of colonial legacies on HEIs formalised men's privilege in the workplace and intensified HEIs' gendered nature. The Vietnamese salary scale which did not reflect market mechanism gave no space for academic staff's salary negotiations and limited their earning. Therefore, female academics in my study had to either find an extra source of income or depended on their spouses and family for economic resources. At the same time, the practices of mimic Western academia's focus on research increased the workload for academics and disadvantaged women who took a large role in domestic responsibilities. The organisational culture based on seniority also widened the gap in power distribution between junior and senior academic staff. To this end, my study confirms and extends the understanding of J. Acker's (1990) discussion of the processes that produce gendered social structures.

10.3.3 What performances are supported or contested by Vietnamese HEIs?

Further to the processes that produce gendered social structure, J. Acker (1990) suggests that gendered interactions, a manifestation of gendered organisations, could be examined through, “the internal processes in which individuals engage as they construct persons that are appropriately gendered for the institutional setting”. In this sense, my study offers a nuanced understanding of performances which was supported and contested by HEIs at the same time.

The performance facilitated by my HEIs is working hard. For example, as discussed in Chapter Eight, Participant 15 attributed her career success, the attainment of the title of associate professorship, to her hard work and her abilities to multitask and especially her physical ability to be able to start working only ten days after childbirth. This ideal academic staff who can devote her time and energy to work resembles the Western concept of a disembodied and universal worker who has no gender (J. Acker, 1990; Bailyn, 2003b; Górska et al., 2021). While Participant 15’s performance of working hard could be read as complimenting the masculine nature of HEIs and rewarded by her university in the form of academic promotion, her action at the same time might be seen as breaking the social norm. This complexities of doing and undoing gender simultaneously (Kelan, 2010) offers a critical insights into the means in which gender performances are both supported and constrained (Jenkins & Finneman, 2018). This finding also does not support the notion that gender is irrelevant and the enactment of a genderless self to avoid discrimination, as described by Kelan (2010) might not produce desirable outcomes.

10.4 Rethinking the concept of equality in the Vietnamese academia

The complexities in gender construction and performance among my research participants, and the gendered organisations and their impacts on my participants’ career experience have posed a challenged for the Vietnamese HEIs in tackling gender inequalities at work. I argue in this section that rethinking the concept of equality and its understanding in the Vietnamese context, its applications in the Vietnamese academia and its impacts on the elimination of gender inequalities might be the first step to create more significant changes. This section is also a response to sub-question (4).

As discussed in Chapter One, the Vietnamese government has signalled its concern about the inequal outcomes between women and men in formal labour market. Among the government’s effort to prevent the discrimination against women at work and place the rights of women on a par with those of men is the enforcement of legal documents like the 2006 Law No.

73/2006/QH11 on Gender Equality and the 1994 Labour Code of Vietnam. Both legal documents uphold the goals of CEDAW, the legal instrument to protect women's rights to free choice of profession and employment, same employment opportunities, and equal remuneration like men (UN Women, n.d.), which Vietnam ratified in 1982 (United Nations Human Rights, n.d.).

Vietnamese HEIs in this study appeared to support the Vietnamese government's effort by ensuring the equal treatment between women and men in accessing employment and occupational opportunities. For example, as discussed in Chapter Eight, promotion criteria to management positions and associate professors/professors were straightforward. Any academic staff who had a doctoral degree, met institutional, and state council's requirement in research outputs and maintained a high quality of teaching could be considered for promotion. Membership of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) is an important criterion to be promoted to middle and senior management level positions. Female academics in my study as well as male counterparts from their narrative had similar access to institutional support like mentoring and training. Many participants in my study asserted that they were not discriminated based on their gender.

However, both the state and institutional approaches tended to equate *equality* with *sameness of opportunities and treatment* between men and women and scholars have raised concerns that this approach might not be useful for promoting gender equality (Beddoes & Schimpf, 2018; Chegwe, 2014; C. Sheppard, 2012). Chegwe (2014) argues that women are biologically different from men. For example, pregnancy is exclusive to women. The struggle for gender equality in the absence of sex specific legislation to deal with pregnancy and maternity leave will paradoxically strengthen the inequality and make women suffer from work discrimination (Chegwe, 2014). For example, in Chapter Eight, Participant 5 observed that if a woman in her workplace goes on parental leave, she has to say no to career advancement opportunities because of her inability to devote her time and energy to her organisation. Therefore, "if women are treated as the same as men, the outcome is not necessarily equality" (Nash, 1997, p. 16).

Moreover, organisational practices among HEIs in this study appeared to be dependent on merit-based promotion practices which might benefit some groups over others (Beddoes & Schimpf, 2018). For example, Chapter Eight shows that research outputs had an increasing important in promotion criteria to higher professional and management rank. Meanwhile, the influences of economic deprivation in the form of low wages in Vietnamese academia had a

significant impact on my participants' career aspirations and development. Therefore, academic staff with financial burden or no financial support from spouses and families did not have sufficient time and effort to invest in the research activities which were of great importance to progress to higher management positions or academic ranks. This finding accords more with studies done in other developing nations (Maxwell et al., 2015). Therefore, remedies to eradicate discrimination and inequalities should not be discussed in separation from the local socio-economic structures.

Overall, the state and institutional approaches on gender equality in this research were not inspired by a local cultural-based processes (M.-H. Lee, 2014). Furthermore, this study highlights the notion of equality as subjective concept as what counts as equal in my study was defined by those in power and control (the state and HEIs) (Beddoes & Schimpf, 2018). The discussion of equality in this section has implications for management practices which will be discussed in the next chapter.

10.5 Where are the Vietnamese feminists?

Findings in Chapter Eight and Nine show my participants developed some forms of resistance to the imposed values; however, those resistance strategies were unconscious, and implemented individually rather than collectively and did not result in significant changes in their conditions. Furthermore, during my literature review of gender inequality of Vietnam, I have actively search for *feminist* for *feminism* in writing about women's issues and women's movement in Vietnam. I have not found any equivalent of *feminist* or *feminism* in the Vietnamese language. There has been no political theory or doctrine dedicated to feminism in Vietnam (W. N. Duong, 2001) although some concerns of feminism (e.g., social justice, sexual freedom) can be found peppered across Vietnamese folklore and poetry like in the work of Hồ Xuân Hương, a female poet in the nineteenth century (Do & Brennan, 2015). Furthermore, there is a dearth of scholarly work on gender inequality, women empowerment or Vietnamese feminism, despite three waves of feminisms in the Western world, and a vast body of literature on feminism. Therefore, my final concern arisen from the findings is that whether these the resistance strategies which were done individually instead of collectively are connected to the absence of feminism in the Vietnamese context.

The review of Vietnamese women's positions throughout multiple waves of colonisation in the Vietnamese history in Chapter Two demonstrates that Vietnamese women have never been passive victims of domination. They were the free-spirited and heroic women in the early

period before Vietnam was colonised by China and became a patriarchal society (T. K. Tran, 2016). While they were absent in historical texts during the Chinese rule and only men's shadows in the history through various Vietnam's feudal dynasties until the nineteenth century, they still integrated in the social and economic spheres through trade and religious activities and "created a space in which they could engage in ideological experiment" (Dutton, 2013, p. 26). They became "conscious of themselves as a social group, with particular interests, grievances, and demands" (Marr, 1976, p. 371) and engaged with the early global feminist movement by joining new movement in poetry and literature in the early twentieth century. During national liberation movements led by the Communist Party from the early twentieth century to the end of the Vietnam war in 1975, they replaced men and assumed control of the family. During this period, they were active members in agricultural cooperatives, village people's councils or military support groups (Turley, 1972). After the Vietnam War, Vietnamese women have actively participated in the workforce and gained their political and economic status.

Despite those forms of resistance, women's issues have never developed into feminist movements in Vietnam. W. N. Duong (2001) suggests that the integration of Western feminism into Vietnamese society was opposed by scholars (e.g., Nguyễn Mạnh Tường) as they believed "the genuine feminism must be searched for, not elsewhere but in their own country, by returning to the admirable and reasonable traditions of their races" (p.268). Furthermore, women's movements in Vietnam were diffused with socialist and nationalist movements led by the CPV. The success of the socialist and nationalist movements in the 1970s might have created a false sense that women's liberation was successful (W. N. Duong, 2001). Thanh Dam Truong (1996) further argues that while the communist state has successfully raised social consciousness on equality, it has largely depended on the control over women's labour and sexuality. For example, the Doi Moi Policy (Reform or Renovation Policy) which enabled Vietnam to achieve strong growth, advancing to a lower middle-income country from a poor nation and become one of the most dynamic economies, was highly gendered. Access to export-led industries has only been available to young unmarried women who do not have to bear domestic and childcare responsibilities (Thanh Dam Truong, 1996).

Collins (1989b, p. 749) argues that an oppressed group's "lack of control over the apparatuses of society that sustain ideological hegemony makes the articulation of their self-defined standpoint difficult". Like Collins (1989b) suggests, my research participants' lack of control in both domestic and public spheres might make their articulation of their gender identity, and

patterns of inequalities challenging. In addition, as discussed in Chapter Two, multiple waves of colonisation with multiple changes in ideologies, and social conditions might have disorganised Vietnamese women in my study sense of coherence and identities (P. Miller, 2017). If there is no shared understanding of gender inequalities, women who feel discomfort with gender inequalities might have limited theoretical base to enact actions in their lives (Dyer & Hurd, 2018).

This study highlights the need for the re-articulation of Vietnamese women's standpoint which can offer women "a different view of themselves and their world than that offered by the established social order" (Collins, 1989b, p. 750). In this sense, my research contributes to the literature on the emerging voice of women in the postcolonial and Third World feminism discourse. The first section in this chapter 10.2 shows the common experience with women in other contexts, which contributes to the conversation that despite differences between women in relation to ethnicity, age, religion, and social class, there are universal values of justice and freedom that could be internationally cultivated (McAfee & Howard, 2018). Meanwhile, the second section 10.3 demonstrates a more context specific issues. Therefore, the challenges ahead for the Vietnamese feminists is to not decide "whether there is a need for feminism, i.e., a general movement which seeks to redress women's oppression, but rather what the definition and agenda of that feminism will be" (Johnson-Odim, 1991, p. 319). In this regard, this section forms a response to sub-question (4) and connects to theoretical implications discussed in the final chapter.

10.6 Chapter conclusion

This chapter critically discussed the findings of the data analysis from the two previous chapters within the research context, the literature previously presented and the research lenses. Significantly, through the critical discussion of the shared and unique ways that Vietnamese academic women in my study construct and perform gender, the interplay between social, economic and historical context and the process of construction and performance of gender and its impacts on women's experience in the labour market, this chapter highlights a need for the re-articulation of the concept of equality and gender issues in Vietnam. This re-articulation has implications for theory, methodology and management practices in the final chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

11.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the shared and unique experiences my participants had in their construction and performance of gender and their experience of inequalities in the workplace within Vietnam's multi-layered socio-political context due to the rich colonial history. The first section of this chapter presents a summary of my research. I then discuss the theoretical and methodological contributions of this thesis. The implication for management practices and policies is explored accordingly. The next section discusses the limitations of the study and finally proposes some future research directions.

11.2 Summary of the thesis

In Chapter One, I introduced the research problem, the underrepresentation of women in senior and top management positions in Vietnamese academia. I argued that the complexity in colonial history with diverse influences including Chinese ideologies, French colonialism, Soviet communism, and United States of America (US) and contemporary global influences makes Vietnam become an interesting research context. Vietnamese academia which carries the imprints of the foreign influences as education, is the best site to explore the nuances of gender construction and performance and its impacts on the women's work outcomes.

In Chapter Two, I briefly reviewed the Vietnamese colonial history. Multiple waves of colonisation have had profound impacts on the way Vietnamese women have constructed and performed their gender. Each wave of colonisation has brought them consciousness on gender inequalities and their political voice. However, the way Vietnamese women construct and perform gender, given the unique context of waves of colonisation, represents a research gap. In order to theoretically inform this emerging gap, I moved my attention to Chapter Three, a review of theoretical orientations of gender.

Chapter Three presented different theoretical approaches to understand gender and to explain the ways women and men behave and the ways they are treated. While the focus of each approach differs, tending to focus on either biological features or the socialisation process, my review of theoretical orientations shows that gender is not a fixed state. However, despite this, most explanations also highlight a binary-gendered hierarchy, in which men are associated with power, and women in the subordinated position. Among the gender power relations, certain forms of femininity or masculinity always has an advantage over the others. The concept of gender performativity (Butler, 1988, 2004, 2007, 2011) which views gender as a construction

that arises only through the performances of gendered acts is of particular interest to me as this notion enables me to see the role of women in enacting certain behaviours. It opens up the possibility to gain insights into the multi-dimensional ways that Vietnamese women construct and perform gender in their social locations. The theorisation of gender as a performance also provides a theoretical space to think about and interrogate Vietnamese women's resistance strategies. At the close of this chapter, I narrowed the focus to the ways in which these constructions are embedded within a workplace context.

In Chapter Four, I explored the way the multiple understanding of gender is embedded in the gendered labour market. The examination of the labour market outcomes shows that the essentialist understanding of gender which assigns women with feminine traits and roles has had a significant influence on the way women interact and are treated. Women are perceived to suit feminine occupations with feminine traits like care work or primary school teaching and not suitable for leadership positions. The essentialist understanding of gender and the well-embedded gendering practices in organisations have prevented women from entering certain professions and advancing to senior and top positions in their career. Women in academia is one example of the manifestation of that process.

In Chapter Five, I synthesised the literature presented in Chapter Two, Three and Four and explored a growing body of research into gender in societies with colonial heritage like Vietnam. I argued that while studies on Hong Kong, India and some Southeast Asian countries have illuminated the process of gender construction in the postcolonial context, little has been done in the Vietnam context. Furthermore, research on Vietnam is not simply to add Vietnam to the mix, but the rich colonial history with multiple waves of colonisation can broaden the knowledge on the complexities and ambiguities of East relations. This synthesis and application to the Vietnamese context led to the identification of a clear research gap, and the formation of my overarching research question, being "*How have waves of colonisation influenced how Vietnamese academic women construct gender and experience unequal outcomes at work?*"

My researcher positioning was presented in Chapter Six. This positioning includes the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions which underpin my research. My choice of a feminist methodology is justified by my research aim which places gender at the centre of inquiry. The perspective of a non-western feminist is highlighted due to my background as a Vietnamese feminist. The relevance of my two research lenses, the liberal and

postcolonial feminism, was critically analysed at the end. I situated the liberal feminist lens as a focus on public domain while the postcolonial feminist lens as an attention to women's roles within the domestic sphere and the spill over of those roles to the public domain.

Chapter Seven outlined my methodology and research design, where I argued for the employment a qualitative narrative inquiry in order to examine the way Vietnamese academic women construct and perceive their world. I then presented the research design from the participant selection process to the conduct of pilot and then semi-structured interviews with academic women across Vietnamese public universities to generate a rich source of data. Thematic analysis was utilised in this study to make sense of meaning of participants' narratives. I concluded Chapter Seven with a reflection on the formation of my research topic, data collection, and data analysis. The commitment to reflexivity fits well with my ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological assumptions discussed earlier in the Chapter Six. Furthermore, reflexivity can give validity, methodological rigour, and credibility to my study.

Chapter Eight and Nine analysed the results of interviews from the liberal feminist and the postcolonial perspectives, respectively. Chapter Eight analysed narratives from the liberal feminist perspective, which shows that while some women enjoyed the supports from their peer or depended on their personal efforts to facilitate their career. However, they were perceived to have low power motivation due to the absence of career goal setting or lack of confidence. Furthermore, while some academic women had access to effective mentoring and training which provided them with access to valuable career advice and professional support, many did not have sufficient mentoring and training, or other forms of professional development provided by their universities. The performance appraisal and promotion processes were not transparent and fair. At the close of this chapter, there remained questions around the impacts of multiple waves of colonisation on my participants' construction and performance in the domestic sphere, the local power dynamics in relation to organisational factors and my participants' resistance to the imposed values that led me to apply a postcolonial reading to the data.

Chapter Nine, analysis from the postcolonial feminist perspective showed that my participants were under the pressure of performing the Confucian filial daughters, dutiful wives, and nurturing mothers. Additionally, they also performed the virtuous women at work because of the spill over of Confucian's essentialisation of gender role from the domestic into the public

sphere. Simultaneously, their universities adopted a work structure and promotional system which prioritised research outcomes due to the impacts of current trend in Western academia. However, their pay which was based on a non-negotiable national salary scale, the remnant of the French colonial system, was not adequate for the costs of livings. They were also expected to conform to the Confucian seniority-based culture.

In Chapter Ten, I interpreted and theoretically discussed the significance of my findings in light of what was already known about the research problem being investigated. My critical discussion of multiple performances of femininity challenges the “relative stability of gender performance” within a particular space (Godec, 2020, p. 156). The performance of diverse femininities in my study fits well with the multiplicity, fluidity and dynamics of gender identity as conceptualised by Butler’s (1990) theory of performativity of gender. Furthermore, the diverse performative acts of femininities among my participants and the various resistance strategies with multi-layers of Western, Confucian and contemporary global influences highlight the situatedness of gender relations and advocate for the need to examine relations between different types of femininities and forms of resistance strategies at the site of everyday interactions and within socio-historical arrangements. I then argued for the re-assessment of the concept of equality, which Vietnamese government and Vietnamese HEIs in my studies equated with sameness. The final section of the chapter presented my advocate for establishment of a theoretical foundation for Vietnamese (academic) women in relation to political activism.

11.3 Contributions and significance

This study makes a number of contributions to the conceptualisation of gender relations, the “decolonial critique” from a non-Western perspective, the significance of multi-levels of analysis in relation to methodology and management practices.

11.3.1 Theoretical contributions

The findings from this study make several contributions to the current literature.

First, my research contribution contributes to the scholarship at the intersection of gender studies, feminist theories, organisational studies, and human resources management studies. As described in Chapter Two, there are multiple ways Vietnamese women construct gender due to the impacts of waves of colonisation. Therefore, in Chapter Three I explored the multiplicity in theorising gender. Chapter Two and Three showed that the construction and performance of gender among Vietnamese women throughout waves of colonialism cannot be

explained by a single theoretical orientation of gender or single research lens. This makes it appropriate to explore Vietnamese academic women’s career from multiple theoretical frameworks and lens. Dismantling unequal labour market outcomes is my starting point. Liberal feminist orientation towards activism in terms of systematic transformation is my goal for women. Postcolonial feminism allows me to examine the way the cultural, economic and ideological changes throughout waves of colonisation impact the way Vietnamese academic women construct and perform gender and the way they resist the imposed practices in their personal and working life. Butler’s theory of performativity provides me with the understanding that the way Vietnamese women construct and perform gender is fluid and context specific and there is space for resistance and change in performativity through alternative performances of multiple postcolonial femininities. The diagram below offers a snapshot of the framework I used in this thesis.

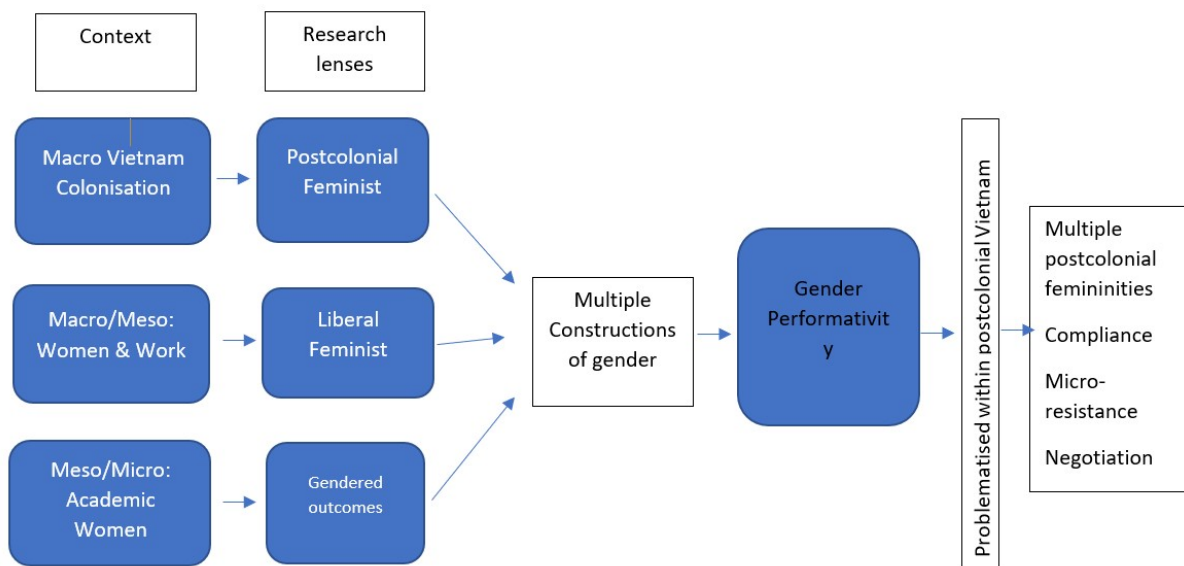


Figure 11.3: Thesis framework

Secondly, in this study, I respond to a call for research from the “other” perspective. The literature has been dominated by many studies on women in higher education management in Western settings like US and Canada (S. Acker & Millerson, 2018; Holmes, Frey, Ongley, & O’Connell, 2008; Walker, 2018), UK (Johansson & Śliwa, 2014; B. M. Thompson, 2015), European (De Paola & Scoppa, 2015; Mattsson, 2015), Australia and New Zealand (Brabazon & Schulz, 2020; Winchester & Browning, 2015), or Asian settings like China (Rhoads & Yu Gu, 2012; Yu & Wang, 2018), India (Sabharwal et al., 2020), Singapore (Luke, 1998, 2001).

However, very little research has been done in the context of Vietnam, a “living laboratory” for the study of a country in the interplay of land, people, culture, feudalism, empire, war, colonisation, nationalism, independence, and rebirth (Shultz & Pecotich, 1997, p. 65). This study is among one of the first attempts to thoroughly examine the process of gender construction and performance in Vietnam in general, and in academia specifically. This new understanding should help to pave the way for the development of studies into gender (de)construction and/or women’s career in Vietnam as well as integrate a minority perspective into mainstream scholarly works.

Therefore, this study also functions as a “decolonial critique” as gender (de)construction change their forms and their degree of intensity across communities (Alcoff, 2017, p. 23). By exploring the different forms of femininities in Vietnam, this study contributes to the multiple ways of knowing (Gearty & Marshall, 2020) by expanding global understanding of the complexity of the process of gender construction and women’s key roles played in this process. While the different forms of femininities in my study resembles Connell’s (1987) notion of emphasised femininities or Schippers’ (2007) notion of pariah femininities, the emphasised and pariah femininities are more context specific as they are grounded on heterosexual, socially elite, feminine women whose ideals of femininity were influenced by Confucianism as a dominant social ideology. My presentation of an alternative Vietnamese femininities framed around waves of colonisation provides new sources for theorising multiple forms of femininities which are traditionally based on white, heterosexual, socially elite, feminine women (Connell, 1987). The discussion of femininities in this study also contributes to the (re)articulation of Vietnamese women’s standpoint which has been shadowed by nationalism, literary movement or state’s agenda throughout Vietnam’s history.

Moreover, while other studies investigate gender issues is in relation to the imposition of western management knowledge and practices in developing countries (Yousfi, 2014), my study investigate the construction of gender and its impact on women’s experience in labour market in relation to the imposition of eastern and western knowledge in a developing country whose colonial history is shaped by both eastern and western colonisation. This study will be of interest to any colonial discourse scholars who attempt to challenge the view of the relations between (and among) Western and Eastern countries as binary, fixed and categorial with the West as the colonisers and the East as the colonised.

11.3.2 Methodological contributions

The key methodological contribution of this study lies in the multiple levels of analysis which involves the micro, meso, macro factors and historical context. Although prior studies on Vietnamese academic women (Dang, 2017; Do & Brennan, 2015; Funnell & Dao, 2013; T. L. H. Nguyen, 2012; T. V. H. Vu, 2018) also employed feminist methodology, my study is the first one within Vietnam context which combined two research lenses: liberal and postcolonial feminist. Most of the shared experiences my research participants had with academic women in different contexts came from the analysis through the liberal feminist lens while the postcolonial feminist lens revealed the effects of Vietnam's multi-layered socio-political context due to the rich colonial history on the construction and performance of gender and on my participants' experience in the workplace.

My study contributes to advocate for the exploration of women's issues from multiple lenses. While liberal and postcolonial feminism are often seen as oppositional, my study shows that both are useful in helping explore the complexity of gendered construction. In a way, the confinement to one lens essentialises the issue and limit the potential to produce transformative knowledge for transformative social action (J. M. Anderson, 2000). Furthermore, the examination from various lenses might reveal why some particular actors matter more than the other in certain contexts (Htun & Weldon, 2010).

Another methodological contribution is my support for the extensive use of reflexivity in all stages of qualitative research to question "what we, and others, might be taking for granted" (Cunliffe, 2016, p. 741). For example, reflecting on the multiplicity and fluidity of my "overlapping identities" (Kezar, 2002, p. 96) as a Vietnamese woman, Vietnamese academic, and 'other' Asian woman living in the New Zealand society (See Appendix A) have demonstrated the impact of reflexivity on my methodological choices. My gendered being as a Vietnamese woman and academic caused me to adopt the liberal feminist lens while my identity as the 'other' Asian woman led me to the postcolonial feminist lens for my research. Such use of reflexivity allows me to develop an awareness of my moral dilemmas (McLeod, 2001) and subsequently can enhance the trustworthiness of the research (Etherington, 2004).

11.3.3 Recommendations to management practices and policies

Identifying barriers to women's career progress in the Vietnamese academia and remedies to remove them, which is both a moral and human resources issues. Studies in various contexts have found a positive correlation between gender equalities and job satisfaction (Memon &

Jena, 2017; Okpara, 2006; Perugini & Vladisavljević, 2019). Organisations which manage the extent and effects of diversity within their workforce effectively are more attractive to potential employees (J. E. Olsen & Martins, 2016).

This study together with previous literature have confirmed that changing numerical representation does not automatically mean that power relations are challenged (Bagilhole, 2002). However, policy makers are more concerned with quantifiable demographic representation but fail to recognise the root causes of the problem. Moreover, providing the training courses is related more to the “fixing the women” approach, which seem to be drawn from the liberal approach and merit-based agenda and fail to challenge the masculine culture of academia (L. Hall, 2010). Therefore, the remedies offered by the Vietnamese HEIs and governments have should have paid attention to some factors that might affect the outcomes. To this end, my study advocates for a more humane approach towards leadership thinking and human resources management (Proctor-Thomson, 2019).

Unpaid work

The solutions at government level pay more attention to gender inequality in paid employment but tend to overlook gender inequality in unpaid care work which is considered the missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes (Ferrant et al., 2014). Women generally spend more time on unpaid work than men. Unpaid work include work inside and outside the home. Examples of domestic unpaid work are the care of elderly family members, children and grandchildren while examples of unpaid work outside the home include volunteering to individuals or groups which promote community issues (Kulik & Liberman, 2013). Although unpaid work is important, but it is hard to measure; consequently, it is absent in policy agendas (Ferrant et al., 2014). Policy makers at government level should incorporate gender inequality in unpaid work between men and women to make gender equality more feasible.

Multiple identities of individuals

The negligence of individuals’ multiple identities and different forms of power is one of the weaknesses of the liberal feminist approach (Weedon, 2007a). One’s identity not only originates from gender but from race, culture, nationality and roles (Josselson & Harway, 2012). However, in today’s world, the concept of “gender” or “culture” is not “pure” or “distinct” (Iyall Smith, 2009, p. 4). Colonisation, globalisation and localisation have created “hybrid identities” which are separated from the previous forms and recombine with new forms (Iyall Smith, 2009, p. 3). Therefore, solutions which aim to provide individuals with same

opportunities and treatment are more likely to fail. Moreover, career development is one such area in which models developed on White males' career experiences may be inappropriately applied to women or minorities or models developed on women in the Western countries might not be able to be applied to women in Asian nations.

Non-merit factors

A person's success is dependent on not only her or his own merits but also the non-merit factors and sometimes the non-merit factors have more effects than the merit factors. The chief non-merit factor is inheritance which refers to "the effect of where one starts on where one finishes in the race to get ahead" (McNamee & Miller, 2013, p. 199). Men and women start at different points in their career path due to the widespread gender discrimination against women; consequently, when women are given similar treatment and chances, their possibility of reaching the same goal as men is still lower. Hence, meritocracy – "a social system as a whole in which individuals get ahead and earn rewards in direct proportion to their individual efforts and abilities" still stays as a myth instead of reality (McNamee & Miller, 2013, p. 7).

11.4 Limitations

One major limitation of the study is that although the study focuses on the 'other' perspective, the Vietnamese academia is treated as homogenous, and some social locations has not been paid adequate attention. First, as discussed in Chapter Two, Vietnamese society is diverse with 54 ethnic groups, among which Vietnamese or Kinh people account for 87% of the country's population. The other 53 smaller ethnic groups, who reside in the rural areas of Vietnam, have distinct culture. As aforementioned in Chapter Five, the standpoint theory argues that the perspectives of different groups in a society are affected by their standpoint or social locations; therefore, social realities viewed from the oppressed, either natural or are different from the perspectives of the oppressors (S. G. Harding, 1991). The dominant groups have the privileges of not having to understand the perspectives of the marginalised groups in order to survive (Wood, 2013). Drawing from the standpoint theory, academic women who come from ethnic minority groups might not have similar advantages as the dominant groups do and their view of equality including gender equality might be different.

Moreover, my study does not examine the regional differences in Vietnam. North Vietnam is perceived to have a more socialist orientation while South Vietnam has a more capitalist orientation (Sanders, 2014). Several studies have found the impacts of historical legacies on management styles (Ralston et al., 1999), intergenerational communications (McCann, Cargile,

Giles, & Bui, 2004), the effectiveness of the economic reforms and poverty reduction (Sanders, 2014), the social, political and economic values (Shibai, 2015) and female entrepreneurial behaviours (Q. V. Le, Nguyen-Lisovich, & Raven, 2016). Therefore, historical factors might also affect the work values among people from different regions, which potentially affect their occupational choices.

In addition, my study focuses solely on academic women in heterosexual relationships and therefore might overlook the subordination of people with non-heteronormative forms of sexuality. Meanwhile, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities in Vietnam have yet to be recognised fully as citizens with equal rights and have been silenced and misrecognised in legislation (Horton, 2014; Horton, Rydstrom, & Tonini, 2015). My failure to incorporate the experiences and voices of LGBT people in academic setting and in general may deprive me of a more in-depth understanding of hegemony of heterosexuality in relation to gendered power relations (Horton, 2014) and different forms of marginalisation and resistance associated with masculinities and femininities in the socio-cultural context of Vietnam (Horton, 2019).

Another major limitation of this study is that while it has been influenced by the work of postcolonial feminists, it has not fully engaged with challenging the “positional superiority of Western knowledge” (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 62). The justification for this limitation is the underdeveloped gender scholarship in Vietnam which has been caused by several reasons as observed from the review of articles in Vietnamese-language journal *Women's Studies* in a ten-year period (1996-2005) by S. Scott and Truong (2007). First of all, the fusion between the women’s movement and the anticolonial struggle for national independence has underplayed the interest in women’s issues. Secondly, there has been a lack of research on all rounded gender related topics. Meanwhile, current research has been dominated by socio-economic related topics like poverty reduction and gendered violence. The conduct of these studies has been motivated by international agencies or non-profit organisations rather than higher education institutes. Therefore, they are more practical, and policy oriented rather than theorisation oriented. Last but not least, the lack of training has resulted in the limited exposure of Vietnamese researchers to different ideologies, methodologies, research methods so as to generate unique gender-specific Vietnamese conceptualisations (S. Scott & Truong, 2007). However, the methodological approaches of this study, the feminist methodology through the lens of the liberal and postcolonial feminism has allowed me to engage in a critical dialogue that focuses on academic women’s experiences in historical, cultural, and socioeconomic

perspective of Vietnam (Wickramasinghe, 2010), paving the way for the articulation and development of unique gender-specific Vietnamese theories.

11.5 Future research directions

An direction for future studies arising from the above limitations to explore the interconnectedness among gender, ethnicity, and sexuality in Vietnam or post-colonial contexts Intersectional approach, either as a theoretical lens or methodological framework, can be adopted as “it focuses on simultaneity, attends to within-group differences, and rejects “single-axis” categories that falsely universalise the experiences or needs of a select few as representative of all group members” (V. M. May, 2015, p. 22). With power as the centre of attention (T. A. Olsen, 2018), intersectional approach may illuminate multiple manifestations of colonial power relations and challenge taken-for-granted privileges on experiential, epistemological, political, and structural level (V. M. May, 2015). From organisational perspective, the employment of such approach will be helpful in “identifying exclusionary processes, ensuring inclusion of marginalised groups, and therefore changing activists’ practices” (Evans & Lépinard, 2019, p. 9). Intersectionality also allows researchers to develop a more culturally sensitive research approach (Valkonen & Wallenius-Korkalo, 2016).

In addition, future studies can explore employees’ voice in Vietnam academia in relation to gender issues from either human resource management or organisational behaviour perspective. The theme of employees’ voice, which refers to “the ways and means through which employees attempt to have a say and potentially influence organisational affairs relating to issues that affect their work and the interests of managers and owners” (Wilkinson, Donaghey, Dundon, & Freeman, 2014, p. 3), does not emerge in the data analysis of this study. Further research can explore the different types of voices (formal and informal, direct and indirect, union and non-union) in the organisational context of Vietnam, the role of union on behalf of employees in tackle unequal treatments on the basis of gender in Vietnam’s one-party state political system, and/or the relationship between collective voice and individual voice. Such studies can provide insight into employees’ choices to raise or withhold voices, and the missing voices in the workplace and as a result, organisational practices can move towards a more inclusive approach (Wilkinson, Gollan, Kalfa, & Xu, 2018).

Finally, future research agendas built from this thesis can explore Vietnamese academic women’s career from a career management perspective. Some of my research participants revealed in their interviews that their career choice as academic staff and career development

were influenced by unpredictable events. For example, Participant 12 shared that her academic discipline was not her choice at first. She was offered a teaching position in that field unexpectedly and built her career successfully from that position. Therefore, a possible future study can explore Vietnamese academic with a focus on the unpredictability of the environment. Such examination can be helpful to academics and policy makers in this fast-changing world of work.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: A reflection on my doctoral research

The questions I have always been pondering for years were “who I am?” and “why have I become the self I am today?”. Towards the completion of my doctoral research, I have come much closer to the answer to that question. In reflecting at the end of my doctoral research journey, this research, which is both a professional and a personal journey, has enabled me to develop as a researcher and as a person.

Addressing the fluidity of my identities

The first awareness that I gained through my research journey was of the multiple overlapping identities (Kezar, 2002, p. 96) that I had acquired. When I embarked on the doctoral research journey, the first identity I identified myself most dominantly with was as *a Vietnamese woman*. As discussed in section 7.6.2, my gendered being as a Vietnamese woman sparked my interest in the topic of women and gender inequality. As a young girl, I was raised to take care of domestic chores while my younger brother did not have to meet the same expectations. I was taught to be a filial daughter who upheld to the family values and made my parents proud of my education attainment. I was taught the ‘proper’ way for a girl to behave which demonstrates Four Virtues of Confucianism: *công* (diligence), *dung* (physical grace), *ngôn* (deferential speech), and *hạnh* (faithfulness, proper conduct).

As a *Vietnamese female academic* who worked in the Vietnamese academia for eight years and in a faculty with approximately 50 female academic staff, I observed a dearth of women in top management and professional positions. Therefore, my focus on women’s unequal labour market outcomes has been attached to my professional identity.

When I moved to New Zealand for my doctoral degree, I found myself aligned to the identity of *the ‘other’ Asian woman living in a New Zealand society*. As discussed in section 7.6.3, when I first applied for a parttime job in New Zealand to support my study, I was advised to change my Vietnamese name to an English name. This emergent ‘other’ identity significantly influenced my theoretical lenses. When I was in Vietnam, I belonged to the dominant group in my own country (Kinh group, the majority ethnic group of Vietnam, comprising 86% of the Vietnamese population). However, when I changed my social location, I become the ‘other’ in New Zealand. My new social location made me aware of my taken-for-granted privilege as a member of a dominant group in Vietnam and increased my sensitivity to the marginalisation of those who are “silenced, othered and marginalised by the dominant social order” (Hesse-

Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 28). As the ‘other’ in the New Zealand society, I felt the need to attend to, or be concerned with, problems that affect an oppressed group more than I did when I was in the dominant group in my own country.

The change in my standpoint from being a Vietnamese academic woman to the ‘other’ Asian woman in the New Zealand society made me aware that my identities are not fixed. Instead, they shift “over time and place” (Naples, 2003, p. 198). Those identities enabled me to “perceive and understand different aspects of both the world and human activities” (Narayan, 2004, p. 213). The acknowledgement of multiplicity and fluidity of my identities gave me insight into not only who I am as an individual but also as researcher who keeps re-positioning herself.

Addressing my performance of multiple femininities.

Through my exploration of the literature, my interaction with my research participants and my data analysis and interpretation, I came to be conscious of the multiplicity of my own gender performance.

In the public sphere, I am *a ‘liberal’ woman*, a ‘modern’ Vietnamese woman who is not confined at home, who has the full support of my family (my partner and my parents) to pursue higher education overseas and the career path that I am passionate about. I also enjoy a large support network from my supervisors and my colleagues in my professional life. Meanwhile, in the domestic sphere, I more closely adhere to the Confucian values which I was brought up with. I am *a filial daughter* who strives to live up to my parents’ expectation, *a dutiful wife* who takes the role of a homemaker. The dichotomy of my professional and private life is my view of what is “intelligible” (Butler, 2004, p. 3). My exploration of feminist literature, especially of Narayan’s (2004) insights on Non-western feminists, helped me to come to consider that a postcolonial feminist like myself might be torn between “being critical of how our culture and traditions oppress women” and “the desire as members of once colonised cultures to affirm the value of the same culture and traditions” (Narayan, 2004, p. 216).

The realisation and acknowledgement of my multiple performance of postcolonial femininities allowed me as a researcher to identify with my research participants who also performed multiple femininities simultaneously. The development of this “shared identity” (Bhopal, 2009, p. 27) with my participants helped me realise that instead of speaking for them, I have a voice together with them (C. C. Lee, 2020).

Finding my voice as a researcher

When I submitted the early versions of my writing to my supervisors for feedbacks, I wrote in an anonymous, third person voice. I was reluctant to write in the first person. In reflecting on my supervisors' encouragement to show my voice as a researcher in my writing, I found making my presence in my writing explicit a challenging task. The first reason is that born and raised in a collectivist culture, I was taught to fit in and not to express opinions. Secondly, writing, to me, particularly at postgraduate level is personal. I agreed with Clarence (2018) in her reflection on thesis writing that "Putting yourself on paper – which is what every argument is – and putting that part of yourself out into the world for others to read, critique and argue with takes courage" (Clarence, 2018, para.7).

I only found the "courage of my convictions" (Clarence, 2018, para.1) as part of my thesis oral defence. That courageousness, which has taken time to build, comes from three main sources. First, it is originated from an increasing awareness of "the self I am, the identity I have, the feelings I recognise, the wants I act upon, are affected by political forces around me, in particular, those that have shaped my identity" (Haynes, 2006, p. 400) as a Vietnamese, woman, wife, and academic as reflected in the previous section. Second, through the interaction between my research participants and I, their agency and resistance in performativity has given me hope in the struggle for gender inequality and a sense of courageousness. Last but not least, my confidence to stand by my claims and raise my voice comes from the interaction between my supervisors and I, and their encouragement that I have a story to share.

To conclude, in my final reflection, I reflect on my whole research process from the start of my research project until my oral defence of my thesis. This research has so far allowed me to grow both professionally and personally thanks to the awareness of the self and the confidence gain through the research process. I carry with me the hope upon the completion that in addition to the contributions to theoretical, methodological and management practices, my work will help to articulate gender performativity of Vietnamese women, women in postcolonial contexts and any individuals who come across my work will gain a better understanding of their performativity and consequently a better understanding of self.

Appendix B: Participant demographic characteristics

No.	Experience in academia	Marital status	Number of children	Partner's job	Qualification	Title
1	12	Married	2	Lecturer	M.A	Lecturer
2	2	Married	1	Engineer	PhD candidate	Assistant lecturer
3	Over 20 years	Married	1	Self-employed	M.A	Senior lecturer
4	17	Married	2	Business owner	M.A	Lecturer
5	22	Married	2	Lecturer	Associate Professor Ph.D	Vice President
6	Over 20 years	Married	1	Businessman	M.A	Lecturer
7	21	Married	2	Lecturer	Ph.D	Vice Dean
8	7	Married	2	Lecturer	Ph.D candidate	Lecturer
9	21	Divorced	2	Businessman	M.A	Vice Dean
10	21	Married	2	Non-academic staff	Associate Professor Ph.D	Senior lecturer
11	22	Married	2	Lecturer	Associate Professor Ph.D	Deputy head of department
12	37	Widowed	2	Businessman	Associate Professor Ph.D	Former Vice President
13	18	Married	2	Businessman	M.A Soon-to-be Ph.D candidate	Head of department

14	9	Single	0	N/A	Associate Professor Ph.D	Lecturer
15	7	Married	2	Lecturer	Associate Professor Ph.D	Lecturer
16	10	Married	0	Lecturer	Ph.D	Head of department
17	Over 20 years	Married	2	Businessman	Ph.D	Head of department
18	9	Single	0	N/A	Ph.D	Lecturer
19	8	Single	0	N/A	Ph.D candidate	Lecturer
20	3	Single	0	N/A	M.A student	Assistant lecturer
21	14	Divorced	2	Self-employed	M.A	Lecturer
22	21	Married	2	Vice President	Ph.D candidate	Dean
23	4	Married	Mom-to-be	Businessman	M.A	Lecturer
24	10	Married	2	Businessman	Ph.D candidate	Lecturer
25	1	Married	0	Businessman	M.A	Assistant lecturer
26	10	Married	2	Journalist	Ph.D candidate	Lecturer
27	4	Single	0	N/A	M.A	Assistant lecturer
28	14	Married	2	Policeman	M.A	Lecturer

Participant Information Sheet

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

WOMEN'S CAREERS IN VIETNAMESE ACADEMIA:

My name is Thi Thu Thao TRAN. I am currently conducting research for my PhD degree at Waikato Management School, the University of Waikato under the supervision of Dr. Suzette Dyer, Dr. Paresha Sinha and Dr. Fiona Hurd.

The aim of my project is to explore the opinions and experiences of Vietnamese academic women in their acquisition of the higher-level posts in academia. Though women in Vietnam have gone a long way to achieving better status, they are still underrepresented in higher levels of academia. Therefore, my research aims to investigate your career experiences within the Vietnam education sector and to consider what features your attribute to women's career advancement.

I request your participation by taking part in a face-to-face interview with me. The interview will take approximately one hour depending on how much detail we discuss. I have included a list of questions for the interview. You can choose not to answer some or all of the questions during the interview. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given. After the interview upon your permission, there will be follow-up emails or Skype video calls if any clarification of information is needed. You have the option to withdraw from the study at any time before 14th August 2018.

The transcripts of the interview will be sent to you on the 1st of August. If you would like to withdraw some parts or all of the transcript, you can e-mail me directly within two weeks from 1st August to 14th August 2018. If you do not withdraw from the project, data will be

subsequently analyzed, and preliminary findings will be sent to you for checking to avoid any misinterpretation. In addition, if you wish, I can send you a summary of the final findings once the thesis is completed.

The interviews will be recorded upon your permission and the tape recorder and its information will be stored in a safe place and locked in the cupboard at my premises. Only my supervisors and I can get access to the data collected. Any digital data will be stored in folders on my own laptop protected with password. Your interview will be used to develop my PhD Thesis. In addition, it is anticipated that my research will be presented at conferences and published in journal articles. Neither you nor your organization will be identified in the Thesis or the publications that arise from my research.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting. If you are willing to participate, please suggest a date and time that suits you from April 11th to May 22nd, 2018. I will then follow up to confirm and arrange a place to meet. In addition, if you know of other Vietnamese women academics who might be interested in participating in this research, please forward my details and Participant Information Sheet, along with my invitation to contact me directly should they like more information or to participate in the research.

If you have any queries about the research, you may contact me at thuthao706@gmail.com, phone +64221922383.

Thank you, and I look forward to meeting you in person to discuss your career.

Appendix D: Email to participants

Dear...,

You are invited to participate in a face-to-face interview which will take one hour about your experiences in relation to gender inequality in the Vietnamese higher education sector. This interview is part of a PhD project with the following details:

- Name of the project: Women's Careers in Vietnamese academia – An analysis from multiple lenses
- Name of the researcher: Thi Thu Thao Tran, PhD Candidate, University of Waikato
- Objectives: To analyse the opinions and experiences of Vietnamese academic women in their acquisition of the higher-level posts in academia.

If you are interested in taking part or if you have any questions about the project, please contact the researcher via her email address: thuthao706@gmail.com. I have attached the participant information sheet for your interest.

In addition, if you know of women academics who might like to participate in this study, please feel free to forward the participant Information Sheet so they can contact me directly if they would like to be interviewed for this research.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Kind regards,

Thao

Appendix E: Interview questions

“Good morning, my name is Thao Tran from Waikato Management School and I am conducting a study on Vietnamese women’s career experiences in the higher education sector. It will take about one hour for you to answer the questions.

Participation in this interview is totally optional and voluntary. You can choose not to answer some of the questions during the research interview. However, by deciding to complete the interview you will contribute a valuable part to this research.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file and only you, I and my supervisors will have access to this information.

Thank you very much for your time.”

Theme 1: Personal career

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. How long have you been working as an academic staff in your organisation?
3. Why do you decide to pursue a career in academia?
4. How has your career progressed? Has it progressed in the way you thought it would?
5. What would you like your career to look like in five years? In ten years?

Theme 2: Family and work

6. Tell me about your family.
7. How have they affected your career?
8. How much time have you spent on family responsibilities? Are these family responsibilities evenly shared in your household?
9. Do you meet any difficulties in career advancement as a working mom? (for married women)
Do you think your marital status affect your career advancement? (for single women)
Do you think single and married women receive equal treatment and equal chance in career advancement? (for both)

Theme 3: Institutional level

10. Tell me about your institution?

11. What help and guidance from your organisation are available to help you progress in your career?
12. Do you think men and women have the same chances of being promoted in your current organization?
If yes, what would be the typical career path expected of men and women?
If no, what differences have you observed between the kinds of careers men have in academia compared to women?
13. What are criteria to get promoted in your organization?
14. Do you often attend any networking activities? How do they affect your career advancement?
15. Do you think generally women invest less time in developing their career than men do?
16. Do senior women in your organization mentor and support junior teachers? Why and why not?
17. Have you ever had any mentor in your organization?
18. Are you willing to become mentors for novice teachers in your workplace?
19. Are there any earning gaps between male and female academic staff in your organization?

Theme 4: National level

20. Do you think decision makers in our country put enough effort to encourage women to get ahead in their career?
21. Do you think the Vietnamese economic, historical, cultural and social context affect women's chances in career progression? If yes, to what extent?
22. What do you think about the roles of the Women's Association in your country? In your organisation?
23. What do you think can help women to advance in their career?
24. Any areas/topics you would like to discuss for this project?

Demographic questions

26. What is your age? Please circle the option that best describe you.
 - A. 18-24 years old
 - B. 25-34 years old
 - C. 35-44 years old
 - D. 45-54 years old

- E. 55-64 years old
- F. 65 years old and above

27. What is your marital status?
28. How many children do you have?
29. Do you live with your nuclear or extended family?
30. What is your spouse/partner's job?
31. How long have your spouse/partner been employed in that occupation?
32. Does your spouse/partner contribute to the household expenses? How often?
33. What is your educational background?
34. Did you undertake any tertiary studies in the country or overseas during your employment?
35. Did you receive support from your employer and your family to study overseas?
36. What is your current job title?

Thank you for participating in this study.

After the interview, upon your permission, a follow-up email will be sent or skype call will be made if any clarification regarding the information you provide during the interview is needed.

A copy of the interview transcript or a copy of the electronic recording of the interview will be sent to you by August 1st, 2018, and you can choose to withdraw parts or all of the transcript before August 14th, 2018.