The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies

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Abstract

This is a qualitative pilot study to explore the key influences shaping the schooling and education of Thai ethic students living in rural mountain villages in one of the poorest and least educated regions of Vietnam. The study uses a qualitative case study approach and data were collected using multiple semi-structured interviews with four senior secondary students, their parents and their teachers. Two of these students were males and two were female, and two were achieving high grades while the others were receiving low grades.

During the interviews, data were collected on the influence of families, Thai culture and identity, the school, school policies, teaching practices, school resources, the physical environment, weather, and school relationships, on student learning and well-being. In relation to school relationships information was collected on teacher-student, student-peer and school-parent relationships. This study takes a socio-ecological approach.

The researcher has a Thai identity and background, was educated in rural remote schools in Vietnam, and speaks fluent Thai and Vietnamese. This enabled him to give participants the choice as to whether interviews were conducted in Thai or Vietnamese, and his background and experiences gave him an understanding of Thai culture as an insider.

In analysing data collected, 15 key influences were identified as shaping the schooling and education of the four study participants. These influences were: economic hardship, social isolation and remoteness, work on the family farm and at home, parent support, the national curriculum, support for learning Vietnamese as a second language, teaching practices, learning support at school, academic achievement, recognition of cultural identities and differences, social marginalisation, interpersonal relationships, student coping strategies, school facilities and resources, and teacher training and professional development. These influences were recognised as interconnected.

Based on the study findings, recommendations were developed to improve the learning, schooling experiences, and academic achievement of Thai ethnic students attending rural schools in Vietnam. These recommendations hopefully could help reduce the educational inequalities not only of Thai ethnic students but of other ethnic minorities as well.

Further research is recommended into the schooling and education of ethnic minorities in Vietnam. A framework is proposed based on this study's findings to assist future researchers.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person where due reference is not made in the text.

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Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: The background to the study

1.1 Introduction

Education is crucial for economic and social development. In developing countries like Vietnam, education underpins future national prosperity and considerable efforts have been made by governments over recent decades to enhance the country's educational performance. However, there is sometimes little room for difference and diversity in national approaches, and this is the case for ethnic minorities in Vietnam.

This thesis explores the issues for one particular minority group in Vietnam. The researcher comes from this group, an ethnic Thai minority in Dien Bien Province, in the north-west of the country. The research on which the thesis is based provides a basis for examining the issues and offering potential solutions to a range of stakeholders, to best meet the needs of this group of people.

This chapter sets the scene for the research and its findings. It begins with two stories.

The first is a story of the researcher's own schooling. It retells his schooling as a Thai ethnic student living in a remote village in Vietnam, and of what shaped and influenced it. This is followed by a story of the researcher's daughter and what happened to her when, as a Thai ethnic student she started school in Vietnam at age five but did not learn as quickly as her teacher expected. New light is then shed on her schooling difficulties when in year 4 she attended a primary school in South Australia while her father was doing post-graduate study.

Following these two stories background information is provided about Vietnam, its history, its geography, its cultural context, the Thai community, and Vietnam's National Education Act of 2005. This provides background information for this study.

A statement regarding the research problem is then identified. It is the focus of this study. Its significance is discussed in terms of the research literature and its importance to Vietnam and the Thai ethnic community. But first, I will position myself within the research with a narrative account of my own experiences.

1.2 A story of the researcher's own schooling

I was born in the 1970s in a small remote Thai village in a mountainous region of Dien Bien province in northern Vietnam. It was at the end of what is referred to, in the west, as the Vietnam War. This was a war between North and South Vietnam, in which America and its allies fought on the side of South Vietnam.

I was born in a rural Thai community. I was born into poor and difficult circumstances. During my childhood, I suffered much pain and hunger. Because of the support and encouragement of my family, teachers and community and my strong motivation, I have been able to overcome economic and social disadvantages to be successful at school and to integrate into the wider Vietnamese community, both nationally and internationally.

I was the first student in my village to finish High School and to gain a high school certificate. I was the first person in the village to study at and graduate from University and to be employed as a teacher. I was the first person in Dien Bien province to gain a Master's degree and to be awarded a post-graduate scholarship to study in Australia.

I was born at home and my mother gave birth by herself because there was no doctor nearby and the hospital was some distance away. The hospital was in the centre of the town; it was about 10 kilometres from the village and people could only travel there on foot. It was very hard to see a doctor at that time because there were very few doctors, especially in remote rural areas. In order to manage health problems, Thai people as well as other ethnic groups at that time, relied on traditional medicine, which they gathered from the forests, or else they consulted the local Thai medicine man.

My village consisted of around 20 households. Both my grandparents and parents were born in this village and had grown up there. The village was located on the slope of a hill and isolated from other villages. The village was surrounded by mountains and rice paddies and farming provided the main income for villagers. In my village, all villagers were Thai and spoke only Thai. Villagers were poor and had little if any formal education; many were illiterate, especially the middle aged and elderly. My mother was one of them; she could not speak or write any Vietnamese because she had never been to school in her life. Everyday life of the Thai people in this village was limited to their local community and the surrounding forest; many of them never venturing out of this area. The village was many kilometres away from the market and shops in the town centre. There were no shops of any kind in the village. Villagers were too poor and could not afford any items except the most essential commodities such as salt or oil for their lamps. The villagers met their everyday needs by growing rice and vegetables, raising cattle, chickens, pigs and buffalo, and scavenging in the forest. Apart from the food they grew themselves, buying meat and food was an unaffordable luxury except on special occasions such as New Year, special festivals or when the family had visitors. The commercial world at this time was unimaginable to them. There was no electricity in the

village until recently, so having light at night depended on oil lamps and firewood, and the sun was used to tell the time. There were no clocks or radios in the homes or village.

Life in my village was, and still is, extremely hard; to ensure two meals a day everyone from little children to old people had their own jobs and responsibilities. It was rare for people to have breakfast because they could not afford it. In addition, they had to get up very early in the morning to travel to their farm before sunrise, so they had little time to prepare it. Family members worked on the family farm for up to 8 hours a day. The men and boys sometimes went fishing or hunting while the women and girls collected firewood and vegetables such as bamboo shoots, which grow wild in the fields or forests, for lunch and dinner. The elderly people looked after domestic animals or performed housework. The children frequently went fishing, collecting vegetables like their parents, or looked after their younger sisters or brothers. They had to work from early morning until late evening. There was little time to play, relax or socialise. Because everyone was in the same situation everyone expected to work this hard and did not complain about it.

I was born into a large family with seven siblings; five brothers and two sisters. I was the youngest in my family. My parents could read and write in Thai, but were illiterate in Vietnamese. All of my siblings went to school but left school in year 2 or year 3 because of the war and the hard life families experienced at that time. Without education, all my sisters and brothers had no other career option other than working as farmers.

Farming only provided the family with food for six or seven months a year even when the harvest was good. In the remaining months the family had to struggle to survive by gathering food in the forest such as bamboo shoots, the roots of cassava and caltrops and banana bulb, fishing, and trying to borrow rice from Kinh people in nearby villages. Unfortunately borrowing rice meant that it had to be repaid with interest. In order to get a loan of 10 kilograms of rice, the family would have to agree to repay 15 or even up to 20 kilograms of rice from their next crop. This added to their ongoing cycle of hardship but families did not know how to survive without doing this. Because all Thai farmers were in the same situation they had no excess to share with other Thai families such as ours.

I experienced many traumatic events during my childhood, which influenced my later life. The first such event happened when I was five or six years old. My mother took me to borrow some rice from our relatives and neighbours but we could not borrow any because all of the people we visited were in the same situation. All the Thai people in our community

were struggling to survive and had nothing left to share. I could see how desperate my mother was because we had not had any rice for our meals for days and we did not have any rice to eat that day. To provide dinner for our large family, in desperation my mother went to a Kinh house in a nearby village to borrow rice. When we reached one Kinh house, I saw people sitting, talking, and having tea outside their house on the veranda. Suddenly two big dogs ran barking and growling toward us. They jumped over my head to growl at my mother. I was terrified even though my mother tried her best to protect me. Even now I still tremble whenever I hear the bark of a dog. We did not get any rice from that family so we returned home without any food.

The second traumatic event occurred when I was in year three. I had a very serious accident whilst helping my parents with farm work. I fell over and one of my collarbones was broken. It was a serious injury and I could not get out of bed for more than a month. I did not go to the hospital to have an operation because my family lived too far away. Furthermore, we could not afford hospital treatment so my mother went into the forest to get traditional Thai medicine to treat my injury. As a result of that accident, my parents supported me to go to school. After that incident, my father said, 'my beloved son, the most important part of a Thai man is his collarbones but you have lost one of them. I do not think you can do the hard farm work which is a man's responsibility so you should go to school as you want and like Kinh people do'. I could see that my father was upset and that his eyes were red while speaking. I have never forgotten this. This memory has had a big impact on me and on my life.

I started school two years later than the other children in my village because I was very small for my age, as a result of malnutrition, and my parents thought I was too small to start.

Normally, children in Vietnam begin school at the age of six but I did not start until I was eight.

The primary school was about 5 kilometres from our house, and before I turned eight, my parents thought it was too far and unsafe for me to travel to school alone, particularly as I had to walk over the mountains. At the time there were no other ways of travelling from the village to the school other than by walking or on horseback. Before I broke my collarbone in year three, my parents believed I would eventually become a farmer, and did not think that my going to school would be important for my future.

School came into to my life unexpectedly. One day because I desperately wanted to go to school, I went with other children from my village. I could not go into class because I had not

been enrolled so I stood outside of the class and watched the lesson through the window. The teacher saw me and invited me to join her class and my schooling started from that day. I struggled to follow lessons and to catch up to my classmates. I did not have any Vietnamese at all when I began school and my teachers were Kinh and there were no special support programs available. But once I started school I enjoyed it and attended regularly.

I was different from other children in the village because I loved school while they did not. I went regularly while they often played truant even when their parents put a lot of pressure on them to go. They preferred to go hunting and fishing, and finding food to eat, rather than going to school and feeling hungry.

I was liked by my primary teachers and classmates because I was a quick learner and keen and confident to participate in class activities, even though I joined the class much later than other students. I often received praise and encouragement from my primary teachers, for being an excellent student and my teachers often pointed me out as a model for the other students to follow. If there were any hard tasks, my teachers would ask me to show the class how to do it. I worked hard to maintain my position as a model in the class. I was never given any punishments by teachers. Some students were punished so frequently that they were afraid of going to school and dropped out.

I often had to struggle to do my homework and school work. No one in my family could help me with my homework or schoolwork so I had to cope with it by myself. I did as much as I could and if there were any hard tasks I would ask my teachers for their help.

I did not have warm clothes or shoes to wear to school and winter in the mountains of Vietnam can be extremely cold. In winter I would keep myself warm at school and on the way there by carrying a slow burning bundle of straw. In class I would place the smouldering bundle of straw on the dirt floor under my desk.

I had to walk to and from school bare foot, because I had no shoes, and as a result my feet would bleed and became chapped in winter. In summer, the wet season in Vietnam, I missed many lessons because my clothes were either too wet or my village was isolated by floodwaters.

The teacher sometimes prevented me from entering the class because I did not have a pair of sandals or shoes to wear to school. Teachers sometimes insisted students wore shoes or sandals.

During my primary and middle school years I went to school on foot because my parents could not afford to buy me a bike. It was not until later in secondary school that my family bought me a bike.

Throughout my time at school I never ate breakfast. Breakfast was not something I ever expected or ever thought about. It was not until I returned home after school that I ate any food.

I loved primary school. The harder my life was the more I studied in order to become successful. Even though I had many responsibilities at home I studied whenever I could. I did my homework or reading while looking after my nieces and nephews or while taking care of the family's buffaloes. Prior to breaking my collarbone my parents wanted me to leave school and stay at home to help with farming work like other children in the village. But I begged my parents to allow me to stay at school and promised to complete all my jobs if they let me go.

I sometimes had to stay at home from school because my parents needed my help looking after the buffaloes or in harvesting the crops. I used to get up early in the morning and stay up late in the evening in order to do my study after completing my family chores.

I accidentally broke my collarbone at home when I was in year three. After recovering from this, when I returned to school the principal told my class teacher that I was suspended because I had missed more than a month of school. My class teacher pleaded with the principal to let me return to class. She told him that I could catch up to my classmates and that I would be ready to move onto the next class at the same time as they did. Fortunately the principal relented and let me return. After this my teacher told me to prove that I could catch up to my classmates and reassured me that she believed I could. This encouraged me to study hard so as not to let my teacher down. I passed the exams easily and received high grades in almost all my subjects and was promoted to the next class at the end of the year.

When I transferred to middle school I seriously thought about dropping out. At the time there was only one middle school in my district (commune). In winter, school starts at 7 in the morning before sunrise and this meant I had to walk eight kilometres by myself to get to school in the dark. There were no clocks in my home and before sunrise you cannot tell what time it is from looking at the sun. My family relied on the sun for telling the time. So it was understandable that before sunrise I had trouble knowing when to get up and when to leave home to get to school on time. I was also nervous and afraid of walking the 8 kilometres to school in the dark by myself. As a result I frequently arrived at school late and missed

many lessons and became discouraged. Fortunately at this time I had the opportunity of seeing farmers working extremely hard on their farms and this helped me change my mind. School seemed a much easier and much more enjoyable option than leaving school and working on the farm.

When I moved into senior high school, once again I nearly stopped going because of the distance and difficulty of the journey. There was only one senior high school in the town and it was more than 10 kilometres from my village. My parents could not afford to buy me a bike and there was no public transport, so getting to school was a major problem. Fortunately, my parents finally solved this problem by selling two pigs, which had been raised by my sister for more than a year, and with the proceeds they bought me a bike. This made travelling to and from school much easier.

My experience of high school was very different from my experience at primary school. While I never had any close friends at school, at high school I experienced negative relationships with my peers. None of my classmates wanted to play with me or to be my friend, and they laughed at me when I mispronounced Vietnamese words or used the wrong Vietnamese words. There were 45 students in my class but only two were Thai. I felt extremely lonely and inferior to my Kinh classmates. I felt different to my Kinh classmates because of my Thai identity and lack of knowledge of what were popular conversation topics amongst my classmates, such as knowledge about films, film stars and football player.

I was also ashamed because my family was so poor and my classmates were so much better dressed and wore more fashionable clothes, and apparently were smarter than I was because of my difficulties in using Vietnamese correctly. Being socially ignored, laughed at and excluded by classmates, undermined my social confidence and triggered in me feelings of inferiority. This, however, did not stop me from attending school and I directed my efforts at doing well to prove myself. Fortunately I was achieving high grades at school and the teachers were supportive and encouraging. On occasion a few classmates even sought my help with their homework, but these contacts were never about friendship.

I received much support, encouragement and praise from my teachers. One teacher said in the front of the class that even though I was Thai that I studied as well as, if not better than, non-Thai students and that she believed I would easily pass the final exam. Another teacher stated she thought that I as a Thai student had to study much harder than other students, implying that it was my effort more than my ability that was responsible for my high grades.

On the day of my final high school exam, I nearly missed it because I did not have a clock or watch to check the time. My family was too poor to buy me a watch so I had to use the sun to estimate the time. On that day, after finishing the morning exam, I returned home for lunch. I had cycled more than ten kilometres. After lunch I returned to school but was prevented from entering the exam room by the exam supervisor. I became anxious because I did not know what was happening. Fortunately my class teacher saw what was happening and asked the exam supervisor to let me in, because I was her student. The exam supervisor explained to me that the exam had been going for nearly an hour and I was too late to do it. My class teacher and the woman chairing the examination arranged for me to go into a private room and sit the exam. They helped me relax and overcome my anxiety. I finished the exam and fortunately passed it.

I have always found it difficult to do well in Vietnamese, as I have trouble pronouncing words correctly, using the right words in the right context, and expressing my ideas in Vietnamese. There are big differences between the Thai and Vietnamese languages. This includes differences in vocabulary, grammar, cultural expectations about language use and the pronunciation of words. It is easy for Thai students to mispronounce Vietnamese words and to use the wrong words for particular situations.

Life changed for me when I went to university in a large city nearly 1,000 kilometres from my home that took two days to travel to by road. At university I made some good Vietnamese friends, and was included in their social groups. My friends gave me a lot of support at university.

While I was at university it was hard for my family financially. Every month my parents and siblings sent me money to live on. If they had not done this I would not have survived financially. This was a big sacrifice for my family. They did it so I could have a better life.

In addition to financial support from my family I was also supported by my friends at university. My Kinh friends knew that I had financial difficulties so they gave me money when I was short of it. In long university semester breaks they often invited me to go with them on visits to their relatives and friends in the country and paid for my transport and food. I did not feel lonely at this time even though I was a long way from home, because I had such good friends and teachers.

I have a Thai name, which is part of my identity. It means a lot to me. My name though causes me difficulties when I interact with people in the wider Vietnamese community

because it is hard for Vietnamese people to write or pronounce it. As a student my Kinh classmates often made fun of my name and confused my name with more familiar Vietnamese names. My friends at University called me Tuan, Tan, Anh or Dung (Dzung), familiar Vietnamese names, in order to help me be socially accepted. While it stopped people having difficulties in pronouncing my name and making fun of it, it still left me feeling an outsider and that I was hiding my real identity.

This story highlights the importance of family, economic circumstances, geography, culture, school policies, support, relationships and chance events on my schooling experiences. My schooling experiences were not just the result of my own effort and motivation.

1.3 A story of the researcher's daughter

My eldest daughter started school in Vietnam when she was 5 years old. She was the only Thai student in her class and was a little younger than her classmates. In class she was a very quiet girl, appeared disinterested in schoolwork, and no one in her class wanted to play with her. Classmates apparently saw her as culturally different to them. She was slower than her classmates in learning what was taught and her teacher's viewed her as making very poor progress.

Her teacher thought her poor progress and lack of interest in lessons was either because she was not working hard enough, or because she might have autism. She recommended that our daughter take extra lessons in the evening to improve her schoolwork.

We, her parents, agreed to the extra evening lessons. So at 5 years of age our daughter went to school six days a week from 7.00 am in the morning until 4.00 pm in the afternoon. After finishing her day class she returned home for a quick bath and dinner before starting her evening class at 7.00 pm. Evening classes did not finish until 9.30 pm. After getting home at night she was too tired to do anything other than to go to bed and sleep.

Our daughter's teachers did not notice any significant improvement in her learning or school performance. At the same time our daughter became more reluctant to go to school and became an unhappy quiet girl at both home and at school. She told us that she did not want to go school because no one would play with her.

When our daughter was in year 4, our family moved to Australia where I was studying at the University. My daughter started at a primary school in Australia. With the help of her teacher she changed from an extremely quiet, passive, unhappy student into an active happy, talkative one who loved going to school. She picked up English quickly, got on well with her

classmates, made some close friends, and received a certificate for her achievements at school. We, her parents, were surprised with her progress and her transformation.

One day she started telling us how lonely and stressed she had been at school in Vietnam. How she had no friends there, how her classmates avoided her, that her teachers were unfriendly, and how difficult she had found the work. She said she had been too afraid to ask for help in Vietnam or to tell anyone just how unhappy and stressed she felt. By contrast she said she loved school in Australia because her teachers were friendly and helpful, she had friends, she was making good progress with her work, and because she loved doing the creative activities the teacher had them doing in class.

In reflecting on this story I recalled that my daughter did not speak until she was three, and that developmentally she was unlikely to have been ready to start school at age 5. I now recognise because of my recent study that her initial teacher's expectations were unrealistic from a developmental perspective. These teachers did not show any real understanding, awareness or appreciation of Thai culture or of the possibility of cross-cultural problems such as language difficulties or social or cultural rejection, and did not recognise the need for any intervention to promote social acceptance by peers or to encourage cross-cultural friendships. It is unfortunate that the teachers involved showed little understanding of the importance of peer relationships, or of establishing a positive teacher-student relationship, or of encouragement, or of listening to and respecting her feelings and needs, and of promoting her happiness and well-being. From reflecting on this story I recognise that parents cannot just rely on the perceptions, expertise and expectations of their children's teachers. Teachers do not necessarily recognise when students are lonely, culturally and socially rejected, discouraged or feeling inferior, or appreciate how this can influence their learning and engagement in class.

1.4 Background Information

Vietnam has a population of over 85 million, which consists of 54 ethnic groups. Eighty-five point seven per cent are Kinh and 14% are Thai (Census, 2009, p. 1). Vietnamese is the official language and the language of all school instruction (Assembly, 2005, p. 4). The country is divided into 64 provinces. Ethnic minorities primarily live in the mountains and remote areas of the country, where living conditions are relatively poor and primitive by national standards (Cuong, 2012, p. 2).

Dien Bien Province where this study is being carried out (see Figure 1) is a mountainous remote region. It is located in the northwest of Vietnam, and is home to 23 different ethnic groups. It has a population 490,306 people of which 38% (186, 270) are Thai (Census, 2009). The province shares a border with Laos and China. In Dien Bien schools, most pupils belong to ethnic minorities and Vietnamese, the language of instruction in schools, is not their home or mother language.

The Thai community is believed to be one of the most disadvantaged in Vietnam (Cuong, 2012, p. 4). Thai make up nearly 14% of the population but they constitute up to 44.7% of the poor in Vietnam (Bank, 2009, p. 49). Thai people have been living in Dien Bien Province for nearly 12 centuries (Wyatt, 1984, p. 6) and have their own language and writing script (Cuong, 1998, p. 117). They are among the poorest and least educated in Vietnam with 88% employed as farmers or farm workers (Baulch, Chuyen, Haughton, & Haughton, 2007,

p. 1151).

In Dien Bien Province the Thai community is reliant on subsistence farming and the majority live at or below the poverty line (Tuyen, Son, Huong, & Viet, 2015, p. 268). There is limited arable land in the mountains and according to Tuyen et al., (2015) this region has experienced a number of animal and crop diseases and natural disasters.

The Thai community in Dien Bien province lives mostly in small villages scattered throughout the mountain regions in houses built on stilts. Between Thai families there are community bonds built on their common language, family ties, involvement in local festivals, communal sharing and the tradition of helping each other (Lang, 1998). According to Lang (1998) when a buffalo is slaughtered, it is divided into small portions and distributed to others in the village (pp.395-396).

Thai families are dependent on farming rice and growing whatever food they need for their survival, and often they spend their evenings engaged in traditional craftwork. Girls and women doing sewing and cloth making, while men and boys construct things out of timber and metal (Son & Trong, 2005).

According to Su (1998), Thai people in Vietnam are animists in that they believe natural objects such as mountains, rivers and trees have spirits. They believe in spirits, magic and the spirit world, and that the spirit world manages the living world. People are thought to belong to nature and there are ceremonies to help keep them on good terms with the spirit world that manages it (Su, 1998, p. 662).

1.5 Vietnam's National Educational Act of 2005

The 2005 National Education Act outlines the aims and objectives of education for students in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and universities throughout Vietnam. Some of the key objectives and priorities in the Act that are relevant to this study are:

➢ All students are to be treated equally regardless of their ethnicity, religion, gender, background, social or economic status.

➢ Vietnamese is to be the language of school instruction.

➢ Textbooks are to set out and specify the knowledge, content and skills required in each subject each year (article 29).

➢ Students are to be given a comprehensive general education that prepares them for participating in real life.

➢ Educational content needs to be appropriate to the psychology and physiology of the students (article 28).

➢ School fees will be waived and subsidies given to support poor students to overcome economic difficulties (article 89).

➢ Ethnic minorities will be given the opportunity to learn their oral and written language so as to preserve and promote their culture (article 7).

➢ Ethnic minorities and people who live in disadvantaged areas are to be given priority in their learning (article 10)

Figure 1. Map of Vietnam showing location of Dien Bien province

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provinces_of_Vietnam

1.6 Statement of the problem investigated by this study

There is a low school attendance rate and a high dropout rate among Thai students, despite school attendance being compulsory for all school age students in Vietnam. Less than 2% of the ethnic Thai students are currently completing their secondary schooling and going onto

college or university (Census, 2011, pp. 36, 55, 47). Yet little is known specifically about the key influences shaping these outcomes. Further research is needed to shed more light on this problem. Improving educational outcomes for ethnic minorities is a priority for the Vietnamese government and Ministry of Education.

While a number of studies have looked generally at the education of ethnic minorities in Vietnam, no studies have looked specifically at key influences shaping the schooling experiences of Thai ethnic students. This study uses a socio-ecological approach and is concerned with looking at schooling experiences from perspectives including: the family, the school, the Thai culture, interpersonal relationships, social support, the environment, student well-being, teaching practices and school policies.

This study explores the key influences shaping the educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam and what can be done to improve their schooling experiences. The study's two research questions are:

1. What influences the educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Dien Bien Province in Vietnam?
2. What can be done to improve the learning experiences and the learning outcomes of rural Thai ethnic students?

1.7 The significance of this study

This study aims to help fill an important gap in the research literature. Currently very little research has been undertaken to explore the schooling experiences and challenges of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam. The Thai ethnic community in Vietnam is a unique culture with its own language, history, geographical location, and socio-economic circumstances. This study seeks to shed light on what is influencing the school attendance, engagement, and achievement of these students. Little is currently known as to specifically why so many rural Thai ethnic students are not attending school, why so many are dropping out of school early, and why only a small percentage of those who begin their secondary schooling are completing their final year certificate.

Obtaining a better understanding and knowledge of what is influencing the school attendance and school experiences of rural Thai ethnic students will help educators and authorities in Vietnam to know better how to go about improving the situation. Vietnam's future social and economic development is dependent on the country better educating its young people. This includes its ethnic minorities. Better educating Thai ethnic students means more attend school

and achieve their final school certificate. Any study that makes a contribution to improvements in the education of Vietnam's ethnic minorities has the potential to assist in the social and economic development of Vietnam.

This study has a number of limitations. It is a pilot study that explores only four case studies. A longitudinal study would have had a number of advantages but time constraints prevented such a study. Further research is needed in order to know to what extent the findings of this study reflect the experiences and challenges of other Thai students in different parts of Vietnam. For more details of the study's limitations refer to the methodology and conclusion chapters.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter provides the background information, context and rationale for this study. The researcher tells the story of his own schooling as a Thai ethnic student in rural Vietnam, and a story about his oldest daughter and her early school experiences. These stories provide the personal context for the present study.

In this chapter background information is provided about Vietnam, its history, the Thai ethnic community, and Vietnam's National Educational Act of 2005. This is followed by a statement of the problem underpinning this study and the potential significance of this study for research literature, for Vietnam and for the Thai ethnic community in Vietnam.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews research articles, from a number of countries, in relation to the education of ethnic minorities and schooling in remote areas, and from general education literature on effective teaching and learning. In this chapter key findings and issues from the literature are identified.

Different countries take different approaches to the education of their ethnic minorities. There are differences between countries in relation to educational policies, practices and school structures. While ethnic minorities face a number of common challenges, Thai students in Vietnam, because of their unique culture and local circumstances face a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Local circumstances and cultural considerations shape educational challenges. Unfortunately there has been no targeted study of the education of Thai students in remote areas of Vietnam that looks in detail and in depth at their local circumstances and specific cultural challenges.

In the second part of this chapter, a gap in the literature is identified, followed by a description of the theoretical framework underpinning this study. This study is shaped by a socio-ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005), resource theories of adaption (Hobfoll, 1998, 2002; Hobfoll & de Jong, 2014), and work on socio-cultural borders (Brie & Dărăbăneanu, 2014; Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998). This framework shapes and underpins the study's methodology, data collection and analysis.

What follows is a summary of key issues found in the researcher's review of the research literature. The review was broad in scope but the researcher does not claim to have read all the relevant literature in this field.

2.2 What is meant by "culture"?

Culture is a complex construct and is difficult to define (Telleria, 2015). It shapes how people live their lives in families and in communities, and what they perceive to be normal and appropriate behaviour. It also shapes how people communicate and interact with one another, what they recognise as problems and what they think are appropriate ways of addressing them. Culture provides people with a sense of personal and social identity that is central to who they are as people, and includes more than a group's language, costume, food, and dances

(Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016). Duchesne and McMaugh (2016) state that culture, 'defines all of us, shaping our view of the world, and the ways in which we think and behave' (p. 407).

> Culture refers to the systems of knowledge, beliefs, values and behaviour shared by a group of people. It is shared by members of a group because of their shared history, and because they identify themselves as members of that group. The sharing of cultural understandings between members of a group is important because of the ways in which these understandings help group members to interpret one another's behaviour and decide how to behave. Culture is learned, transmitted and constructed by each of us… Culture is not static, but … dynamic and continually being reconstructed by its members (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016, p. 407).

People within the same cultural group usually have a shared language, shared beliefs and values, and often communicate, think and behave, in similar ways. Knowing the cultural context of an interaction assists in understanding what is being said, their behaviour and their intentions. Without knowing the cultural context involved one is likely to misinterpret and misunderstand observed behaviour.

Language is an extremely important part of a person's culture and influences their perceptions and ways of thinking. It not only has visible features such as grammar and vocabulary but invisible features such as 'conventions about language use, such as how and to whom questions are asked, use of eye contact, what can be spoken about, how adults and children interact, turn-taking in conversations,…' (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016, p. 407). If someone only knows the visible features of a language they are unaware of how the language is used in a culturally appropriate way.

When people are learning a second language they need to be explicitly taught the hidden or invisible features of the language as well as the visible features. According to Duchesne & McMaugh (2016) teachers need to 'teach cultural differences explicitly, in order to make the invisible visible' (p. 407).

2.3 The importance of cultural identity

Cultural identity is about our place in the world, and our connections with our family and community, which are central to our lives. It is part of the glue that holds people and communities together. Baumeister and Leary (1995) highlight that the need to belong is a basic human need, and according to Silva (2010) cultural identity is linked to well-being.

Loss of, or a weakened cultural identity, has been associated with personal and social difficulties and problems in adapting to life's challenges. Maintaining one's cultural identity is related to one's ability to adapt (Ngo & Li, 2016). Somasundaram (2014), a psychiatrist, states that:

> Group identity is a basic need that determines a community's well-being: its cohesiveness, relationships and networking: its social capital. When it is lost or weakened, the group undergoes loss of dignity, esteem, status, confidence and pride; feelings of inferiority, disempowerment and lack of direction and control over their fate rise to the fore. There may develop various forms of social dysfunction like anomie, suicidality, crime, domestic and child abuse, alcohol and drug problems, motivation, helplessness, dependence (on outside help), mistrust, paranoia and a host of other social ills (Somasundaram, 2014, p. 10).

Cultural identity shapes expectations of relationships, how people interact with others, their goals and how they view themselves. All these influence a student's schooling experiences, so cultural identity is of critical importance in this study.

2.4 Different approaches to acculturation

Different countries take different approaches to the acculturation of their ethnic minorities. Some countries have educational policies that seek to assimilate and marginalise ethnic minorities while others seek to integrate them. Government policies to assimilate, separate or integration influence how schools operate, what is included in the curriculum, teaching practices used, and how success is defined and by whom.

For example, Maruyama (2014) describes how Japan's assimilation policies in relation to the Ainu people, their language and culture, negatively impacted on the Ainu people, resulting in discrimination and extreme poverty, and the need to struggle to survive as a people. Recent legislation to integrate the community allows Ainu children to be taught in the Ainu language in school (Maruyama, 2014).

Individuals, groups and communities differ in the degree to which they resist or embrace the acculturation policies of their governments. Berry et al. (2006) distinguishes between four different approaches to acculturation that individuals can take in intercultural settings.

> **Assimilation**: do not wish to maintain their cultural heritage and seeks involvement with the other culture.

Integration: holds on to their original culture and interacts with others.

Marginalisation: little interest in cultural maintenance or in having relations with other groups. They live on the boundaries of both cultures.

Separation: holds onto the their original culture and avoids interaction with others (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Schools play an important role in the acculturation of ethnic minorities. They provide contact opportunities for cross-cultural interaction. No doubt the school's influence on the acculturation of students is influenced by people's own individual approaches to acculturation (Berry et al., 2006). Schooling and school practices are the result of government policies aimed at achieving what the government believes are desirable outcomes and 'good' for children and the community. A study of what influences the schooling experiences of ethnic minorities needs to take into account whether the country is pursuing a policy of cultural assimilation or integration, or some combination of these.

2.5 Bilingual education that includes the students' mother language

Different countries have different policies and practices for teaching students from ethnic minorities. There has been research into the importance of teaching children in their first or mother language, and the advantages this has for a student's development and well-being (Cincotta-Segi, 2011; Lee, Watt, & Frawley, 2015; Smith, 2003). According to Lee et al. (2015) 'primary school teachers can provide a successful learning experience to minority language speakers by building on the known foundation of the language and experience of these children' (Lee et al., 2015, p. 539). But longitudinal studies are needed to evaluate long term outcomes.

In Beijing, ethnic minority students can attend ethnic schools and learn bilingually (Lin, 1997). While all students in Beijing studied a common national curriculum, ethnic minorities were also able to study their own language and culture. The results of a study by Hasmath (2011) showed that the academic results of ethnic minorities in Beijing were above the national average (Hasmath, 2011). How much this is the result of having ethnic schools, their bilingual policy or because they have better facilities or more qualified teachers is unknown.

Cincotta-Segi (2011) reported on ethnographic research she had carried out in Laos into the teaching of reading in three junior primary classes where the official policy is that ethnic minorities are required to learn literacy in Lao, the official language that they do not speak.

In the three classes studied, teachers implemented different teaching approaches based on the perceived needs of their students. One taught using almost exclusively Lao, the official language. Another taught in a combination of the official language and the ethnic students' mother language, and a third taught almost exclusively in the ethnic students' mother tongue.

This article identifies a number of significant benefits in using a combination of both Lao and the mother tongue, over the almost exclusive use of Lao or the mother language. According to Cincotta-Segi (2011), using a combination of both languages enabled students to engage in more meaningful reading activities, to achieve more comprehension, and to read with a greater degree of independence, while ensuring a significant degree of exposure to the Lao language. The official policy though does not support bilingual teaching, and the Ministry of Education officials claim 'that the mother tongue is only used as a support language in the first grades of schooling' (Cincotta-Segi, 2011, p. 207).

In Vietnam, all school instruction is in Vietnamese and there is no teaching of ethnic minorities in their mother language. Nor is their mother language used to support ethnic minorities in their general education. Today in some primary schools students can elect to study their own ethnic language as an extra subject, but this is not considered to be a part of their core education.

2.6 Economic inequality, hardship and disadvantage

Ethnic minority families are often poor and live in remote regions (Tuyen et al., 2015) where economic hardship results in practical difficulties not only for families, but for schools as well. Giacchino-Baker (2007) states that 'economic conditions and inequities continue to be the primary causes of education gaps in Vietnam' (p. 170) and that 'socioeconomic status still affects attitudes toward minority students' abilities' (p. 173). According to Giacchino-Baker (2007) economic disparities, geographic isolation, and societal prejudices are underlying reasons for the inferior education experienced by minority ethnic groups (Giacchino-Baker, 2007).

Luong and Nielke (2013) studied schooling in Hmong communities, and Tran (2013) explored factors influencing the academic motivation of ethnic students and their progression to higher education. These studies highlight the impact and influence of poverty and economic hardship, of geographical isolation, the challenges ethnic students have in learning Vietnamese as a second language, teachers' lack of knowledge and understanding of ethnic cultures, lack of close relationships between ethnic students and their teachers and Kinh peers,

and lack of support for ethnic students by their teachers at school (Luong & Nieke, 2013; Tran, 2013).

Chi (2011) in her paper on eliminating inter-ethnic inequalities states:

> The sources of marginalization faced by each group touch and interact with income inequality, administrative problems, and the burden of geography, among other aspects; and they mesh with the local political economy to produce vastly different outcomes. Because there cannot be a uniform, seamless policy towards ethnic minorities, only with greater leeway for decentralized, local authorities to innovate and adapt, can there be diversity in effective policy approaches to the education of ethnic minorities. Further, the effectiveness of such a diversified policy catered to local specific conditions can only be guaranteed if stereotypes and misconceptions on the part of policymakers and implementers are tackled. This again can only be done through the increased participation of local populations and the inclusion of local voices in the policy making process (Chi, 2011, p. 20).

Chi sees the need to adapt policies to address inequality as needing to take into account local conditions and circumstances, rather than just trying to implement uniform interventions across the country.

2.7 Schools having local staff who can act as cultural mentors

Local staff that are members of local ethnic minorities and have local knowledge can play important mentoring, educational and mediation roles with other staff, ethnic students and local ethnic communities. Guenther et al. (2015), discussing the Australian context of education for remote Indigenous students state that '…knowing students in a remote community requires a lot more from teachers than it would where teachers and students come from similar cultures. This is why, it is so important for schools to engage local staff. They are the community. They know their students (Guenther, Osborne, & Disbray, 2015, pp. 10-11). In the context of teaching in remote Aboriginal schools, Guenther et al. (2015) highlight the potential roles local Aboriginal staff can perform 'as brokers and mediators of local knowledge, being an integral part of 'two way' learning, being actively engaged in what happens in classrooms, teaching in local languages, and working with staff to ensure student wellbeing and safety' (p. 6). Local staff can provide local knowledge expertise and act as cultural mediators. While their work is based in Australia the same principles may apply in other minority settings, especially where schools are the site for acculturation.

2.8 Parent involvement and community engagement

Varela et al. (2013) recognise the 'need to ensure communities and families are involved in the learning process and delivery of social and emotional learning, to provide more holistic support' (p. 6). Parent involvement, their support and encouragement for their children's schooling is considered critical for achieving successful learning outcomes (Guenther & Bat, 2013; Guenther et al., 2015; Lester, Minutjukur, Osborne, & Tjitayi, 2013).

Parents and local communities have a key role to play in helping schools adapt curriculum to the local needs and circumstances of ethnic minority students, to ensure schools provide students with what students and parents see as a relevant curriculum.

Bartholomaeus (2013) highlights the value of place-based learning. She states that 'Some secondary students may also be encouraged to resist school if their parents see schooling as focused on equipping young people for leaving, with learning having little relevance for a future life in the rural place, and not providing the skills and knowledge required for building a life locally' (p. 17). She also states 'linking some of the learning activities with the local community where a school is located results in engaging and motivating learning activities. These can be particularly valuable for those students who are disenchanted with schooling as a result of failing to find value in the learning required of them' (p. 21).

In Vietnam, parents are obliged to attend one parent-teacher interview each year, to review their child's progress. Other than this yearly meeting, there is often little involvement of parents in their child's education. Parent-teacher communication is also difficult when ethnic parents are not fluent in Vietnamese, and teachers are not fluent in parents' ethnic language (Hornby, 2011).

2.9 A school curriculum that is relevant to the local needs and circumstances of ethnic minorities

In Vietnam, all schools implement the same standardised curriculum, lesson plans, textbooks, homework exercises and tests (Vietnam's National Educational Act of 2005). Schools teach the same lessons and administer the same tests simultaneously on the same day across the country. No allowance is made for local circumstances or for students with special needs. No allowance is made for ethnic minorities who lack the pre-requisite skills or knowledge to successfully master the curriculum or to cope with the prescribed pace of lessons.

Different countries adopt different strategies in providing curriculum to indigenous students, ethnic minorities or refugees (Battiste, 2002; Perso, 2012a; Silburn, Nutton, McKenzie, &

Landrigan, 2011). In relation to teaching Aboriginal students in remote schools in Australia, Guenther at al. (2015) says 'successful teaching will however be found in the collaborative efforts of local and non-local staff, in a contextualized curriculum and in two-way approaches that build on and respect local languages and cultures'(p. 11). This implies students need to be able to see connections between what they are learning and their personal lives i.e., that learning is not separate from students' personal and social lives.

In Guenther et al.'s (2015) study, again in the Australian context, it was found that 'successful teaching, according to the views of [study] respondents, demands an approach that takes into account the health, wellbeing and safety of students, it is contextually responsive and it works to support constructive relationships with staff, parents, community members and students' (p. 10). In other words curriculum needs to be shaped by local context, conditions and student needs, where learning is recognised as an active collaborative process.

 Varela et al. (2013) argues that 'education systems can foster resilience by integrating social and emotional learning with academic learning' (p. 4) and that 'children with social and emotional skills do better in school, have improved relationships with peers and adults, are better adjusted emotionally, and have improved mental health' (p. 1). This highlights the need to incorporate teaching social and emotional skills in the curriculum and seeing student well-being as a curriculum issue and one deserving of a school priority.

2.10 Teacher quality

There is extensive research evidence that remote rural schools face special challenges (Lee et al., 2015), because of their remoteness and because the teachers working in them often have additional challenges in both their teaching and everyday lives. While there are benefits in teaching in remote schools there can be significant practical, personal and professional disadvantages for both teachers and their families. Teaching in a remote rural school does not just influence or impact on the lives of the teachers involved, it also impacts on the lives of their partners, their children, their extended families, and their social networks as well (Mafora, 2013).

Remote schools often find it difficult to recruit and retain experienced teachers, and to provide teachers with effective professional development and opportunities for professional networking because of their remoteness (Broadley, 2012). It is often easier to recruit new graduates than experienced teachers, but retention of new graduates can still be a problem (HREOC, 2000).

Research suggests teachers frequently receive little if any pre-service or in-service training in teaching and living in a remote area, in understanding the local cultures and languages of the students they are teaching, in communicating with parents and students from different cultures, in teaching students the language of instruction as a second language, and in catering for the needs of diverse students including those with significant learning and attendance difficulties and social disadvantage. Lack of such preparation can exacerbate the difficulties experienced by both students and teachers (Beutel, Adie, & Hudson, 2011).

Remote secondary schools often are only able to provide limited curriculum options based on the specialist subject knowledge and skills of the staff they have recruited and their frequently limited facilities and teaching resources. Staff frequently are required to teach subjects for which they lack specialist knowledge and training (HREOC, 2000). Masakale et al. (2016) found 'in Lesotho there are instances when teachers are require to be specialists in topics without adequate background knowledge. Teachers need to educate themselves in such areas, but this is often impossible in rural areas where there are no libraries and other facilities to support their knowledge'(p. 89).

People living in remote communities often have limited access to the community resources and specialist health and support services, and limited access to vocational training, higher education and employment options. These services and opportunities are much more readily available in larger urban centres. Students and families living in remote communities frequently perceive themselves as being socially and educationally disadvantaged (Hornby, 2011).

Lee et al. (2015) in their study of the effectiveness of bilingual education in Cambodia identified the following issues with teaching quality in remote schools:

> A chronic and systemic shortage of teachers.
> A high turnover of teachers.
> A high proportion of teachers that are young and inexperienced.
> Irregular attendance of both students and teachers.
> The official curriculum, which is unresponsive to the reality of village life and inappropriate in bicultural and bilingual settings.
> Lack of effective communication between teachers and students because of language (Khmer teachers do not speak the language of the children and children do not speak Khmer).
> Inadequate training of teachers (Lee et al., 2015, p. 527).

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These issues impact on the quality of teaching experienced by ethnic minorities. They relate to the effectiveness of teaching and student learning. Lack of appropriately trained and experienced teachers is an obstacle to the provision of high quality teaching and learning.

2.11 The importance of student well-being

Student well-being is important for effective student learning. 'In the classroom, students who feel safe, cared for and supported are better able to learn' (Varela et al., 2013, p. 5). Therefore schools need to provide safe supportive environments.

Definitions of well-being usually refer to effective functioning in the cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual domains (Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2010). Such definitions recognise that learning is not separate from a students' personal or social lives, and that students are holistic human beings, with thoughts, feelings, needs, and goals.

Learner well-being is about students having positive relationships at home and at school, a sense of belonging, being confident active learners, having a sense of self-efficacy and achievement, being optimistic and hopeful, having positive feelings about themselves and others, and possessing a belief that life is meaningful (DECS, 2007). Research into learner well-being has found extensive evidence that learner well-being is associated with academic achievement at school. Students with higher learner-wellbeing on surveys were associated with higher academic achievement than those with lower student well-being (Slee, Skrzypiec, Dix, Murray-Harvey, & Askell-Williams, 2012). This research also provides evidence that teachers can carry out simple interventions to increase learner well-being with an accompanying significant increase in student academic achievement.

According to Varela et al., (2013) 'schools can foster hope, purpose, social competence, problem solving and autonomy, mutual care and support among students, parents, teachers and administrators' (p. 4). Well-being is not just important for students. It is important for parents, teachers and administrators as well.

Research on learner well-being is in accord with research that has been carried out in relation to optimistic thinking and the optimistic child by Seligman (1995) and his work on positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It also links with Baumeister and Leary's (1995) research on 'the need to belong', Bandura's work on self-efficacy (1997, 2000, 2001), and Maslow's work on the hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1954, 1987) and the value of recognising and addressing students basic human needs. It also resonates with humanist approaches to learning (Duchesne, McMaugh, Bochner, & Krause, 2013, chap. 6) that

highlights the importance of encouragement and social support. Learner well-being can be thought of as being influenced by encouragement, support and positive reinforcement.

Duck (1999) states that 'our well-being is intricately tied to the functioning of our significant others' (p. 81). Luthar (1999) expresses a similar viewpoint when he says 'the well-being of every child is intricately tied in with the functioning of his or her parents…'
(p. 41). These statements reflect the importance of parents and teachers on student well-being, and of these relationships.
McGrath and Noble (2010) encourage the promotion of positive peer relationships. Peer relationships have an important influence on peer support and student well-being.

It is important to include student well-being in this current study because student well-being is an indicator of how effectively students' social, emotional and educational needs are being catered for. Well-being is recognised as a pre-requisite for effective learning as well as an outcome of effective learning.

2.12 The importance of relationships
Relationships are a central and necessary part of peoples' lives and influence student learning, happiness and well-being at school (Murray-Harvey, 2010). Giles (2011) in his study of the nature of relational experiences in teacher education, concluded that 'relationships are essential to the experience of education whether they are recognised or no' (p. 80) and at times of difficulty 'concern over the relationship foregrounds the teaching-learning experience for those involved' (p. 80).

Murray-Harvey (2010) found in her study that the quality of instructional relationships between teachers and students had a major influence on students' social-emotional adjustment and their academic achievement, and that positive school relationships were linked with social, emotional and academic functioning. In this study Murray-Harvey argues that building supportive school relationships and reducing stressful relationships at school is essential to meeting learners' needs (p. 113).

Relationships can be assets, liabilities or both, and relationships with peers, teachers and parents are not always positive. While positive relationships can be sources of practical and emotional support, companionship and personal validation, negative relationships can be extremely stressful and detrimental (Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2010).

Rejection, abuse or neglect by peers, teachers or parents can have serious long term consequences for students (Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006). Peer rejection can involve isolating

or ignoring the student, refusing to work with them, giving them 'black looks', and verbally expressing hostility towards them. Rejected children often disengage from classroom activities as a way of avoiding further rejection (Buhs et al., 2006). Results of longitudinal studies indicate that peer rejection in childhood predicts a wide range of internalising and externalising problems in adolescence, including dropping out of school, delinquency, conduct disorder, attention difficulties, substance abuse and depression (Buhs et al., 2006; Burks, Dodge, & Price, 1995; Caspi, Moffitt, Newman, & Silva, 1995).

Peer friendships can provide students with many important benefits (Dunn, 2004). These benefits include companionship, playmates, someone who will listen to them and provide practical and emotional support, access into the social and emotional worlds of others, a sense of belonging, a protector or shield from bullying and social difficulties, and access to the experiences of others which can help normalise one's experiences. The presence of supportive peers also helps in coping with stressful events and their aftermath (Ertel, Glymour, & Berkman, 2009).

There is extensive research that demonstrates the importance of play and sport in a student's learning and development (Slee, 2002). Play provides opportunities and contexts for children to learn about themselves and others, to learn about the world around them, to develop and practice social and emotional skills, to have fun and engage in positive interactions with peers, and to be involved in playing different roles. Socio-dramatic and pretend play can assist in the development of children's emotional understanding, self-regulation and empathy (Coplan & Arbeau, 2011). Based on this research schools need to encourage play and sport to promote student learning and development and peer relationships.

Culture plays a key role in shaping the expectations of the teacher-student, family and peer relationships (Allan, 1993). Friendship is shaped by perceived equality and reciprocity (Allan, 1989), perceived similarity (Rose, 2002) and opportunities for interaction (Epstein, 1989). Family relationships are shaped by cultural expectations of parenting and care giving. While student-teacher relationships are shaped by cultural expectations of the teaching role, the duty of care of teachers, and by curriculum policies, aims and priorities.

Poverty and economic hardship, language and cultural differences, and physical distance, are important obstacles and barriers to the formation and maintenance of friendships (Allan, 1989; Fehr, 1996). They influence the building blocks of friendships which include perceived similarity and equality, proximity and opportunities for interaction, ability to communicate

effectively together, ability to reciprocate in kind, and the support of existing friends (Allan, 1989; Epstein, 1989; Fehr, 1996; Rose, 2002).

Allport (1954) and Allport (1998) have identified a number of conditions (i.e., Intergroup Contact Theory) considered favorable for the establishment of intergroup relationships. These conditions are authority support, equal group status within the situation, intergroup cooperation, common goals, friendship potential, and having an in-group friend (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). This work is considered especially relevant to the establishment of cross-cultural relationships. In a school situation without the support of teachers (authority figures), and groups having similar status, and there being intergroup cooperation, the formation of positive intergroup relationships is unlikely. Unfortunately cultural minorities are often perceived by mainstream groups as inferior, and minorities often perceive themselves as inferior as well.

2.13 The importance of student-centred teaching

Implementing recent research on the importance of promoting student well-being and relationships means undertaking student-centred teaching practices. Student-centred teaching approaches are important because student well-being and relationships are of key importance for student learning.

Teaching practices are shaped by beliefs about students, teaching and learning. Today, many educators recognise children as holistic human beings who develop at different rates, and that their task as teachers is to educate the whole child (Duchesne et al., 2013, chap. 6) and to take their needs, feelings, goals and wishes into account. This means actively listening to students and giving them a voice and agency in their own education.

Vygotsky (1986) promotes the beliefs that learning and development occur as a result of social interaction and that learning is not just a passive impersonal experience but an active interpersonal one, in which learners are actively engaged in 'making meaning for themselves, supported by peers, teachers, parents and community members' (Duchesne et al., 2013, p. 199). Teachers who hold these beliefs perceive learning as a collaborative social process that involves two-way communication, relationships and interactions with others, where teachers act as learning facilitators and encourage students to be self-directed learners (Shindler, 2010, p. 25). Learning is not therefore thought of as occurring in a vacuum or in isolation from others or as dependent on teacher direction, and learner well-being is

considered a pre-condition for learning to occur (DECS, 2007). Building positive relationships and promoting learner-well-being are regarded as essential teaching tasks. Teachers who believe in student-centered teaching are likely to engage in humanist approaches to class and behaviour management (Duchesne et al., 2013, chap. 6). This means teachers seek to resolve conflicts and problems collaboratively, using active listening, two-way communication, joint problem solving, negotiation and attempt to achieve 'win-win' solutions. Students are seen as active participants and partners in addressing classroom concerns. Their voices, needs and feelings are respected.

Not all teachers share these beliefs and understandings about learning and development or know about student-centred teaching practices. According to Duchesne et al. (2013) there are a number of different ways of looking at learning and student behaviour (Duchesne et al., 2013). Duchesne et al (2013) focuses on four main ways of doing this. These are: developmental, behavioural, cognitive, and humanist. Each of these views is based on a different set of beliefs or assumptions.

Developmental theory focuses on the importance of individual development and learning readiness. It recognises that children develop at different rates and that they are not necessarily ready to learn the same things at the same age. For example, children cannot jump high if they cannot jump low. Trying to teach students things before they are ready for them is considered futile and can undermine student confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem (Duchesne et al., 2013, chap. 1). In this study the researcher is interested in the developmental readiness of Thai students for their curriculum. This includes whether Thai students are interested in what they are being taught and whether they have the pre-requisite language, skills, knowledge and understanding for the tasks expected of them.

Behavioural theory focuses on behaviour, its antecedents and consequences, and the environment as determinants of behaviour. Environmental engineering, modifying antecedents and consequences and the use of positive reinforcement are promoted as ways to modify behaviour (Duchesne et al., 2013, chap.4). In this study the researcher will notice the use of encouragement and praise, and the scaffolding and adaptation of tasks by teachers.

Cognitive theory focuses on children's thinking and information processing. Children are assumed to be active learners and problem solvers, who develop their own explanations of events. The learning process is not just about receiving knowledge but actively processing it (Duchesne et al., 2013, chap. 5). In this study the researcher will look for the use of problem

solving as a teaching approach, how much teachers listen to their students' thinking, and how much teachers encourage student self-evaluation and reflection.

Humanist theory focuses on student needs, feelings, wishes and relationships. Students are seen as holistic human beings and teachers endeavour to take student needs, feelings, and wishes into account. Teachers try to resolve difficulties through active listening, problem solving with students, and 'win-win' solutions (Duchesne et al., 2013, chap. 6). In this study the researcher is interested in teacher-student communication, how teachers listen to and respond to student feelings and wishes, and the nature and quality of school relationships.

Looking at education through the lenses of these four different theories will provide valuable insights. It will assist in developing the study's suggestions and recommendations.

2.14 The study's theoretical framework

This study is informed and shaped by socio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005), work on social and psychological resources and adaptation (Hobfoll, 2002), and work on socio-cultural borders (Brie & Dărăbăneanu, 2014; Phelan et al., 1998). Phelan et al.'s work is a two-year anthropological study, on the school borders and transitions students negotiated as they moved from one school to another during desegregation of high schools in California.

Brie and Dărăbăneanu's study is about social-cultural borders in terms of ethnic identity and the Roma in Romania.

2.14.1 Socio-ecological theory

Socio-ecological theory looks at behavior from multiple levels not just from the perspective of a single individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005). For example, a socio-ecological approach will study student behaviour from levels, ranging from the student as an individual, to the student as a member of a family, to the student as a member of a peer group, to the student as a member of a class group and school community, to the student as a member of a neighbourhood. These levels are assumed to be interdependent and to mutually influence each other.

In socio-ecological theory people are not assumed to be functioning simply as independent individuals, or in isolation from their family, school, neighbourhood, peer group, or the wider community. Instead people are seen as living interdependent lives that are influenced by physical and social environments and the social structures in which they live their lives.

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This means from an educational perspective that schooling is not seen as an individual process conducted in isolation from the family or community. Learning is not seen as separate from peoples' personal and social lives. What happens in the classroom is not seen as totally separate from what happens in the schoolyard or at home, and what happens at home is not totally separate from what happens in class or in the school area. There are complex connections and interactions between the various aspects of peoples' lives, including their relationships. According to Pendegast and Kaplan (2015) 'a child's learning and development occurs within a complex network of interpersonal relationships and multileveled social structures' (p. 64).

Socio-ecological theory recognises the influence of parents, families, schools, peers, communities and culture in shaping student learning and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Goldstein, 1994; Lerner & Galambos, 1998). This study will implement a socio-ecological approach. The aim is to achieve an ecological understanding of what shapes Thai students' schooling in a remote school in Dien Bien Province in Vietnam.

By using a socio-ecological approach there is no attempt to explain behavior simply in terms of the actions of individuals or groups. There is no attempt to try and explain the behavior of individuals or groups, solely in terms of their actions, motivation or effort. Explanations for behavior are sought in the underlying situational, interactional and social contexts in which actions take place. Actions are seen as having multiple causes and being shaped by multiple factors outside the individual.

Socio-ecological theory assumes complex social problems need multi-level explanations and to be addressed by multi-level interventions. Such approaches have been found to be useful in exploring and developing interventions to address a wide range of educational, health and behavioural issues such as learning and behaviour difficulties, bullying, obesity and depression. (Fitzgibbon, Kong, & Tussing-Humphreys, 2014; Humphrey, 2015).

2.14.2 Social and psychological resources and adaptation

Hobfoll (2002) highlights the critical importance of social and psychological resources in influencing human adaptation. Possession of resources, resource loss and resource gain, can be seen as helping to explain how people adapt to negative life events. According to Hobfoll (2002) resources are fundamental to understanding adaptation and individual and group well-being.

Hobfoll (2002) has identified seven generalizations about social and psychological resources and adaptation. These are:

1. People strive to obtain, retain, protect, and foster resources (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 317)

2. People with resources are less likely to encounter stressful circumstances that negatively affect psychological and physical well-being (Hobfoll, 2002, pp. 317-318)

3. Those who possess resources are more capable of solving problems inherent in stressful circumstances (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 318)

4. Those better endowed with resources are less negatively affected by resource drain or loss that occurs in the face of stressful conditions. This allows them to substitute resources for those lost or simply absorb the loss with the ability to call on further resources (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 318)

5. Resources are linked to the possession of other resources (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 318)

6. The influence of resources is long term and tends not to be transient (Hobfoll, 2002, p.319)

7. Resources become valued in their own right, and those who possess resources are viewed by others, and will view themselves, more favourably (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 319)

Hobfoll (2002) concludes that 'overall, higher resource levels are favourable and, especially in high stress circumstances, are related to better functioning, more active goal-directed behavior, and better psychological outcomes' (p. 316). This highlights the need to consider the role played by resources in determining resilience and adaptation.

Social support is an extremely important resource that can be provided from multiple sources. Research evidence suggests that people with more social support are less stressed and experience a greater sense of well-being and social acceptance, and achieve higher academic results (Chen, 2015; Vedder, 2005).

Looking to explain adaptation and resilience in terms of the possession, lack of, or loss of resources is compatible with use of a socio-ecological approach. Social and psychological resources are part of the situational and social contexts of peoples' lives.

This theory is seen as part of the theoretical framework for this study because the researcher believes the education of Thai students in Vietnam is shaped by social and psychological resources. Differences in these resources may help explain student experiences of schooling.

2.14.3 Socio-cultural borders

The importance of socio-cultural borders has been highlighted in the work of Phelan et al., (1998) and Brie and Dărăbăneanu (2014). As a result a two-year anthropological study, Phelan et al., (1998) identified seven types of borders that secondary student participants crossed in the desegregation of a number of high schools in California. These were: sociocultural, socioeconomic, psychosocial, linguistic, gender, heterosexist, and structural.

Phelan et al. (1998) noted that '... students frequently receive little help in their efforts to cross borders and few opportunities to develop border-crossing skills or to analyse and deconstruct the borders that exist in their school environment or the broader society' (p. 183). These researchers also observed that '… students' ability to move between settings and adapt to varieties of circumstances has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chances of using the educational system as a stepping-stone to further education, productive work experiences, and a meaningful adult life' (pp. 3-4).

The idea of students having to cross multiple borders at school in order to adapt to a school setting is compatible with the use of a socio-ecological approach. It puts the focus for studying adaptation of students on situational, policy and structural factors rather than on individual students, teachers or school administrators.

This study demonstrates that explanations of difficulties in adapting to a secondary school need to consider the borders students have to cross, not just to focus on their skills or ways of coping. The idea of students of having to cross socio-cultural borders is a valuable way of exploring the schooling of Thai ethnic students.

2.15 Gaps in the research literature

Despite the research mentioned in this chapter, there are still important gaps in the research literature in relation to the education of Thai ethnic students in Vietnam. Further research is needed to shed more light on what influences the education of Thai ethnic students in rural schools, in the context of Vietnam. The Thai ethnic community has a unique culture, history and geographical location and further research is needed to explore how best to facilitate school attendance, increase student well-being, reduce the school dropout rate, and promote the academic achievement of Thai students in this community.

There is a need to specifically study the rural Vietnamese context and the Thai community in Dien Bien province in Vietnam and to look at their local circumstances, conditions and the challenges confronting them. A socio-ecological approach, such as the one being adopted in

this study, provides an opportunity to study multi-level influences on students' schooling experiences by looking at relationships, student well-being, school policies and curriculum, teaching practices, and school, family and situational contexts. It is anticipated that this approach will help in developing a more contextualised ecological understanding of the schooling experiences of Thai students in Dien Bien Province.

A more contextual understanding of the schooling experiences of Thai ethnic students is needed in order to know how the situation may be improved. This means finding out not only the challenges facing Thai ethnic students but the challenges confronting their parents, teachers, schools, peers and cultural communities as well. It is important to recognise the many ecological and cultural influences. As Shute (2011) says '…simply transposing a … program into another culture is doomed to failure if local conditions, customs and values are not taken into account' (p. 361).

2.16 Chapter summary

This chapter reviews research articles, from a number of countries, in relation to the education of ethnic minorities in remote areas, and from the general education literature on effective teaching and learning. In this chapter key findings and issues from the literature are identified.

Issues raised in this chapter are: what culture is, the importance of cultural identity, different approaches to acculturation, bilingual education that includes the students' mother language, economic inequality and hardship, schools having local staff who can act as cultural mentors, parent involvement and community engagement, a school curriculum that is relevant to the local needs and circumstances of ethnic minorities, teacher quality, the importance of student well-being, the importance of relationships, the importance of student-centred teaching, the gap in the literature that this study will address, and the study's theoretical framework. The study is shaped by a socio-ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005), resource theories of adaption (Hobfoll, 1998, 2002; Hobfoll & de Jong, 2014), and work on socio-cultural borders (Brie & Dărăbăneanu, 2014; Phelan et al., 1998).

Chapter 3: Method

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides details of the methodology and methods used in this study. It outlines the researcher's research design, epistemology and the methods used to recruit the school site and participants (i.e., teachers, parents and students), to collect and analyse data, to ensure ethical practices, and to promote the validity and reliability of the study. It also provides the researcher's criteria for school and participant recruitment, and rationale for decisions about the number of student participants and their year levels.

3.2 Research design

This is a qualitative study that used a case study methodology as described by Yin (2003) and Stake (2005). In this study, four separate student case studies were developed based on interview data from the students themselves, their parents and their teachers. Each of the four case studies focuses on the schooling experiences of one student participant and what has influenced his or her school experiences. The purpose is to gain insights and understanding of students' school experiences.

Multiple one-on-one interviews were held with each of the student participants and their teachers. A one-off interview was also held with their parents or caregivers. Students and teachers were interviewed on a number of occasions to assist in the development of trust and rapport (Seidman, 2013), to provide interviewees with opportunities to reflect on their answers, time to recall their experiences, and opportunities to clarify and expand or even change their answers. Trust and collaborative relationships take time to develop. It takes time for interviewees to feel relaxed and comfortable in unfamiliar interviews with unfamiliar interviewers.

Interview questions were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews are recognised as an effective way of accessing peoples' interpretations of their experiences (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998; Seidman, 2013). Leading questions were avoided to prevent the researcher biasing answers or interrupting participants from saying what they wanted to say (Bolton, 1987).Please see appendices 2, 3 and 4 for lists of initial interview questions used.

Information was collected from multiple sources (Yin, 2003) and triangulated to develop the case studies. The four case studies were compared with each other, to identify commonalities and differences, and key influences.

3.3 Epistemology

This study seeks to find out and understand students' school experiences. In order to do this data is collected of their stories, thoughts and feelings, and the meaning these experiences have for them (Crotty, 1998; Thomas, 2011). Such data are subjective and interpretive and can change as a result of new experiences, reframing and reflection. Therefore these data are not static or objective, nor does this researcher assume there is a knowable objective reality. The focus of this study is on learning about participants' experiences and trying to understand them; not to measure or quantify them. It tries to capture peoples' realities as seen and experienced by them. There is a recognition that 'different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon' (Crotty, 1998, p. 9) and that 'the social world is constructed by each of us differently, with words and events carrying different meaning for each person in each situation' (Thomas, 2011, p. 51).

Learning is recognised as a socially constructed unfolding process, shaped by family, school, neighbourhood, peer group, and the social structures in which individuals live (Palincsar, 1998; Wenger, 1999). Underpinning this study is an interpretive epistemology.

3.4 The Study's Research Questions

This study researches the following two questions:

1. What influences the educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Dien Bien province in Vietnam? This includes finding out what their experiences were.
2. What can be done to improve the learning experiences and the learning outcomes of rural Thai ethnic students?

3.5 Recruitment

The researcher decided to recruit only senior secondary school students for this study because students at this level would be able to talk about their schooling experiences at all stages of their schooling e.g., junior primary, secondary and senior secondary. As older students they were also more likely to be able to express and reflect on their schooling experiences than younger students, and to better understand what research is and concepts of confidentiality and informed consent.

Since this study involved carrying out in-depth interviews with a number of students, their parents and class teachers, a decision was made to recruit only four student participants, along with their parents and teachers. This decision was made for practical reasons such as limited time, and because an even number of student participants enabled the recruitment of equal

numbers of male and female students. It was considered important to recruit both male and female students to enable the exploration of how gender might influence school experiences. The researcher knew because of his own experience that there are significant differences in gender responsibilities and obligations in traditional Thai families.

Recruiting four students also provided an opportunity to explore differences in the school experiences of students achieving high grades from those achieving low grades. A decision was made to recruit two students (one male and one female) with high grades, having a Grade Point Average of 8 or higher, and two (one male and one female) students with low grades, having a Grade Point Average of less than 6. In recruiting the two students with low grades there was an additional criteria. It was that their low grades were not attributable to exceptional health, behaviour or learning difficulties.

Recruitment of the school or participants did not start until after approval had first been given by the Flinders University Ethics Committee and then from the Vietnam Education Department in Dien Bien Province. Prior to receiving approval from the Flinders University Ethics Committee the researcher had first to prepare letters of introduction, information sheets, and consent forms for the teachers, students and parents, written in both Vietnamese and Thai, that met the Ethics Committee's criteria. The Thai documents were written in Roman script because few Thai ethnic parents in Vietnam can read traditional Thai script.

3.5.1 School recruitment

The researcher first identified high schools in the rural areas of Dien Bien province where there were a high proportion of Thai ethnic students. He then approached the principals of these schools, one at a time, explaining who was he was, what his study was about and what participation in his study would involve. Principals were also given a letter of information and details about the study written in Vietnamese. The aim was to seek their informed consent and permission to conduct the study at the school. Once a principal agreed the researcher did not approach further schools. The researcher then with the help of the principal arranged to meet the year 11 and 12 teachers at the school, to introduce himself and to provide them with information about the study and what participation in the study would involve if they decided to volunteer to take part. They were also to be provided with information sheets written in Vietnamese.

3.5.2 Teacher Recruitment

 After the researcher had met with the year 11 and 12 teachers, and informed them of his study and what their participation would involve, recruitment was by informed consent and self-selection. Interested teachers were invited to talk further with the researcher to clarify information or ask further questions before giving their informed consent.

Class teachers participating in this study were asked to help identify and recruit potential student participants who met the researcher's criteria. General criteria included: Thai ethnicity, students in years 11 or 12, a mix of boys and girls, no two students from the same class or the same family, students with high grades, and students with low grades not attributable to exceptional health, behaviour or learning difficulties. The researcher helped coordinate the recruitment process so that only four students were recruited and they met the recruitment criteria.

Teachers who consented to participate in the study were asked to help recruit potential student participants by speaking to individual students in private and sharing information the researcher had prepared for them. The following information was provided to teachers to help them do this. This information was provided in both Vietnamese and Thai. A copy is in Appendix 4.

Teachers in their efforts to recruit were asked not to put any type of pressure on students to volunteer. All teachers were required to sign a consent form before participating in the study. There is a copy of the consent form for students, teachers and parents in Appendices 8, 9, and 10.

3.5.3 Recruitment of Student Participants

After hearing from a teacher that a student had expressed interest in being a participant in this study, the researcher privately met with the student to ensure they were fully informed about the study and what would be expected of them. If after this the student wanted to be involved, the researcher would arrange a meeting with the parents to seek their informed consent. The class teacher and student usually facilitated this by face-to-face communication because it was not usually possible to do this by phone or writing. Meetings with parents were held in their village at a location and time convenient to them and conducted in Thai. The meetings were held in Thai because this is what the parents wanted and often because Thai was the only language they were familiar with or fluent in.

In addition to providing parents with information about the study face-to-face, they were also given copies about it written in Thai. Much time at these meetings was spent with introductions, getting to know each other, developing rapport and trust and overcoming any initial suspicion.

Parents generally had no prior knowledge or experience of research or researchers, or of what might be expected of participants. This lack of knowledge made them initially suspicious of the study.

If after being fully informed parents were in agreement with their child participating in this study, they were asked to sign a consent written in Thai. There is a copy of the consent form in Appendix 9.

3.5.4 Recruitment of Parents

When seeking parental permission to interview their child, the researcher also invited the parents to become participants in the study themselves. Their participation was dependent on them giving their informed consent.

In relation to one student who was living with her grandparents and a very sick mother, the grandparents were recruited as participants because of their guardian role with this student. The mother in this situation decided not to be a participant herself.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Interviews

Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews with student, parent and teacher participants. Except for the parents all participants were interviewed on multiple occasions.

Interviews with participants were conducted by the researcher in settings that provided visual and auditory privacy. They were conducted one-on-one, except in relation to the interviews with the parents which usually involved joint interviews with both parents in the family home. In joint parent interviews, one parent, the father, usually did most of the talking.

At the start of interviews the researcher spent time on introductions and informally chatting to establish rapport and to put participants at ease. Participants were reminded of the purpose of the study and that details of interviews would be kept confidential. Cameron (2005) suggests starting interviews with 'free narratives' (p. 601) to help put participants at ease. 'Free narratives' involves getting to know the participants, establishing rapport and helping to put them at ease before starting to ask the interview questions. Before the first interview question

participants were told that 'if you don't understand something please tell me', or 'It is OK to say 'I don't know' or 'I don't remember' to questions I ask' (p. 600).

First interviews usually lasted from 30 to 60 minutes and interview questions were semi-structured. Interview topics and starting questions used in interviews are described in Appendix 1, 2 and 3. With participants permission interviews were recorded on a digital recorder. Participants could ask to stop the digital recording at any time during the interview.

Participants were given a choice as to whether the interview was conducted in Vietnamese or Thai. All the student and teacher participants chose Vietnamese and since the parents had very limited Vietnamese, interviews with them were all held in Thai.

Interviews were not restricted to asking only pre-determined questions. While the researcher had prepared a list of topics and beginning questions for each group of participants (i.e., the students, parents and teachers), how the interviews unfolded depended on the answers given by individual participants. After hearing answers to the initial questions, the researcher might seek to clarify their answers, ask additional follow-on questions that were developed on the spot, or prompt participants for additional information. The interview process was dynamic in that it was shaped by the responses of individual participants.

When participants appeared to have difficulty understanding interview questions the researcher checked their understanding of the question and if necessary sought to explain the meaning of the question, reword it, or ask the question in another way. This was considered essential in order to obtain meaningful credible answers.

Multiple interviews were held with each of the student participants. This helps in developing rapport and trust and the building of the researcher-participant relationship. It also helps provide opportunities for both students and the researcher to reflect upon what they said at an earlier interview, and to expand on, check out, or clarify what was said, and possibly to ask new follow-on questions. There is also the added advantage that it enables the researcher to ask new questions about topics that only emerged when interviewing other study participants. According to Tracey and Robin Burgess-Limerick (1998) conducting multiple interviews over a period of time has an advantage in capturing the complexity of people's lives compared with one-off interviews (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998).

Startup interview questions were piloted with two international post-graduate students from Vietnam who are currently studying at Flinders University. One was Kinh and the other Thai.

Piloting was done on these questions to check their wording, ease of understanding, the use of body language, and to ensure they were semi-structured questions.

Participants in this study were four students, seven teachers, six parents and two grandparents. The four students were all interviewed up to five times each (20 interviews in all). Teachers were interviewed three to five times each (30 interviews in all), and parents and the grandparents were only interviewed on one occasion (four interviews). Follow-up interviews with the teachers were generally short interviews of 10-20 minutes each.

3.6.2 Personal research diary

During the study the researcher kept a personal research diary of his observations, experiences and thoughts. This diary assisted the researcher during the analysis of data and in looking reflexively at the findings.

3.7 Data analysis

Interview data were partially transcribed and typed into Microsoft Word files. Because of the number of interviews carried out, the decision was taken to only partially transcribe interviews to make the task more manageable within the study's time constraints. Four separate case studies were developed by triangulating interview data, from the students, teachers and parents (Yin, 2003).

After developing the four case studies, commonalities and differences between them were identified and analysed in terms of possible key influences shaping them. Answering the first research question required identifying these key influences. Member checking and peer debriefing were used to check the credibility of the findings.

After identifying an answer to the first research question, the researcher set about answering the second research question and developing recommendations from the findings and the research literature, as to ways to improve the learning experiences and the learning outcomes of rural Thai ethnic students. These recommendations were discussed with a number of educators from Vietnam.

A framework for future research was also developed to help study the education of students from minority cultures in remote rural areas in countries such as Vietnam. It is based on the findings of the present study and adopts a socio-ecological approach. This framework is provided in the concluding chapter.

3.8 Ethical considerations

There are important ethical considerations in recruiting and working with participants and in protecting their privacy and identity. In order for participants to be willing to disclose their experiences, it is important that researchers establish rapport and trust with them, and address their worries, fears and suspicion. In this study when recruiting participants, they were fully informed of the study, its purpose and what would be expected of them as participants, and no effort was made to pressure or coerce them into volunteering. Informed consent was a requirement for anyone wanting to participate. They were told how their identity would be protected, that what they said in interviews would be treated confidentiality and no one would ever find out what they individually said, and that any information collected would be securely stored without their name on it, and only be accessible to the researcher. They were also told the steps that would be taken to try and prevent others knowing they were participating in this study, however, because student and teacher interviews were taking place in the school setting they were told their anonymity could not be guaranteed. Participants were also told they could decline to answer questions and could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. They were also told that the researcher would be writing a paper to summarise study findings but their names would not appear on it, and it would be written to keep their identity anonymous.

Before fieldwork started, approval was sought and obtained from Flinders University's 'Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee', and the Vietnam Education Department in Dien Bien Province in Vietnam. In order to obtain approval from the Flinders' University Ethic Committee the researcher outlined to the committee's satisfaction how he would ensure that the recruitment and involvement of participants would be by informed consent and voluntary participation, and how any data collected from participants would be kept confidential and anonymous.

No one could participate in this study without first voluntarily giving their informed consent. When prospective participants were under 18 years of age, informed consent first had to be obtained from their parents or guardian. Please see in the Appendix copies of the Letters of Introduction, Information Sheets and Consent forms.

3.9 Ensuring the quality and credibility of the data

3.9.1 Member Checking

Member checking was used to ensure the credibility of interview data and the researcher's interpretation of it, and the findings generated from it. Interpretations and findings were

checked out with study participants to see if they reflected their experiences and viewpoints. Stuhlmiller (1996) states that 'One way to insure the validity or truth of an accurate account is to have it verified by the [participants] themselves. They must recognize the interpretation as matching their own' (p. 38).

3.9.2 Peer Debriefing

In a way similar to member checking, peer debriefing (Braithwaite, Moore, & Abetz, 2014) will also be used to validate study findings. The findings will be shown to non-participants who have expertise in the Vietnamese rural school context. This includes a school principal, a number of teachers and several international postgraduate students. Peer debriefing is being used to check whether the findings are perceived as credible by these peers.

3.9.3 Interview Debriefing

Interviews will be debriefed with participants at the end of interviews to check whether the researcher had accurately heard and understood the key points they were making. A key aim of debriefing is to identify and clarify misperceptions (Eyde, 2000).

3.9.4 Reflexivity

It is important to minimise biases in the way we look at and interpret the experiences of others (Creswell, 2012). We look at other peoples' experiences through the lenses of our own history, experiences and the stories we have constructed around them. Our stories are a way of knowing (Seidman, 2013). Through our stories, we make meaning out of our experiences and those of others (Jago, 1996).

In order to counter possible biases in this study, the researcher has written his own story about his schooling experiences as a Thai ethnic student growing up in a remote rural village in Vietnam and reflected upon it. This story and the personal reflection identify potential biases influencing this study. The researcher's own story is presented in chapter one of the thesis.

As a Thai ethnic student who has graduated from school and University, I recognise that I have been encouraged by my educators and family to think of my academic achievement solely in terms of my strong motivation and hard work. This does not recognise the critical role social support, encouragement, and good fortune have played in shaping what I have achieved. I have to guard against thinking any rural Thai ethnic student can do what I did just through their own efforts alone. Others are not necessarily as supported or as fortunate as I have been.

3.9.5 Auditability

The researcher has made explicit the methodology and the methods used in this study. This detail is provided in order to enable other researchers to replicate the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.10 Limitations associated with the methodology

Time constraints, and practical difficulties in accessing, recruiting and interviewing participants, have shaped decisions about the study's methodology. Limitations associated with the methodology are:

1. This study has only a small sample size. There are only four student case studies involving interviews with students, their teachers and parents.

2. Student participants all attend the same senior secondary high school. Students in different schools may have different school experiences.

3. All student participants regularly attended school. This sample did not include any student who had dropped out of school nor were non-school attenders.

4. No information was being gathered from participants' classmates or peers about classroom relationships, classroom climate or cross-cultural interactions. More sources of information about peer relationships would have added to the richness of the data collected. Peer relationships are known to play an important role in shaping student learning and classroom engagement.

5. The researcher did not take part in any class observation or assessment of student work or learning difficulties. More sources of information about learning difficulties, learning challenges and classroom contexts could have contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of student school experiences and the challenges they are experiencing at school.

6. School relationships, student wellbeing, learning difficulties and school experiences are all expected to vary over time, across year levels and across the three levels of school. A prospective longitudinal study would have been better suited to studying these changes as they occurred over time.

7. Interviewing students about their retrospective school experiences that occurred years earlier is influenced by how well participants recall their school experiences and the level of trust and sense of safety that the interviewer has established with them.

Participants may have difficulty recalling their earlier school experiences and if they feel insecure in the interview setting, and inferior at school, they are likely to be reluctant to share negative or painful experiences and feelings with the interviewer. Interviewing students about their early school experiences as they happened would have minimised recall difficulties.

8. While one can try one's best to describe reality, the best that can be achieved is only an approximation or a reasonable account. No investigation can ever reveal the true nature of reality.

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter outlines the study's research design, its epistemology, the research questions, how the site and participants were recruited, how data were collected using semi-structured and open-ended interviews, what was covered in the interviews, how data were analysed, and what was done to ensure the quality and credibility of the study. It provides details of the methods and methodology used.

The following chapter presents the study's findings. It outlines the 15 key influences identified as shaping the schooling experiences of the study participants.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings of this study. They are based on interview data from the four student participants, six of their parents, two grandparents and seven of their teachers. This chapter begins by describing key features of the specific school involved, the local geography of the area, and of the Thai villages and families.

The situations of the four student participants are briefly described, and the combined interview data are analysed to identify 15 key influences that have shaped their school experiences. Pseudonyms are used instead of the students' actual names.

All student participants attend the same school but were in different classes, and came from different Thai villages. Two of the students were male and two female. One male and one female were achieving high school grades while the others were achieving low grades.

4.2 Key features of the school

Information about the school's key features were obtained from interviews with school staff, students and parents, and by personal observations made during multiple visits to the school. This information was gathered from multiple sources.

4.2.1 The National Curriculum

The national curriculum and associated textbooks provide a detailed program for teaching students at all levels of schooling throughout Vietnam. The curriculum and textbooks are designed by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training. They articulate what subjects are to be taught, teaching aims and goals, what content is to be covered, what teachers are expected to cover each lesson, homework assignments to be set, and what and when tests or exams are to occur. This means that the content, pace and timetable of instruction and assessment are prescribed for all students at all levels of schooling, throughout Vietnam.

Teachers are expected to adhere strictly to the curriculum and textbooks, with their prescribed content, pace and timetable. Students who miss lessons need to catch up on their own. They may be helped in doing this by attending optional afternoon lessons and, if possible, getting assistance from class peers or family members. No allowance is made for students with special learning difficulties, disabilities, or for students learning Vietnamese as a second language.

4.2.2 Teaching practices in the school

Teachers commonly present instruction in the form of lectures to whole classes. This is the most frequently used teaching method. Group work, according to participants, is used only infrequently, and when it is used, it is more about students working individually alongside a group of students than working collaboratively as a group. When using group work the noise it creates can be a problem for nearby classrooms, because of lack of soundproofing.

There is a lack of practical and technological equipment for teaching subjects such as science, computer skills or agriculture. This means teachers usually are forced just to teach theory in these subjects without any opportunity to engage in practical experiments or the practical application of what they are teaching.

Students can be punished when they fail to learn what they are taught or when they break school rules. Individual teachers determine what punishments or consequences are given.

Classroom management does not involve working with students to understand their behaviour or to resolve difficulties through communication or the use of collaborative problem solving. Teachers do not use logical and natural consequences or see their role as teaching students social skills. When students do not learn what is required of them their teachers frequently require them to stand up in class as a punishment for a period. Punishments for behaviours such as bullying can range from being given a warning for minor incidents, cleaning the school toilets, up to being suspended from school for a few weeks up to a whole year for serious episodes. At this school there is no school counsellor or staff member trained in counselling or in working with students with learning, social or emotional difficulties.

After students have been punished, no attempt is made by staff to conclude incidents or to bring about reconciliation or get things off to a fresh start. No effort is made to help students transition back into school after they have been suspended.

4.2.3 School attendance

By law, students are required to attend school from age 6 to 15. Nevertheless many Thai students do not attend school for a number of reasons. Some live too far away from school and others have significant transport difficulties. Others stay home to work on the family farm as labourers to help on the family farm, or to assist their family with childcare or domestic chores. Others have special learning difficulties, which are not adequately catered for, at

school. Schools decide what are considered satisfactory reasons to justify non-attendance. If the reasons are thought to be reasonable, non-attendance isn't regarded a big issue.

4.2.4 The classrooms

Classrooms have ceiling fans, and windows and doors that can be opened to increase classroom air flow. There are no other forms of classroom air conditioning, such heaters, or insulation to minimise noise and heat.

Winter lasts from November to March, and in the coldest months the temperature is frequently 4° or 5^oC. Some students don't have sufficiently warm clothes to avoid being cold at these times. While the winter months are cold, the summer months are hot and humid. In summer the temperature can reach 38^oC while the humidity is over 90%. This makes the classroom extremely uncomfortable for both students and teachers.

Each classroom has an area of 40 - 50 m^2 and accommodates 40 to 45 students. Students sit in rows at bench desks.

4.2.5 The school library

The school has a library and a full-time librarian who performs roles outside the library as well as work in it. Most of the books in the school library are textbooks. There are few reference books and few fiction books. If students want to borrow a book they have to ask the librarian to find the book for them. Students are not permitted to do this themselves.

The library has six computers and students can book to use them in advance but only for a short period at a time. There are no desks available in the library for studying. Apart from borrowing books and using the computers, there is little students can do in the library.

4.2.6 The language room

The school has a modern language room that is specifically used for the teaching of the English language. It is some distance from the general classrooms and has cubicles for students, microphones and headphones, computers, projectors, and a screen.

Unfortunately sharing one language room between 30 classes is difficult and some teachers don't know how to use the equipment because they have never been trained, and the five minute break time between lessons is not enough for classes to move between the language room and their normal classrooms before the next lesson starts.

4.2.7 Two computer rooms

The school has two computer rooms and each has 26 computers. These rooms are used for students to study computer skills such as Microsoft Office and Visual Basic. Each class has two computer lessons each week and students are able to use these rooms in their lesson time under the supervision of their teacher.

4.2.8 Teaching professional development

Teachers employed in remote rural schools have few opportunities for professional development. They do not have a staff room or meeting room where they can meet and share ideas with colleagues. They do not have non-contact time they can use to interact with each other. They do not have opportunities for team teaching because classrooms are too physically small and all teachers have a full teaching load. The school library does not have textbooks and reference books that support teacher professional development. There is also a lack of funds to support staff who need funding for travel and accommodation to participate in professional development in other areas or distant schools.

What teachers do have is a two-week workshop each year, organised in the town centre with speakers invited by senior education personnel. Teacher participants generally have little involvement in planning program content or how it is provided.

4.2.9 The language of school instruction

Vietnamese is the language of school instruction. At school the use of Thai and other ethnic languages is discouraged. When students need to learn Vietnamese as a second language, they are expected to learn it incidentally without any planned help. There is no recognition or reference to local ethnic languages or cultures in the curriculum, textbooks or lessons provided.

4.2.10 The local Thai Villages

The 150 villages from which students attend the school are scattered across a large area. They are isolated and distant from each other and the paths to and from the villages and to the school are mostly unsealed and more like footpaths than roads. They are unsuitable for use by cars, buses or trucks. Walking and riding bikes and motorbikes are usual forms of transport.

Only a small number of families live in each village and on average only one or two students go to high school from individual villages. So a number of students have to travel to school from their village by themselves.

There is little interaction between villages because of the distances between them, their isolation and the long hours spent farming seven days a week. Many adults have spent nearly their whole lives in the one village, and only have the opportunity to interact with each other at Thai festivals organised once or twice a year.

In the Thai community, communal sharing is a long-standing tradition. The community has survived in the past because of the support Thai people give each other by sharing food, helping each other build houses, and assisting each other during times of hardship and crisis. It is believed that there is no wall or fence around Thai houses because this might prevent people from seeing and helping each other.

4.3 Vignettes of the four student participants

4.3.1 Kim

Kim is a year 12 female Thai student, 17 years of age, who comes from a poor farming family. She currently rents accommodation in the town and lives by herself so that she can attend school. The government gives her a subsidy to cover the cost of accommodation and living expenses. She comes from a village where it would take her more than an hour, riding a motorbike on a rough mostly unsealed mountain track to get to school. This track to school passes through a number of creeks and rivers. In the rainy season this track floods and can be impassable for days.

Kim is the eldest child in her family. She has a younger sister in year 10, and a brother in year three. Her parents are farmers who have had little schooling and know very little Vietnamese. Kim's father went to school until year three but her mother never went to school. The father has very limited literacy skills.

Kim's family relies on the family farm for their daily food and to generate an income. Their monthly income is so low that her family is considered extremely poor by the local authorities. This means that her family doesn't have to pay basic school fees and can get a free loan of textbooks from the school.

When Kim moved to the senior high school at the start of year 10, the distance to travel to school was much further, and she qualified for a Government subsidy ($A36 a month) to enable her to rent accommodation in town. For Kim this means living alone, cooking for herself and managing a budget, and only going home at weekends. She has no one living in the town to keep an eye on her and act as a protector and mentor. Kim says that she is lonely,

misses her family, finds it hard to concentrate on her study, and is distracted by the frequent visits and unwanted attention from boys living in the town who have left school.

Kim says she loves school and has close female Thai friends in her class, but they, like her, struggle with the work and are often unable to give her much help when she needs it.

When she was living at home her parents were unable to her help with her studies and the conditions at home did not make studying there easy. As a Thai girl, while living at home, she has a lot of chores and responsibilities to perform, no private space to do homework because there were no walls in the house, and no reference materials other than the textbooks she had on free loan from the school.

Kim is achieving low school grades and frequently has difficulties with the work but rarely feels confident enough to ask her teachers for help or to speak in class. She does seek help from her close friends but only talks in class when she is asked a question by the teacher. Kim frequently does not understand her homework but struggles to do it on her own.

She constantly has difficulties speaking and writing in Vietnamese and finds it hard to express her ideas, to comprehend long text, and to understand and use words in their correct context.

Kim does not receive any assistance with her Vietnamese or comprehension difficulties. She believes that if she achieved better grades she would be better liked and given more attention and help.

When she finishes school she wants to be a kindergarten teacher. This is because she loves little children and she thinks she is not good enough to get other jobs.

4.3.2 Hung

Hung is a year 11 Thai male student, 16 years of age, who lives in a hut in a village where everyone is Thai and communicates in the Thai language. It takes him more than an hour by bike to travel from this village to the school. The track is mostly unsealed and passes through a number of creeks and rivers. There are no bridges across these creeks and rivers and in the rainy season floods make the track impassable.

Hung's parents are farmers and he is the oldest child in the family. He has a younger brother in year seven. His family is very poor. The family lives in a small hut with few amenities and has been classified as poor by the local government authorities. This means his parents do not have to pay the main school fee and Hung qualifies for a free loan of school textbooks. But Hung's family does not quality for other government subsidies, such as for food and

accommodation, which are only given to families considered extremely poor. While the government exempts the family from paying the main school fee it still has to pay a number of school fees such as those when Hung attends afternoon lessons.

Everyone in Hung's village is a farmer but farm income in this area is unreliable because their crops are frequently affected by disease and unfavourable weather. Hung's family only has a small plot of land to cultivate rice and the income they generate from this isn't sufficient to meet their family's needs. The family supplements its income by selling vegetables from their home garden and produce from their domestic animals.

Hung's parents have had more education than many other Thai villagers. His father said that he went to school until year 11 and his mother said that she went to year 3, but they claim that they are unable to help Hung with his schoolwork. Hung's parents only speak very elementary Vietnamese and have very little opportunity to use it because everyone in their village speaks Thai. Most people in Hung's village are illiterate and if they can speak Vietnamese it is only at a very elementary level.

Hung has many responsibilities at home. In order to do everything expected of him he gets up at about 5 am each day. When he comes home from school in the afternoon he helps his parents by labouring on the family farm and carrying out domestic duties and responsibilities until sunset when he returns home to have dinner to start his homework sometime after 8.30 pm. He goes to bed at around 11pm and unfortunately by the time he is ready to start his homework he is physically tired.

Because there are no walls or rooms in the small hut, Hung does not have any private space in which to do his homework and is often distracted by his brother and parents moving around and talking. In addition to being tired and distracted, he finds it difficult to complete his homework because he has trouble understanding the work and in knowing what he needs to do.

At school, Hung is getting below average grades in Maths, Vietnamese, English and Physics, and is struggling to understand and complete his work. Limited vocabulary, general knowledge and proficiency in Vietnamese, Science and English affect his learning.

Homework and schoolwork are big problems for Hung. When he has difficulties he does not seek help from his teachers or his parents. He knows his parents will not be able to or willing to help him, and he is reluctant to ask his teachers because he does not feel close to them or confident to approach them. In class he is extremely quiet. While he knows several friendly

Thai classmates he does not seek help from them because they are usually experiencing similar difficulties to him and besides he is not close to them. He tries to do his schoolwork and homework as best he can to avoid being punished by his teachers.

Hung has negative relationships with his parents, teachers and peers and receives little if any encouragement or support from them. He feels distant from his parents and does not talk much to them and sees his father as stressed, easily upset and frequently angry and critical. His Kinh classmates reject him and do not want to mix with him, and he was the target of bullying by Kinh students in year 7, and this experience still affects how he relates to his classmates. He sees his teachers as generally ignoring him, paying him little attention and at times just being critical. As a result Hung doesn't feel close to his parents, teachers or peers. He is a lonely, vulnerable student with no close friends or no support from anyone at school.

When Hung finishes school he wants to be an actor. He discovered that he loved acting when he participated in a school comedy sketch and received praise from his teachers.

4.3.3 Nam

Nam is a year 11 Thai male student, 16 years of age, who lives in village that has a mix of Thai and Kinh families. There are two Thai families and the rest are Kinh. It takes Nam up to 30 minutes to cycle to school but the track is mostly sealed and there are bridges over the creeks and rivers. This track is passable in the rainy season.

Nam has a twin brother who is in the same class, and an older sister who has finished school and attends college. His parents have had little schooling and are illiterate, but they highly value education and schooling. His father never went to school and his mother only attended school until year three. Both parents recognise education as the means by which Nam can achieve a much better and easier life than theirs. While they are unable to help Nam with his schoolwork they give him much support and encouragement, and make it easier for him to complete his homework by managing his family responsibilities and minimising possible distractions when he is working on homework. Nam often talks with his parents about what he is doing at school and his school experiences. He has a close supportive relationship with them.

Nam's parents are farmers but they do not have a reliable income. While they are not officially classified as poor they still have difficulty paying school fees and do not have the money to pay for extra voluntary lessons in the afternoon. Nam worries about the family's financial difficulties especially when the due date for paying school fees is approaching. He

says it affects his concentration. Lack of money also means that he cannot afford to attend extra voluntary lessons in the afternoon when he wants or needs to do this.

Nam is achieving high grades at school and he has received many certificates for his excellent schoolwork. He has positive relationships with his teachers and classmates. Many of his friends are Kinh, who are also getting high grades at school.

Kinh friends support Nam in a number ways. They help him practise and improve his Vietnamese and provide him with feedback when he makes mistakes. When Nam has difficulties he often seeks their help. If they can't work it out they together seek their teacher's help. The closeness of the village to the town makes it possible for Nam to have some contact with his friends outside of school.

Nam gets on well with his teachers and because he is getting high grades he gets considerable support and encouragement from them. His teachers sometimes offer him free voluntary lessons in the afternoon, knowing that his family can't afford to pay for them.

When he leaves school Nam wants to study at the police academy. His parents support this plan knowing that while he is at the police academy the government will pay for his education, accommodation and food.

4.3.4 Mon

Mon is a year 12 female Thai student, 17 years of age, who lives in a village not far from the school. Most families in her village are Thai and communicate in Thai. It takes Mon up to 30 minutes to travel by bike from her home to school. The journey to school is on a part sealed and part unsealed mountain track. In the rainy season the unsealed section of the track becomes muddy and has to be walked, but it remains passable.

Mon is the youngest child in her family. She has an older brother who is serving in the army. Her mother left school in year three and has been farming all her life. She is a single parent who cannot work at present because of a mental health problem, and she and Mon now live with Mon's grandparents.

A number of Mon's extended family (i.e., her grandfather, uncles and aunts) are employed in government positions. Her grandfather, who Mon lives with, completed his middle schooling and has achieved certificates in health care. He is educated, proficient in Vietnamese and is employed as an officer in the local commune (council).

Mon's mother is officially classified as poor and this means she does not have to pay Mon's normal school fees and Mon can borrow textbooks for free from the school. This helps reduce the family's economic burden.

At home Mon is not required to perform domestic duties or farm work except in the summer school holidays. Her mother and grandparents just want her to concentrate on her studies and homework. This means she can begin her homework when she gets home after school. At home she has been provided with a desk, chair and lamp in a quiet corner of the house.

Her grandfather, aunts and uncles frequently help Mon with her homework. The grandfather also purchases and borrows books and magazines for Mon to read to improve her Vietnamese, reading skills, general knowledge, and knowledge of the Vietnamese culture.

Mon is a student who has achieved outstanding grades at school in subjects such as Maths, and has won two maths awards in provincial competitions. In the middle school she won a place in a special school for gifted students but declined it because it required her to live a long way from home and would have negatively affected her family financially and emotionally. Mon is achieving well in nearly all subjects but she finds Vietnamese and Chemistry especially challenging. She sometimes has difficulties using Vietnamese and in pronouncing Vietnamese words correctly. A number of Vietnamese words and concepts do not exist in the Thai language and this can create difficulties for Mon.

Mon gets on very well with her teachers and peers. She is popular and has a number of Kinh and Thai friends who are high achieving students. Mon also has a close best friend who comes from a poor family and is an excellent student. Mon and her best friend support each other in their learning at school and in coping with personal issues and challenges.

Mon gets much emotional and practical support and encouragement from her teachers. They think highly of her abilities because of her high academic grades, and give her special personal attention in class.

When Mon experiences difficulties with her work she can seek support from multiple sources. She is confident in seeking help and frequently seeks support from her best friend, her classmates, her teachers, her grandfather, and members of her extended family. Mon is not quiet or silent in class and is very confident. However she finds the pressure of continuing to achieve high grades stressful.

After completing school Mon wants to become a policewoman. She and her family have developed a detailed plan for her future education.

4.4 Fifteen key influences identified as shaping the schooling experiences of these four students

In analysing the case studies, 15 key influences were identified as collectively shaping the educational experiences of each and every one of the four students in the case studies. These identified influences were seen as being embedded in the lives of the study participants; the degree of influence of each varying over time as contexts and circumstances changed. For example, the degree of economic hardship depended on the success of the family farm. These 15 key influences are as follows:

4.4.1 Economic hardship

Family economic hardship impacted every one of the four study participants. It reduced their access to educational resources and their learning opportunities. All four students came from poor families who were dependent on a small farm income which varied from year to year. Lack of a reliable farm income was a source of continual stress and insecurity. When crops fail this has serious consequences for a family's ability to pay school fees and meet their basic needs. Rural Thai farmers do not have resources in reserve for failed crops.

In interviews with participants, economic hardship impacted on these families' ability to:

- Pay school fees
- Afford extra voluntary lessons
- Provide students with adequate clothing to keep them warm and dry in the wet and cold seasons (e.g., having a raincoat in the rainy season)
- Provide their child with a bike or motorbike to make the journey to school shorter
- Provide a comfortable area at home for doing homework
- Feed their family during hard times
- Afford accommodation for their child or children in the neighbourhood where the school is located

As the due date for school fees approached, if families did not know whether they would earn enough income after harvesting their crops to pay the school fees, this caused much stress and worry. All study students said this was a very stressful time for them as well as for their parents. They said they worried about this, and this affected their ability to concentrate in

class. Some of the students said they also felt ashamed if their family couldn't afford school fees.

4.4.2 Remoteness and social isolation

Thai ethnic students live in small villages scattered through the mountains and valleys of Dien Bien province. Travel between the villages and from the villages to the school, through the mountains, is mostly on narrow unsealed tracks that cross creeks and rivers where there are often no bridges, and the tracks are subject to flooding in the rainy season. Sections of these tracks are inaccessible to cars, buses and trucks, but are usually accessible to bikes and motorbikes. When tracks are flooded they are often impassable for days and students needing to use them are unable to travel to school. If students are absent from school this means missing lessons, which are not repeated.

The distance from the village to the school, the often unsealed track between the two, and the mountainous terrain through which the track passes, often makes the journey to school a challenging one. The nature of this journey also acts as an obstacle to interaction between Thai villagers, Kinh families and traders in the town, and Thai parents and teachers in the school.

The distance between the villages and the town and the poor transport system between them, contributes to the lack of interaction and intercultural awareness and understanding between Kinh and Thai communities. Many adults in the Thai villages have never travelled outside their village or farm, and many Kinh families have never visited a Thai village. Remoteness and social isolation help explain the limited cultural awareness and understanding of teachers at the school and of members of both the Kinh and Thai communities.

4.4.3 Work on the Farm

All four student participants came from farming families that relied on manual labour and the use of animals such as buffalos, instead of mechanical labour saving machinery. Because they are almost subsistence farmers they do not have the income to employ casual labourers and so all members of the family are needed to work on the family farm, to dig and weed, to care for domestic animals, to look after the family garden and to gather water. Mon was the only one of the four student participants who did not have to perform farm duties or responsibilities and so was able to focus on her studies.

Three of the four student participants said their typical day started when the rooster crowed at sunrise. They left home to arrive at school by 7.30 am. School lessons went until 11.30 am

after which they usually returned home to work on the family farm until sunset. After working on the family farm they walked home to help prepare dinner. They usually arrived home hungry and physically tired. After dinner they worked on their homework before going to bed.

Hung said that by the time he got around to starting his homework he was too tired and sleepy to do it. Two of the other student participants had similar experiences.

Most of teacher participants said that failure to complete homework was due to student laziness and parents not being strict enough. These teachers did not understand that Thai students are required to work long hours labouring at home and on the family farm and that this can seriously impact on their ability to complete homework.

4.4.4 Parent support

The parents of the four student participants generally have had very limited schooling, speak little if any Vietnamese, are either illiterate or have poor literacy skills, and have been given little information from the school about what their children are studying. Parents who went to school for some years said they had forgotten most of what they were taught. So for many practical reasons these parents were unable to help their secondary school children understand or do their homework. Nam's mother said that she really wanted to help Nam but it is impossible, she had left school in year 3, and is now nearly illiterate.

But there was evidence in the interviews that the support of parents was extremely important, and that it had a significant influence on their children's schooling. Different parents used different ways of supporting their children but students such as Hung and Kim did not receive much support.

The ways parents supported their children's schooling include:

- They convinced their child to believe that school is the path to a better life
- They demonstrated a belief in their child's abilities
- They listened and encouraged their child to talk about what he or she was doing at school
- They celebrated their child's successes and achievements
- They reduced the chores and duties their child was required to do at home and on the family farm, so that he or she was more able to focus on their studies and to be less physically tired

- They took steps to make it easier for their child to study at home by reducing distractions when they were studying and providing such things as a desk, chair and a lamp
- They provided educational reference materials at home such as books and magazines
- They paid school fees so that their child could go to voluntary lessons for extra tuition
- They encouraged extended family members who had the educational skills and knowledge to help their child
- They encouraged friendships with Kinh students and their families
- They encouraged their child to aim for a career and to plan to go onto further education

Parents can provide support for their child in many important ways other than helping them with their homework. Convincing their children of the importance of schooling was seen as extremely important.

4.4.5 The national curriculum

The national curriculum plays a key role in shaping the schooling experiences of students. All four student participants expressed concerns and difficulties relating to their curriculum.

Key concerns expressed by student and teacher participants were:

i. The curriculum assumes experiences, knowledge, vocabulary and concepts that Thai ethnic students do not have.

- Many words in Vietnamese do not exist in the Thai language.
- The same Vietnamese words mean different things in different contexts and this is confusing for Thai students.
- Most rural Thai students have not experienced the world outside their village and have no direct experience of what are normal experiences for students who live in other areas and have more technology and live more complex lifestyles. For example, students who have never seen or experienced the 'sea' have difficulty making sense of stories relating to the sea.

ii. The curriculum ignores the difficulties that Thai students have in learning the Vietnamese language without any direct instruction. Thai students have difficulties with mastering grammar, the pronunciation of words and the learning of some vocabulary.

- Using incorrect Vietnamese words, grammar or pronunciation often results in negative reactions by teachers and peers.

iii. Teachers do not have time to check what individual students know or do not know and to provide any personalised help.

- Teachers said they could not provide students with individualised help because they were under pressure to cover the curriculum content specified for each lesson and giving individualised help would prevent them going at the pace required.
- Teachers recognised that Thai students needed much more support than they were able to provide.

iv. Teachers do not have time to help students catch up on lessons they miss as a result of roads being flooded, and absences due to illness or injury.

- The pace of the curriculum is nationally prescribed and no allowances are made for local or personal circumstances. Dates for assessments are also prescribed and teachers are expected to meet these expectations.

v. Students do not have the option of studying the Thai language, culture and history.

- Thai students interviewed in this study said they had limited knowledge of their own Thai culture and history and wanted to learn more about it.

4.4.6   Support for learning Vietnamese as a second language

All four student participants expressed difficulties in learning and using Vietnamese, the language of school instruction. Of course, some students experienced greater difficulty in learning and using this language than others.

While Vietnamese was a second language to study participants, no effort was made to teach it systematically to them as a second language. The majority of their teachers were Kinh, who cannot speak Thai and have no knowledge of Thai culture, history or lives. None of the teachers had received any training in teaching Vietnamese as a second language.

Because Vietnamese is the language of school instruction and there is no special course to teach it as a second language, Thai students need support from every one of their teachers in the different subject areas. But teachers interviewed in this study were ill-equipped to do it, were not aware of the need to do this at the senior secondary school level, and even if they were aware of the need they believed they did not have the time to provide it.

Student participants with Kinh friends and Kinh speaking family members were at an advantage to Thai students who did not. They had the advantage of being able to seek help and assistance from them in learning and using Vietnamese.

4.4.7 Teaching practices

Teaching in class, according to study participants, usually involved teachers giving lectures to the whole class with little individualised instruction, discussion or collaborative group work. After the lectures students were expected to work individually through exercises in their textbook.

Teachers said they needed to treat each student exactly the same, no matter their ethnicity, background, skills or abilities. This was seen as treating students fairly. Students who lacked expected skills, had gaps in their knowledge, or significant socio-economic disadvantages, had to struggle on their own as best they could.

The teachers of the four student participants explained that they had not received any teacher training or professional development in the use of student-centred teaching practices, in how to cater for student diversity in an inclusive classroom, in theories of managing student behaviour, in assessing and catering for learning difficulties, or the importance of building positive classroom relationships and promoting student well-being. Their practices therefore did not involve working collaboratively with students to clarify or resolve their problems or difficulties. Teachers did not listen to their students' perceptions of difficulties nor did they listen to their students' feelings or to the reasons for their behaviour or their ideas on how problems might be resolved. Teachers used mostly teacher-centred authoritarian discipline. Teachers could individually decide the punishments they used except for serious misbehaviour when the principal became involved.

The study participants said that students were punished for not learning what was being taught, not doing homework, being late for school, for bullying and other misbehaviour. Punishment and fear of being punishment were the main methods used to motivate 'good' behaviour. The most commonly used punishments were: having to stand up in class for a lesson or more, having their name put on a black list, having to clean the school toilets, and being suspended for up to a whole year. There was no counselling or reconciliation after they had served their punishment.

All four student participants spoke of the importance of teacher praise on their motivation and self-esteem. Mon and Nam because of the high grades thought they received much more attention and praise than their class peers. Kim and Hung talked about being very quiet in class and only talking in class when the teachers spoke to them. They were fearful of

displeasing their teachers, feared being laughed at by their peers, and received little attention and praise from their teachers. Their low grades did not attract extra teacher support.

4.4.8   Learning support at school

Kim and Hung had learning difficulties other than mastering the Vietnamese language. They have difficulties in subjects such as English, Maths and Science and had experienced difficulties in these subjects for many years,

Unfortunately Kim and Hung did not receive support at the time they started to experience difficulties in these subjects, and because knowledge and understanding in these subjects builds on earlier learning, these difficulties became more entrenched and hard to address. Early intervention in learning difficulties can help avoid the development of secondary difficulties. Because the sources of their difficulties were not identified by diagnostic assessments and were not resolved by remedial instruction, they were ongoing and this helps explain their low grades.

The four student participants occasionally attended voluntary classes in the afternoon and found them useful but there was little if any individualised instruction during these lessons. Students can only attend these lessons when their families can afford to pay for them or when individual teachers waived the fees for them as they sometimes did with Mon.

4.4.9   Academic achievement

There is evidence from the interviews with study participants and their teachers that academic achievement influences student motivation, relationships with teachers and peers, and the level of support and attention they receive at school. In other words academic achievement influences subsequent school support and functioning.

According to Mon, her outstanding grades motivated her to keep achieving at a high level and as a result of her high grades teachers gave her individual attention and support, and waived fees when she attended voluntary afternoon classes. Her high grades were associated with positive relationships with teachers, popularity with peers, and friendships with classmates who were also achieving high grades.

By contrast, Hung's low academic achievement was associated with poor academic motivation, a less positive relationship with his teachers, low social acceptance, lack of friends and more limited individual attention and support from his teachers. He experienced loneliness and a sense of difference at school.

Kim and Hung both receive low academic grades at school. Both said because of their grades they felt inferior and lacked confidence in their interactions with teachers and classmates, and were overlooked by their teachers, and often felt lonely at school. They thought teachers preferred to work with 'good' students.

4.4.10 Recognition of cultural identities and differences

Kinh teachers interviewed had little awareness or understanding of Thai culture, language, history, village and family life, and of the impact of economic hardship, farming and geography on the lives of Thai students. They were unaware just how hard students were expected to work on the family farm, the conditions under which they did their homework and the challenges they faced in learning Vietnamese as second language learners.

Because Kinh teachers were usually unaware of Thai culture and lives, they had little if any understanding of the social, cultural and educational challenges Thai students faced at school. Nor, the sense of inferiority they often felt because of their socio-economic disadvantages and difficulties in mastering Vietnamese and the school curriculum.

Kinh teachers noticed that Thai students were often quiet in class, and did not speak unless they were spoken to. They assumed that this was because they were shy. In the student interviews with Kim and Hung they presented a different explanation. They were generally silent in class because of a lack of confidence, fear of saying the wrong thing and being laughed at or criticised by the teacher or their classmates. It was about avoiding embarrassment, ridicule and attracting negative attention not just about shyness.

From interviews with teachers and students, it became evident that cultural identity and cultural differences were never openly discussed in class and that teachers did not take steps to promote intercultural awareness, acceptance, and cross-cultural relationships. The teachers' ignorance of the Thai culture no doubt influenced this.

The four student participants demonstrated that they had learnt that equality is treating everyone the same. However failure of their teachers to recognise and respect their Thai identity and cultural differences sends a powerful message to Kinh and Thai students and their parents that these differences are unimportant and can be ignored. [This message helps explain why Thai students and their parents feel inferior, inadequate and second-class citizens]. When parents feel inferior this impacts negatively on their communications with Kinh teachers.

4.4.11 Social marginalisation

The four student participants thought that Thai students were sometimes discriminated against by teachers and Kinh classmates especially in the primary and middle schools. Thai students living in villages came from houses that did not have bathrooms, toilets, running water, or washing machines, and laboured on family farms after school that made them dirty and sweaty. If Thai students came to school smelly, dirty and wearing ragged unclean clothes they were generally ignored and Kinh students and teachers kept away from them. The school did not have bath, shower or laundry facilities and teachers were not seen as taking any steps to reduce these difficulties.

Because Thai students were usually poor at speaking Vietnamese, Kim and Hung said they risked being laughed at and humiliated if they used incorrect Vietnamese words and grammar. Therefore they avoided answering questions in class and teachers. Not answering questions while it might help students to avoid being laughed at and humiliated, encouraged teachers and Kinh students to see them as lazy and not bright, especially if they achieved only low school grades.

Teachers were seen by study participants as giving more attention and support to students they thought were bright and who answered questions correctly in class.

4.4.12 Interpersonal relationships

The four student participants saw their relationships with their teachers and Kinh and Thai classmates as influencing their learning and schooling. They thought their relationships with their teachers affected their confidence, their willingness to seek help, and to answer and ask questions and to speak in class.

Mon and Nam who were achieving outstanding school grades had positive relationships with their teachers, friendships with both Kinh and Thai classmates, and were confident in answering questions in class and in seeking help from their Thai and Kinh friends and teachers. They were both very positive about their schooling experiences.

Both Kim and Hung who were achieving poor school grades said that they had a number of Thai friends, but no friends among Kinh classmates. They found their interactions with their teachers stressful and worried about whether teachers might embarrass, humiliate or punish them. This was especially so if their teachers were strict, unfriendly and unpredictable. They were both quiet in class, and neither sought help from their teachers nor received much help if

they asked other Thai students for help. They found Thai classmates were usually experiencing similar difficulties to them and unable to help.

Hung was bullied in year seven by Kinh classmates and this had left him feeling suspicious and worried about the possibility of further peer rejection. He does not understand why Kinh students do not want to talk and be friendly with him.

Hung is often lonely and feels very different to other students. He prefers Thai teachers to Kinh teachers because he thinks they have a better understanding of him and are friendlier. Nearly all his teachers are Kinh and non-locals.

In interviews with student and teacher participants it became evident that students had limited opportunities for making friends at school. There were no free play periods such as recess or lunch periods, and few opportunities to play sport or participate in collaborative social activities. Teacher participants also did not recognise that relationships such as teacher, student or peer, played important roles in students' learning.

One teacher study participant said he did not have time to talk with his students to get to know them, because teaching took so much of his time at school. He did not see developing a positive teacher-student relationship as part of his role as a teacher, or that it had any learning benefits.

Similarly he did not believe that teachers had a role to play in facilitating peer relationships, or needed to do this. Teachers were not interested in peer relationships.

None of the student participants said they liked strict teachers. They all said they much preferred friendly, supportive teachers.

4.4.13 Student coping strategies

The four students interviewed in this study use a range of coping strategies. Mon and Nam because they have more social resources (i.e., social capital) have 'a wider repertoire' of coping strategies than Kim or Hung.

Mon's resources include her abilities and knowledge as an outstanding student, her positive relationships with her teachers, her friendships with high achieving Kinh and Thai classmates, her educated grandfather who she lives with, and her educated uncles and aunts who are employed in government positions. By contrast Hung does not have similar social capital or academic skills or knowledge. He does not have a good understanding of the school curriculum, he does not have positive relationships with his teachers, is not confident enough

to ask his teachers for help, does not have friendships with Kinh students, does not have friendships with capable Thai students, and his parents are unable help him with homework but he never asks them anyway.

Coping strategies frequently used by Kim and Hung for school learning difficulties include trying to work things out on their own and doing as much of the work as they could, copying other students work when they were able to do so, and giving up. The strategies used by Mon and Nam included seeking help from their teachers, seeking help from Kinh and Thai classmates who are achieving high grades, and working collaboratively with their friends.

It is likely to be much more effective for students to seek help and use collaborative problem solving than just trying to work out problems by themselves. But Kim and Hung lack the social capital, the positive relationships and the confidence required to seek help from others and to work collaboratively with classmates. As members of Thai rural families they have been brought up to be self-reliant and to work independently to solve problems. Letting others know that you are having difficulties and asking for help is not encouraged in rural Thai families unless it is as a last resort.

4.4.14 School facilities and resources

Teachers interviewed drew attention to the school's limited physical facilities and teaching equipment. They thought that large class sizes, lack of facilities and equipment, limited training and professional development, difficulties in recruiting highly trained teachers and lack of support staff, were obstacle to their effectiveness as teachers. Students interviewed reinforced their teachers' concerns about lack of resources.

For example, students saw their classrooms as lacking effective air conditioning and sound insulation. They recognised that they did not have enough equipment to use practical hands-on problem solving when studying subjects such as science, computing and agriculture, and that their classes were too large to allow teachers to give them much individual attention.

4.4.15 Teacher training and professional development

Interviewed teachers recognised a need to have more ongoing professional development in areas such as working with ethnic minority students, teaching in remote schools and in teaching their specialised subject areas. They had never received cultural awareness training, or training in teaching Vietnamese as a second language, or working with ethnic minorities or teaching in remote, rural schools.

Teachers said they only participated in one week's professional development each year. This professional development was held in the summer school break and organised at the regional level. As teachers they did not have any say in what is included in the program or how the program was run. They did not think these programs were usually relevant to their needs or effective in facilitating changes to their teaching practices.

Other than this regional in-service, it is very hard for teachers in rural schools to attend professional development provided elsewhere in other towns or cities in Vietnam. Their school does not have the funds to pay for their travel and accommodation costs for in-service and no effective way of covering classes when teachers are absent. There are no local relieving teachers and no funds to pay them if they were.

Teachers do not have any non-contact time during lesson periods. Teachers are expected to teach every lesson each day. They do not have any non-contact time they could use for professional discussions with each other, or for providing team teaching, or for observing each other's teaching. Thus there are few opportunities for teachers to work with one another, or to learn from each other.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter reports the study's key findings. It describes what was discovered about the school and the four student participants. The four student participants are introduced and 15 key influences are identified that were found to be shaping their schooling experiences. In the next chapter there will be a discussion of these influences.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the 15 key influences identified in the Results chapter shaping the schooling experiences of the four student study participants. As part of this discussion links are made to the general research literature. The general aim of this study is to develop a better understanding of the challenges Thai ethnic students face, how these challenges are addressed and what influences their schooling outcomes. This discussion seeks to develop a better understanding of the results of this study.

Before starting to discuss the 15 key influences it is important to make several general comments. These are:

- The 15 key influences interact and influence each other. For example, the national curriculum influences teaching practices and academic support, and family economic hardship influences parent support and the student's work commitment on the family farm.
- The four student study participants are a small and particular sample of Thai students in that they are senior high school students, regularly attend school, and are highly motivated to achieve their high school certificate. They do not necessarily represent other Thai students.
- Schooling experiences evolve and unfold over time. Some of the challenges students faced in their early schooling were different to those they experienced later in their schooling.
- Economic hardship was not just experienced by the four student participants and their families. It was likely to have affected other members of their school community, including teachers, other ethnic groups, and many of the Kinh students and their families.

The outcome of this discussion will be used in the final chapter as the basis for proposing a socio-ecological framework for future research in relation to this topic.

5.2 Discussion of the 15 identified key influences

5.2.1   Economic hardship

Thai ethnic families living in remote rural areas rely on near subsistence farming. They have few amenities or labour saving devices (e.g., no toilet, no bathroom, no separate rooms in their house, no water taps, no refrigerator, no oven, no heater, no tractor, no truck, no power

tools, no village shops, no public transport from the village to the school or town), little surplus income, and when the crops fail, they have difficulty finding enough food to survive (Cuong, 2012, pp. 10-11).

Farming in the mountains of Dien Bien province is highly reliant on manual not mechanical labour and all family members are obliged to work on the farm to produce enough food to meet their own needs and to earn income. Children are required to work on the family farm, which is time consuming and physically tiring. After finishing their school in the morning, Thai students work on their family farm allotment until the sun sets at around 7.30pm at night and then walk home several kilometres for their evening meal. Because they usually do not start their homework until after their evening meal when they are physically tired, they can find it hard to concentrate on their studies (Anh, 2010, p. 10).

Low-tech farming that does not use fertilisers, as is carried out by rural Thai ethnic families, involves clearing new land from the forest each year to maximise crop yields (Luong & Nieke, 2013, p. 9). If crops were to be planted on the same land each year crop yields would quickly decrease as the soil becomes depleted of soil nutrients without the addition of fertiliser, which is too expensive for these farmers to buy.

As with farmers everywhere Thai ethnic farmers are dependent on having fertile soil, enough land, reliable and adequate rainfall, generally favourable weather conditions and healthy domestic animals. But in the mountains of Dien Bien province these conditions can vary markedly. For example, soil erosion, lack of rain and reduced area of farmland can result in greatly reduced crop yields which affects the family's income and availability of food (ADB, 2002, p. 31). There are occasionally lean years when families do not have enough of the staple foods, rice and fish, to feed themselves or to sell to pay school fees. In such years families have to look for and gather food from the forest (e.g. gathering bamboo shoots and wild vegetables, hunting, fishing) to supplement what they get from their home vegetable garden, their domestic animals and livestock (e.g., chickens, buffalos and pigs) to tide them over until the next harvest. In addition some families make and sell craftwork to add to their family income.

According to Kim's father the government provides villagers with a very limited amount of rice in lean years but it is still a struggle for families to survive. Other than this there is no government welfare safety net to support families when crops fail or when people are sick or

injured or when there are natural disasters. Families are therefore extremely vulnerable when there are unexpected setbacks or crises.

Uncertainty and worry about harvests, crop yields and family income is stressful for all members of the family. Study participants spoke about how stressful, worrying and distracting it was for them before the harvest. One of their key worries was whether the family would earn enough income to pay their school fees.

Students have to leave for school very early in the morning usually before the sun rises, and because these families do not have readily available supermarket snack or food packs or fruit available at home they usually go to school without breakfast and do not eat or drink until they return home much later in the day. Families cannot afford to buy food packs, even if there were shops to buy them from in the village. Students who do not eat breakfast nor any food during school time are likely to experience difficulty in concentrating and processing information in class especially later in the day (Cooper, Bandelow, & Nevill, 2011, p. 431).

Teachers offer extra voluntary lessons in the afternoon to help students who are having difficulties in understanding the morning lessons or for those who want to consolidate what they have been taught. These extra lessons are not free and are held after the normal school hours and therefore reduce the hours students can work on the family farm. Families cannot always afford for their children to attend such lessons. It is too costly financially and in terms of lost assistance on the family farm. Family economic hardship has a major influence on the school experience of Thai ethnic students, and the research literature indicates that this is true of other ethnic communities in Vietnam as well (Luong & Nieke, 2013).

5.2.2   Remoteness and social isolation

Families living in remote mountain villages and working long hours seven days a week on family farms are socially isolated. Their children have to travel many kilometres each day to and from school and to and from the family farm, on unsealed paths through the mountains. They have to begin the journey to school early in the morning before the sun has risen, and this involves crossing rivers and streams in semi-darkness. In heavy rain they not only have to cope with the rain, but the challenge of crossing swollen streams and rivers, walking through thick mud, and arriving at school in wet clothes that cannot be effectively dried at school. The journey to school is especially challenging for very young children who may have to travel many kilometres to school on their own.

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Heavy rain can make the route to school impassable resulting in irregular attendance. Given the predetermined pace of the national curriculum this can result in students missing sections of the curriculum. Unsealed poorly maintained rural roads pose difficulties for students at times of extreme weather (HREOC, 2000, p. 52).

To have sufficient land for their home garden and for raising domestic animals, rural Thai families prefer to live some distance from the other villagers. They prefer living near rivers or streams because they do not have tap water, and need access to rivers or streams for washing, cooking, their domestic animals, and home garden (Thu, 1998, p. 255). Living some distance from other villagers and their domestic animals also helps in avoiding the spread of diseases.

Thai village families are self-contained and family centred. They spend seven days a week working on their farm. There is little space in their lives for socialising especially with anyone who is non-family. Where they live there are no hotels, delicatessens, shops, restaurants, cinemas, banks, or sport/leisure facilities. According to Allan (1989) in his research on working families in the UK in the 1950s, he suggests that 'The exclusion of non-kin from the home ensures a greater wall of privacy can be constructed around the domestic sphere' (p. 134).

It is difficult for Thai families to develop close friendships outside the family because they do not have the conditions or circumstances favourable for this to occur. Conditions conducive to the development of friendships include opportunities to interact, time to socialise, shared interests and activities, and ability to repay in kind what others have done for them (Allan, 1989). Circumstances greatly limit opportunities for socialising and for the formation of friendships outside the family. Geography and economic circumstances help contribute to their social isolation.

People are generally reluctant to seek and accept help from the others unless they able to repay help given. Nevertheless, at times of hardship there is a understanding and tradition among Thai villagers to help one another and to share with each other what they can (Trong, 1998, p. 391). Historically communal sharing during hard times is important for their survival as a community, and for maintaining the cultural bond that exists between them.

Thai villagers believe that family matters should be kept secret from outsiders and encourage their children to be self-reliant and self-sufficient and to keep family and personal matters private. This, no doubt, contributes to Thai students being quiet or silent in class and their preference for self-reliant coping strategies, and for their unwillingness to seek help.

5.2.3   Work on the family farm

Thai village students have everyday obligations and responsibilities not only for working on the family farm, but in caring for young children and performing domestic duties such as looking after domestic animals and the home garden, fetching water, and collecting firewood and gathering food from the forest (Luong & Nieke, 2013, p. 23). This work can leave them with little time to complete school homework and physically tired.

Rural Thai student participants generally have to get up early in the morning at 5 a.m. in order to arrive at school on time, and often only went to bed at 11 p.m. after finishing all their jobs such as cleaning, washing the dishes and homework (Luong & Nieke, 2013, p. 23). It is hard for Thai ethnic students to do their homework effectively when they are very tired after working all day. It is also hard when they have to go to school with an empty belly and no food to eat until after school finishes.

The teachers of study participants were ignorant of their students' lives, the duties and responsibilities they had to perform at home, how hard their lives were, and the challenges they had to overcome in just getting to school on time. They were also unaware of any learning difficulties these students had. "Many educators did not consider a student's cultural background to be an important factor in his or her education" (Gardner, 2005, p. 161). Usually teachers just focused on attendance and completion of homework.

Parents of study participants, because of their lack of schooling, the long hours they spent working on their farm, and their limited communication with teachers, had little understanding of their children's schooling, or the importance of completing school homework or how home duties and responsibilities might be negatively affecting completion of homework and concentration and alertness at school. In this study there is evidence that home duties and responsibilities affected these Thai students schooling.

5.2.4   Parent support

Support and encouragement by parents was important to study participants, but parent support was limited by the parents' lack of schooling, their lack of proficiency with the Vietnamese language, and the family's reliance on near subsistence farming which required long hours of heavy manual labour. Unfortunately Thai village parents did not have the knowledge or the opportunity to provide their children with much support with their schooling. Other research such as Duchesne and Maugh (2016) has noted that socially disadvantaged parents often have

received only a very limited education (p. 424). Two of the parent participants in this study had never attended school and those who had, did not finish their primary schooling.

Thai village parents rarely travel far from their village and their social networks are generally limited to other villagers who have had little schooling like themselves. This means they usually do not have much contact with people who know more about schools and school programs than they themselves. So they do not know others who they can consult over school issues other than teachers at the school, who they have difficulty communicating with. Mafora (2013) states that ethnic minority communities can often feel socially isolated (p. 231).

Ethnic students generally experience home and school as two separate cultural worlds where adults in one world are ignorant of what is happening in the other (Giacchino-Baker, 2007, p. 173). Such a division acts as a barrier to parents playing an informed participator in their child's education.

Winterbottom and Leedy (2014) state that it is hard for teachers and ethnic parents to develop a close partnership because of their different levels of education, their different languages, their different cultures and their different socioeconomic status. In Vietnam there are two compulsory teacher-parent meetings a year and Thai ethnic parents are generally reluctant to attend them. Parents in this study said that they felt inferior at teacher meetings that they lacked confidence in communicating with teachers, and were fearful of being asked for a donation towards buying school equipment because they have had no money to spare. They also thought that teachers blamed them if their child had any schooling difficulties and found it insulting when teachers lectured them about how to help their child at home. This helps explain why, according to Tien (2013) 'Some parents never attend …regular teacher-parent meetings' (p. 130). This results in Thai parents having little opportunity to have an input and voice in their child's education. McDonald (2014) highlights that the voice and views of parents in disadvantaged areas are rarely listened to or taken into account (McDonald, 2014, p. 3).

Given these circumstances it is understandable that Thai parents are likely to feel inferior and disempowered in their interactions with teachers and therefore to avoid having much contact with the school. Hornby (2011) suggests parents believe their child's schooling is best left to teachers who know much more than they do, but in this researcher's opinion it may be more likely that Thai parents perceive the challenge of being involved as too difficult and painful without resulting in any benefits for them or their children.

5.2.5 The national curriculum

In Vietnam, the national curriculum provides a detailed program for the teaching of all Vietnamese school students. It sets down what subjects are to be taught, teaching aims and goals, what content is to be covered, what teachers are expected to cover each lesson, the work books students are expected to use, what homework is to be set and what and when assessments are to occur. This means that the content, pace and timetable of instruction is prescribed for all students.

The aim of the Government is to ensure every student covers the same curriculum content, irrespective of where they live or whatever their cultural background. While this has many potential advantages it also poses significant challenges for students from different cultural backgrounds such as the Thai ethnic community. The national curriculum is designed and based on assumptions about development and learning of Kinh students, who are the majority group in Vietnam. It is supported by literature review that the curriculum is designed based on the majority group (Adamsona & Feng, 2009; Perso, 2012b). But we know from the developmental and cognitive literature (Krause et al., 2010) that students develop and learn at different rates and that children of the same age are not necessarily at the same stage of cognitive, language, social, emotional and physical development. It cannot be assumed that all students at the same year have the same level of knowledge, the same language and literacy skills and are at the same stage of cognitive development. Gardner (2005) claims that 'the majority of educators believed that all students, regardless of ethnicity, were basically the same … and were unable to identify barriers that culturally diverse students encountered' (p. 161).

When talking about the national curriculum it is important to include associated workbooks and teaching materials, lesson timetables and homework assignments. Together these shape teaching practices, choice of methodologies, language and cultural challenges and as a result influence the nature and quality of the teacher-student and student-student relationships. So the challenges associated with the curriculum are not just solely about lesson content and the pace of instruction.

As a consequence of having relatively large classes and a highly prescribed curriculum and pace of instruction, and the apparent need to employ a whole class instruction methodology, teachers who participated in this study, argued that they do not have adequate time or the opportunity to help students with special learning needs, such as many of their ethnic students. They also said they did not having permission from their principal or the Education

Department to adapt or modify the curriculum to better meet the developmental needs of their students.

Some argue that curriculum in general needs to be much more student-centred, more responsive to the developmental and learning needs of students, and to be able to be modified or adapted to take into account local regional circumstances, cultural differences, and the special needs of their students (Moore, 1999). Research has identified that at least 10% of students are likely to have special learning needs.

Roofe (2014) claims that a 'one size fits all' curriculum is unsuitable for meeting the diverse needs of students (p. 13). In relation to ethnic students it is important to recognise the large gap between their 'home culture and language' and the 'school culture and language' and the impact this has on their learning readiness, skills and knowledge.

In terms of curriculum provision, equity is not treating everyone the same. Maher & Geeves (2014) state that:

> Equality is not sameness… Equality is allowing every student the opportunity to learn at a level that is suitably challenging. Equity is not the goal of achieving equal outcomes for all students. Expecting all students to work through the same curriculum at the same pace is a violation of equal opportunity (p. 47).

According to the four student participants in this study there a number of areas where they would like the curriculum to be modified. Firstly, they wanted more time to be given to them to help them comprehend the content of lessons because of limitations in their proficiency at Vietnamese. Secondly, reducing the pace of instruction. Thirdly, being given the opportunity to study their own language and culture. Fourthly, being given more time to complete assessments.

5.2.6 Support for learning Vietnamese as a second language

In Vietnam, the language of school instruction is Vietnamese and no special measures are employed to support students who have to learn Vietnamese as their second language. This means ethnic students have to learn Vietnamese incidentally without structured teaching or support from school or home. This can pose ongoing difficulties for Thai students. Lack of early language support may result in ongoing language difficulties for students throughout their schooling.

The four students participating in this study spoke of the continuing challenges they have with communicating in Vietnamese. All four student participants had difficulties in speaking, reading and comprehending Vietnamese in their literature and science lessons in particular, and had a sense that their use of Vietnamese in the classroom was inferior to their classmates. They feared being laughed at when they spoke in class, in case they used inappropriate Vietnamese words. This discouraged them from speaking up in class.

Learning Vietnamese is not just about learning the language but needs to include learning about the Vietnamese culture as well. Luong and Nieke (2013) in their research of Hmong ethnic students in Vietnam found that Hmong students were disadvantaged in learning Vietnamese because the Vietnamese language has many words and concepts they have never experienced. Thai students spoke of similar difficulties.

5.2.7 Teaching practices

Teacher participants in this study were unaware of recent educational research into the importance of the following:

➢ Building positive teacher-student and student-student relationships

➢ Working to give students a sense of belonging, acceptance, and safety

➢ Effective communication with students, listening to their feelings and perceptions and working with them collaboratively to address learning and behaviour difficulties

➢ Encouraging students and giving them positive reinforcement

➢ Promoting learner well-being and recognising its impact on student learning and participation in class

➢ Giving students choices and an important say in their learning and curriculum (i.e., giving them personal agency)

➢ Using pre-assessments to help plan lessons and help teachers scaffold lessons

➢ Catering for the learner diversity in the classroom

➢ Using diagnostic assessments to clarify learning difficulties

➢ Involving students in self-assessment and evaluation of their own work

> ➤ Working collaboratively with parents as co-educators and partners in their children's education

Teacher participants did not currently use student-centred teaching approaches such as those listed above. Given their lack of awareness of this research it is not unexpected. Modern textbooks for teachers, such as the ones by Shindler (2010), McDonald (2010), Krause et al., (2010) and Duchesne & McMaugh (2016) encourage and promote these teaching practices. Numerous other educational articles advocate and support these practices too. For example, Murray-Harvey (2010) has written an article highlighting the importance of building positive school relationships because of their impact on student school experiences.

Teachers face the challenge of addressing the needs of diverse learners in their classes. If diverse learners are to be effectively catered for in schools their teachers need to consider adopting student-centred practices. Use of student-centred teaching practices has the potential to enrich the schooling experiences of all students and to increase the attendance rates, retention and participation levels of ethnic minority students.

Research indicates if students are to be actively involved in their education it helps to achieve this by giving them choices and a say in their education (McDonald, 2014; Shindler, 2010). Choices may be in terms of what they study, how they study and whom they study with. It is important to listen to the student's 'voice' and take their wishes and needs into account (Givon & Court, 2010). Participants thought they were given little voice in their own education and that teachers were not interested in their wishes or needs.

Unfortunately there are practical barriers to teachers adopting student centred teaching practices in Vietnam. Large class sizes, teachers needing more professional development, teachers having little say in their professional development, and teachers feeling unable to modify or adapt curriculum to accommodate the special learning needs of their students. These barriers inhibit changes to teaching practices.

Most teacher professional development in Vietnam for rural teachers occurs as one-off, once a year workshops held at the provincial level where teachers have little say or input into what or how training is provided and no provision is made for ongoing in-service training. Research suggests that this model of professional development is often ineffective.

5.2.8 Learning support at school

Educators generally believe that development builds on itself, that effective teaching means building on what students already know (Cano, Nuqui, & Cruz, 2013), that students develop

at different rates and students of the same age can be at different stages of development (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016). When teachers have no understanding of what students already know; and little awareness of their culture, language or development; and when their communication with students is difficult because of language and cultural differences, teachers can have unrealistic expectations of what students are ready to learn and how best to teach them.

On the basis of the interviews with student participants, there are a number of areas where Thai ethnic students want and need more learning support. They want more support in learning the Vietnamese language as a second language learner, and in learning to understand and use concepts and words outside their experience and culture. For example, Giacchino-Baker (2007) found 'Students do not understand it when a poem describes the sun setting over the water. They only see it setting over the mountains' (p. 173). What is familiar to Kinh students living in the town is not necessarily familiar or understood by students from a Thai village who have little access to TV, modern technology or knowledge of Kinh culture.

Study participants wanted more help and guidance in understanding the Kinh culture so they avoided embarrassing situations where students and teachers might laugh at them for using the wrong words or not acting or responding in a culturally appropriate way. While students did not talk about 'cultural mentoring' this is a way of describing what they want.

Teachers claimed that they did not have time to talk with students individually during lessons because their time was taken up teaching lessons to the whole class. Therefore teachers did not think they had time to work with individual students clarifying confusions and difficulties. The usual sources of support available to students were either attending extra optional lessons offered by teachers outside the regular school lessons in the afternoon for a fee, or getting help from classmates willing and able to give it. At the extra optional lessons teachers repeated what was presented in the morning using a whole group teaching approach.

Getting support from knowledgeable and willing classmates could be especially valuable. Students who were 'friends' with knowledgeable and willing Kinh students were especially fortunate, because Kinh students generally had a good understanding of Kinh culture and the Vietnamese language. (i.e., they could provide both academic and cultural mentoring). Cultural mentoring is recognised as an important form of support for indigenous students (HREOC, 2000, p. 47).

In addition to these sources of support, study participants spoke of receiving encouragement and emotional support from a number of their teachers, and they found this extremely valuable. This provides evidence that individual teachers can make a big difference to how students feel about themselves and to their motivation and sense of self-efficacy. Similarly, lack of negative comments and attention from their teachers is often perceived positively.

Unfortunately, there appears to be little awareness and recognition by teachers that Thai ethnic students, and other ethnic students, are likely to experience different learning difficulties to Kinh students, because of their different cultural experiences, background and circumstances. Without this awareness and recognition teachers are unlikely to respond to the learning difficulties of their ethnic students. Teachers participating in this study thought they did not have time to carry out individual assessments with their students, so they did not use either pre-assessments or diagnostic assessments that would help them identify or clarify learning difficulties. As a result, students had to rely on their own efforts to cope with learning difficulties.

5.2.9 Academic achievement

Marks and grades are not the only outcomes of learning nor are they necessarily the most important ones. Marks and grades influence a student's sense of achievement, motivation and sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994, 2000). In this study there is evidence that they also play an important role in shaping the perceptions and reactions of teachers, parents and classmates.

The research literature suggests that students who receive low marks or grades are more at risk of dropping out of school (Glennie, Bonneau, Vandellen, & Dodge, 2012, p. 2) and evidence from this study suggests that teachers, parents and peers are more likely to have low academic expectations of them if they get low marks or grades. Students who get low marks may be at risk of missing out on encouragement and support because others do not expect more of them. So getting low marks and grades is a risk factor for lack of support, lower future grades and dropping out of school.

Students who achieve satisfactory marks and grades are more likely to feel academically successful, to have high self-efficacy and to have a positive sense of well-being (Samuel, Bergman, & Hupka-Brunner, 2013, p. 76), and there is evidence from this study to suggest their teachers and classmates think better of them and have higher expectations of them. Thus satisfactory marks and grades can have a positive impact on students both socially and psychologically.

All four student participants in this study saw themselves are getting satisfactory marks and grades and of having high motivation and self-efficacy. They all believed that they could achieve their high school certificate. Two of the four were achieving lower grades and marks than the other two, and were seen by their teachers as struggling academically. Yet they still perceived themselves as making satisfactory progress and being highly motivated with a sense of self-efficacy. There is strong evidence that grades and marks play an important role in shaping student motivation and self-efficacy.

5.2.10 Recognition of cultural identities and differences

Teachers interviewed in this study had very little awareness and understanding of Thai culture, Thai language, Thai traditions, how Thai village families live, the difficulties Thai parents have when trying to communicate with teachers, the communication roadblocks in teacher-parent interactions, the practical challenges Thai families face in making ends meet, and the challenges confronting Thai students at school. Parents interviewed had little awareness and understanding of schools, the Vietnamese language and culture, and the school curriculum.

School policies make no reference to the cultural diversity of their students and families, nor to the special needs of ethnic students with limited or no proficiency in Vietnamese and limited or no knowledge of the Vietnamese culture. There is no recognition of cultural identities or languages other than Vietnamese. The target school treated all students as equals and taught all students to believe that they are all equal. Student participants in this study told the researcher how they are all treated equally. At this time it is interesting to recall Thomas Jefferson (1783-1826) who said 'There is nothing more unequal, than the equal treatment of unequal people'.

Research suggests that ignoring a student's cultural identity, first language, life and background may be detrimental to their well-being, identity and mental health, and education.

In interviews with study participants there was evidence of feelings of inferiority, lack of confidence, disempowerment, and efforts to conceal their cultural identity and background.

Given that the target school discouraged the use of the Thai language at school and ignored their Thai background and culture, it is not unexpected that the students had learnt to accept what the school was teaching them, that we are all equal and cultures other than Vietnamese can be ignored, and that they are irrelevant to school learning. At this stage, the school curriculum further reinforces this message.

Ethic minority communities are among the most socio-economically disadvantaged in Vietnam (Tran, 2013). School policies that ignore or overlook this economic reality, fail to recognise what is a major hurdle for many ethnic students that impedes their learning and development. Expecting all students to pay the same school fees irrespective of their family's capacity to pay them is not treating students equally. Socio-economic disadvantage is associated with disadvantaged living conditions, lack of family resources, limited parent education and limited support available from parents for their childrens' education and schooling. Luong and Nieke (2013) in their study of Hmong students thought that 'disadvantaged living conditions contributed to their social marginalization from other groups. They subsequently accepted their subordinated position with resignation' (p.19).

Schools policies can play a role in the marginalisation of ethnic students from their classmates.

Luong and Nieke (2013) highlight a situation that applies to Thai ethnic students as well as to other ethnic groups:

> Hmong students often lacked learning aids such as pens, notebooks and textbooks. They usually had little time at home to do their homework. The majority of Hmong children worked as additional labourers for their families after school, helping their parents with field work and housework including sibling care, water fetching, cow or buffalo herding, wood collecting and grass cutting. Worse, some students were forced to skip school by their parents in order to have more time for housework and/or fieldwork. (p. 23)

Schools need to be supportive and responsive to the consequences of socio-economic disadvantage such as those described above.

Even though the target school in this study had a significant number of ethnic students no special efforts were made or opportunities created to facilitate intercultural friendships and reduce intercultural social marginalisation. Teachers gave priority to teaching the curriculum, paying little attention to listening to student feelings, facilitating positive relationships, collaborative interaction, and fun activities. According to Richards (2004) building positive relationships is crucial to student development and well-being.

If schools in Vietnam are going to better meet the needs of ethnic students and their parents then teachers and principals need in-service professional development as to how they might do this. Such in-service may be best provided on a whole school basis at the school site itself.

It does not have to necessarily involve travel or accommodation costs or interrupt the curriculum program. Members of local ethnic communities could be recruited to assist in increasing teacher awareness of their needs and communities.

5.2.11 Social marginalisation

According to World Bank (2009), ethnic minority students are generally viewed by majority students as backward, less developed and ignorant. As a group there is evidence that Thai ethnic students see themselves as inferior and second class citizens because of their socio-economic disadvantages, lack of amenities and resources at home, poorly educated parents, their parents limited proficiency with Vietnamese, the difficulties they themselves have with the school work, and the way some teachers and Kinh students look down on them and laugh at them when they use incorrect Vietnamese words or make mistakes (Luong & Nieke, 2013). The fact that their parents feel inferior in cross-cultural situations can reinforce their children's own sense of inferiority.

In order to minimise their social marginalisation, there is evidence that Thai study participants conceal their cultural identity. They talked about choosing to be quiet in class to avoid attracting the attention of teachers and peers, and to avoid making mistakes in pronouncing or speaking Vietnamese, which might result in them being laughed at (Tran, 2013, p. 133). Unfortunately remaining quiet and silent in class can be interpreted by others as evidence that ethnic students are ignorant and have inferior academic ability, thus confirming other peoples' negative stereotypes.

5.2.12 Interpersonal relationships

Building positive relationships was not seen as a priority for teachers who participated in this study, even though research provides extensive evidence that school relationships (i.e., teacher-student, teacher-parent and peer relationships) are important in shaping students' learning, development, engagement, and well-being (Murray-Harvey, 2010, p. 104; Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2010). Martin and Dowson (2009) report evidence that establishing positive relationships improves student learning engagement, learning outcomes and behaviour.

There is much research evidence to support the finding that peer relationships and friendships play a central and important role in shaping student well-being and classroom engagement (Martin & Dowson, 2009).

At the study school there were few opportunities for friendship or relationship building between peers or between teachers and students. There are no recess or lunch periods at

school, and few if any opportunities for students to play, mingle or work together, either in or out of class. Lessons usually involved teachers instructing whole classes with little individual teacher-student interaction. The target school did not provide opportunities for socialising, playing, or engaging in creative or practical activities. From interviews with student and teacher participants, teachers did not see it as part of their role to try to build or encourage relationships, or to try to reduce prejudice or stigma associated with ethnic minorities.

Much is known from the research literature about optimal conditions for the development of friendships. Optimal conditions include, proximity and opportunities for interaction (Epstein, 1989), perceived similarity (Rose, 2002), similar status (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), common interests (Allan, 1989), reciprocating or repaying favours and benefits (Allan, 1989), and getting support for the relationship from teachers, parents and current friends (Allport, 1954; Allan, 1989; Pettigrew, 1998). These optimal conditions do not readily exist for the development of cross-cultural friendships, because of socio-economic inequalities, cultural differences and lack of contact opportunities. According to Allan (1979) inequalities jeopardise the development and maintenance of friendships. Socio-economic differences make it difficult to perceive each other as similar, and to repay opportunities and benefits the other provides.

In this study, participants who formed friends with Kinh students generally had better grades and marks than those who did not. Friendships with Kinh students appeared to help buffer Thai students from being laughed at and being made fun of by other Kinh students. If this applies generally to other Thai students this would be an excellent reason for teachers encouraging cross-cultural friendships. There are many ways teachers can do this. For example, they can structure contact opportunities, use group activities and collaborative assignments, and take steps to de-stigmatise ethnic students.

Research indicates that social rejection by peers and teachers often has serious long-term consequences for students experiencing it (Buhs et al., 2006). Such rejection can involve isolating or ignoring them, giving them black looks, avoiding work with them, negative comments, or bullying. According to Buhs, Ladd and Herald (2006) 'Rejected children can disengage from classroom activities as a way of avoiding further abuse' (p. 2). Unfortunately 'the stigmatised are never entirely free of the possibility of encountering prejudice in others' (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998, p. 512). It robs students of their confidence and self-esteem. On the other hand building positive relationships can promote social support and help reduce rejection and bullying and their impact (Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2010).

In Dien Bien province there are occasional sport tournaments in the city and province, and schools enter teams into these competitions, but students who are chosen to participate are already known to have talent in the sports involved. Thai ethnic students unfortunately do not have an opportunity to play or practice sport in their village or at school. They are also unfamiliar with the popular sports included in these competitions. Therefore, ethnic students are unlikely to be included in these teams where they could earn status amongst their peers by demonstrating their sporting talent.

Research provides extensive evidence that teachers and schools can play an important and active role in initiating and facilitating the development of positive teacher-student, peer-peer and teacher-parent relationships. For example, there are excellent books on enhancing relationships between children and teachers and on constructing relationships with high risk children (see Pianta, 1999; Pianta & Walsh, 1996). Such research needs to be made widely available to teachers and schools. In-service professional development is one way of doing this.

5.2.13 Student coping strategies

When students are struggling with their work or homework there are a number of strategies they can implement to cope. They can seek help from a teacher, a classmate or a parent; they can look up information in a book, dictionary or on the Internet; they can use problem solving strategies they have been taught; they can struggle on their own hoping that perseverance will be successful; or they can decide to give up (i.e., avoidance coping) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lyons, Mickelson, Sullivan, & Coyne, 1998; Power, 2004).

Unfortunately evidence from the participants in this study suggests that Thai ethnic students have limited options. For example, their parents are unlikely to be able to help them because of their lack of schooling and education. They can have difficulty getting individual help from their teacher because teachers are so busy instructing the class and have little time to interact with individual students and Thai students feel inferior and may not want to attract attention to themselves and thus be reluctant to ask for help in the classroom. Classmates who might be most willing to help them are likely to be other ethnic students who are having difficulties with the work themselves. Thai students are also unlikely to have access to reference books or the Internet to help them, and often they have received little instruction in learning problem solving strategies. Thai students therefore can be left with two main options, either struggling on their own (i.e., being self-reliant and self-sufficient) or else giving up. Teachers who

participated in this study indicated that many Thai students frequently end up giving up. Unfortunately giving up does not assist their learning or help build their self-efficacy. Students who can make use of help seeking strategies, who can access other resources, and use effective problem solving strategies are likely to be more successful academically.

Teachers interviewed in this study saw Thai students as extremely quiet and reserved in class, and assumed that this was because of their shy personality or because of their culture. But there are other more likely explanations. One is that their quietness is a concealment strategy, to avoid negative attention and stigma, to hide their sense of inferiority and cultural identity, and to avoid being seen as inadequate. Students may think that if they say nothing they cannot be wrong or will not be laughed at or embarrassed. Teachers need to consider whether the quietness of Thai students and their lack of seeking help is a concealment strategy to avoid perceived threats rather than being the result of their personality or culture. Thoits and Link (2016) discuss the use of concealment as a coping strategy by people with psychosis, who use this strategy to minimise their experience of stigma (Thoits & Link, 2016).

There are other possible explanations why Thai students may be quiet in class. Students interviewed said they were fearful of some of their teachers, and that a number of their teachers did not show a willingness to listen to them or to understand them. Other explanations included lack of confidence and lack of practice at asking and answering questions.

5.2.14 School facilities and resources

The target school in this study has limited school facilities and resources. Yet school facilities and resources play a key role in catering for physical and social comfort (Maslow, 1954, 1987). They also play a role in enabling teachers to use effective teaching practices and methodologies. School resources include such things as: teaching equipment and materials, workbooks, textbooks, computers, photocopiers, blackboards, white boards, desks, library books, outdoor play and sport equipment, science materials, and carpets. School facilities include such things as: toilets, heaters, bathrooms, taps, shelter sheds, fans, air-conditioning, refrigerators, clothes dryer, library, language and science laboratories, art and drama rooms, computer rooms, assembly area, canteen, gardening or agricultural area, ovals and outdoor playing areas.

In the target school, limited resources constrained the teaching of a number of school subjects. The school lacked the resources and facilities to carry practical experiments in subjects such

as science, technology, and agriculture. Without the necessary teaching resources, teachers had to focus just on teaching theory without its practical application or demonstration.

Weather varies markedly in the mountainous areas of Dien Bien province. At different times of the year it can be extremely wet, hot, cold, dry or humid. Yet classrooms in the target school had little in the way of air conditioning other than the presence of a fan and the opportunity to leave the door open to encourage airflow. In extremely wet humid weather Thai ethnic students usually arrived at school drenched and muddy with wet clothes but there was no simple way of drying themselves or their clothes or cleaning off the mud because of lack of facilities. There are no classroom heaters.

Teachers themselves are key school resources. Unfortunately remote rural schools have difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified experienced teachers (Broadley, 2012; Mafora, 2013, p. 238). A significant number of teachers in these schools are new graduates, who after working at the school for a few years, often want to transfer to an urban school in a less disadvantage area. Problems with recruitment and retention of staff result in staff shortages and lack of staff continuity. When there is a staff shortage, rural schools sometimes have to recruit under-qualified staff to fill the gap (Goodpaster, Adedokun, & Weaver, 2012, pp. 9-10). These staff usually have little if any experience in teaching ethnic minority students and it can take them time to develop the necessary teaching expertise. Unfortunately in remote rural areas there are limited opportunities for in-service professional development.

Remote rural schools are usually located in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage and have an extremely diverse student population with complex learning needs. In Vietnam these schools often have a high percentage of ethnic minority students who need to learn Vietnamese as a second language, and have parents who have had very little schooling or education themselves. A case can be made that such schools need a much higher level of resourcing than less disadvantaged schools. If Vietnam is to reduce the high number of ethnic students who are not attending school or dropping out of school early, or not making adequate academic progress, remote rural schools need to be better resourced. Reports such as HREOC (2000) advocate for better resourcing for rural remote schools that are operating in socially disadvantaged areas. Adopting needs-based staffing and funding formula may be needed.

5.2.15 Professional development of teacher and principal
In the study school, neither the teachers nor the principal had received any pre-service or in-service professional development on using student-centred teaching practices or the theory

behind them. This study identified that teachers interviewed expressed an interest in getting professional development in the following areas:

- Cultural awareness training in relation to their school's ethnic communities
- Learning ways of effectively communicating with ethnic minority students and their parents
- Learning about student-centred teaching and collaborative teaching practices
- Helping ethnic students learning to speak Vietnamese as a second language
- Using pre-assessments and diagnostic assessments to identify and clarify learning difficulties and needs
- Helping students with learning difficulties
- Ways of promoting relationships and student well-being in the classroom
- Ways of reducing stigma, harassment and rejection of minority students
- Learning how to cater for diverse learning needs in the classroom

Teacher participants in this study expressed their wish to have training in these areas but wanted to have an active say in what, how and when this training was provided.

5.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter the 15 key influences identified as shaping the schooling of the four student participants were discussed and links were made to the research literature. This discussion is likely to be relevant to the schooling experiences of other ethnic students, both Thai and non-Thai. How far the results of this study generalise to other ethnic students requires further research.

Efforts to design effective interventions to lift the attendance and retention rates, achievement levels and well-being of Thai ethnic students, need to take these 15 key influences into account. Effective interventions need to attempt to reduce the socio-economic, educational and cultural inequalities experienced by today's rural ethnic communities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will summarise the study's key findings and then propose a socio-ecological framework for researching the educational experiences of rural Thai students in Vietnam. This framework is based on the study's key findings and may assist application of the findings to other contexts, both within Vietnam and elsewhere. The aim of this framework is to help guide future research and changes in policy development, teacher professional training, teaching practices, and the provision of support programs and special measures.

After presenting the socio-ecological framework, I present recommendations based on the study's findings to answer the study's two research questions, and then identify the study's limitations. Identified limitations will help contextualise and qualify the findings.

Following this, I will highlight the significance of this study and identify areas for future research to explore issues in more detail and to determine how findings might apply to other students, in other areas and schools.

Finally, I will talk about my own personal reflections as a researcher, and reflect on my own schooling and my daughter's vignette that I described earlier, and finish this chapter with a number of concluding remarks.

6.2 Summary of key findings

This study's first research question was 'What influences the educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Dien Bien province in Vietnam?' As identified in the findings and discussion chapters, the schooling and educational experiences of the four rural Thai ethnic student participants were shaped by 15 key influences.

Identified key influences established by this research were:

> ➢ Economic hardship
> ➢ Remoteness and social isolation
> ➢ Work on the family farm
> ➢ Parent support
> ➢ The national curriculum
> ➢ Support for learning Vietnamese as a second language
> ➢ Teaching practices
> ➢ Learning support at school

- ➢ Academic achievement
- ➢ Recognition of cultural identities and differences
- ➢ Social marginalisation
- ➢ Interpersonal relationships
- ➢ Student coping strategies
- ➢ School facilities and resources
- ➢ Professional development of teachers and principals

6.3 A suggested framework for future research

6.3.1 What is the influence of family financial hardship?

Rural Thai ethnic students' schooling is affected by financial hardship. Their families do not have a stable, reliable farm income and there is no guarantee that they will grow sufficient food to meet their needs. School fees pose special challenges for rural Thai families. Good quality schooling needs to be family affordable. Currently parents have to pay extra school fees for their children to access supplementary lessons to develop a better understanding of their regular school lessons and to overcome learning difficulties.

A key question is 'What could reduce the impact of family financial hardship on the schooling of their children?'

6.3.2 What are the barriers to parent support and involvement in their children's education?

The parents of rural Thai ethnic students meet many obstacles and barriers in order to support and facilitate their child's schooling. In this study, it has been established that Thai parents lack proficiency in speaking and writing in Vietnamese, and in understanding what their children are studying at school. This makes it difficult for them to assist with homework or to interact and communicate with teachers. Heavy manual labour and long work hours reduce opportunities for parents to have involvement and support in their children's schooling. Given that parents work many kilometres away from their child's school and have to rely on their own private transport over unsealed roads in order to attend school meetings, it is very difficult for them to attend such meetings. Even when they do attend, teachers lack proficiency in using the Thai language and have little understanding of the Thai culture or lifestyle. A key question is 'What could remove barriers to parent support and involvement?'

6.3.3 What are the students' family responsibilities and workload?

Thai ethnic students have many responsibilities at home. Because families are dependent on their farm for their food and income, all family members are required to work as part time farm labourers seven days a week. Manual farm labouring work is physically tiring, involves long hours and leaves students with little quality time to complete their prescribed homework. A key question is 'What could reduce a student's family responsibilities and workload to make it easier to complete homework and not be too tired at school the next day?'

6.3.4 What awareness, recognition and respect does the school have for the Thai culture?

If teachers are to effectively communicate with Thai ethnic students and to understand their social, emotional and learning needs, they should have a good understanding of the Thai culture and show respect for it and the unique challenges these students have. If teachers do not display any awareness, understanding or appreciation of the Thai culture and the challenges these students have, this will impede teacher-student communication and relationship development. A key question is 'What could increase teachers' awareness, recognition and respect for the local Thai culture?'

6.3.5 How relevant and inclusive is the school curriculum?

In this study the curriculum experienced by the four study participants was extremely narrow in its scope and aims. It was expected to be taught at the same pace for all students irrespective of their skills, knowledge or Vietnamese language proficiency and it did not recognise or acknowledge that many ethnic students start school with no proficiency in the Vietnamese language are living in a very different culture and lifestyle to many other students. The pace, assumed pre-requisites, relevance and inclusiveness of the curriculum can be a major source of stress and difficulty for Thai students.

Treating everyone the same may be socially equitable when everyone has a similar level of skills, knowledge and language proficiency, but this is not the case for many ethnic students. A key question is 'What could make the curriculum more relevant, realistic and inclusive?'

6.3.6 What extra language and literacy support is provided for ethnic students when Vietnamese is their second language?

For many ethnic students, Vietnamese is their second language. Ethnic students who need to learn Vietnamese as a second language and as the language of school instruction need extra support in becoming fluent in it. Such students need extra support in becoming literate in

Vietnamese, and in developing their reading comprehension and ability to express themselves in writing. A key question is 'What extra language and literacy support should be provided to ethnic students?'

6.3.7 Are teaching practices student centred and do they cater for student diversity?

Modern teaching practices today are student-centred, relationship-based and cater for student diversity and individual learning needs. In this study, teaching practices used were not student-centred, not relationship-based, and didn't cater for student diversity. A key question is 'How can relationship-based, student-centred teaching practices that cater for student diversity be encouraged?'

6.3.8 What practical barriers are there to regular school attendance?

Not all students find it easy to regularly attend schools. Extreme weather, especially in the mountainous regions of Dien Bien Province, ill health and injury, and family commitments can prevent students travelling to school, resulting in intermittent attendance, which can severely disrupt student progress in a curriculum, which prescribes what is, covered each lesson, and for which the dates for summative assessments are predetermined. A key question is 'What can be done to minimise the impact of attendance difficulties as a result of illness, injury or extreme weather?'

6.3.9 What support is available to Thai ethnic students who are experiencing learning difficulties?

Not all students are ready to learn the same concepts and knowledge at the same age. Not all students learn at the same rate. Some students have disabilities, some have specific learning difficulties and all students occasionally struggle to understand new concepts and learn new aspects of their curriculum.

Based on statistics collected in Western countries it is known that at least 10% of students have special learning difficulties and at least 3% have significant disabilities that affect their learning (OECD, 2000). It is anticipated that there will be a similar percentage of Thai ethnic students in Vietnam with special learning difficulties and disabilities. There will also be many more students who struggle occasionally with their school work for a complex range of reasons.

In western countries, support is usually given to help teachers identify students with learning difficulties and disabilities and to assist in addressing identified difficulties. A key question to

ask is 'What is being done to help teachers identify Thai ethnic students who are experiencing learning difficulties and disabilities, and what support is being provided to help address identified difficulties?'

6.3.10 What do teachers and the school do to encourage and promote the development of friendships, and positive school relationships and cross-cultural relationships?

Friends play extremely important roles for students in providing companionship, support, and opportunities for learning social skills and having fun, and assist in acculturation and personal adaptation. They also help protect students from bullying and harassment by other students and can act as a 'cheer squad'. Whether students are happy at school depends, to a large extent, on whether they have friends and a sense of belonging at school. Cross-cultural friendships can be especially valuable in facilitating cultural acceptance, tolerance and interaction.

Teachers and schools can facilitate the development of friendships and positive school relationships by the way they group students, how they use group work, and the opportunities they provide for play and collaborative social interaction, thus creating positive school relationships because they are valuable for student learning. A key question is 'What would encourage and promote the development of friendships, positive school relationships and cross-cultural relationships?'

6.3.11 How well resourced is the school?

Schools require many different types of resources. They need adequate school facilities, teaching resources, suitable staff-student ratios, highly trained and effective staff, and ongoing professional develop for all staff. These resources are extremely important in enabling student learning and in creating a positive school climate. There needs to be adequate facilities and amenities to ensure students have a comfortable school and classroom environment, that teachers have the teaching resources and facilities they need to effectively cater for student diversity in their classes, that schools are able to recruit and retain highly trained effective staff, and that staff have the training and ongoing professional development they need to implement an inclusive curriculum. A key question is 'How well is the school resourced given the diverse needs of the local population of students, the socio-economic circumstances and needs of families, and the wider school community?'

6.3.12 What personal support do Thai ethnic students receive?

Ethic students have to cross many borders if they are to effectively learn, integrate and participate in schools and the wider Vietnamese society. They have to cross language, communication, cultural, socio-economic, and learning-literacy borders. The four students in this study received little help in crossing these borders. Much more needs to be done to build bridges between their world at home and their world at school and to recognise the differences and gaps in their experiences and knowledge. There is also a need to build bridges between the worlds of ethnic students and their fellow Kinh students, Kinh teachers and Kinh parents.

Ethnic students need personal support to help address learning needs and to overcome language, communication, social and cultural barriers. In order to assist ethnic students to make cultural transitions students and staff need cultural mentoring to increase their understanding and awareness of cultural differences, to provide cultural guidance.

Cultural mentoring can assist ethnic students in making cultural transitions, to help them understand and appreciate cultural differences and ways of operating, and in providing them with cultural guidance and support in avoiding and dealing with difficulties. It is not only ethnic students that can benefit from cultural mentoring. Teachers and non-ethnic students can benefit from it as well. A key question is 'What personal support and cultural mentoring is being provided to ethnic students and what more should be provided to enable ethnic students to flourish at school?'

6.3.13 What extra-curricular school activities are available to ethnic students?

Schools should aim to contribute to the development of their students' social, relational, personal and practical skills, their well-being and mental health, and moral development, not just their basic academic understanding, skills and strategies. Extra-curricular activities provide valuable and important opportunities to promote the personal and social development of students. Such development is just as important if not more so, than learning literacy and numeracy skills.

The provision of extra-curricular school activities can facilitate the development and maintenance of peer friendships, cross-cultural relations, the building of a supportive multi-cultural school community, and the promotion of student well-being. Lack of social contact opportunities impedes the development of a positive school community. A key question is 'What extra-curricular school activities are available to ethnic students and what extra-

curricular activities would be most valuable in promoting social and personal development in the context of this school, and how to implement changes to do this?'

6.3.14 How well are students' basic human needs being met?

Students have basic human needs that include food, physical comfort, adequate rest, social acceptance, positive relationships, and autonomy. If these basic needs are not met this can severely affect their attention and concentration in class, and their learning and development.

Ethnic students living in remote villages have a number of special practical challenges in getting these basic needs met. In this study the following difficulties were identified - rarely having breakfast and not eating until they arrived home in the afternoon, the physical discomfort of not having any dry clothes to wear in class after being drenched on the way to school, the lack of effective classroom air-conditioning on very hot or cold days, and difficulty of attending and concentrating in class because they are physically tired from their part-time farm labouring seven days a week in addition to their school work and for many students the lengthy journey to and from school.

In relation to students not eating breakfast it is noted that they have to leave for school from their village early in the morning before the sun rises and there are no shops or supermarkets in the village or on the way to school or near the school and no school canteen. Since rural village families rely entirely on the food they produce themselves and do not have a refrigerator or a stock of pre-packaged shop food, it is understandable why accessing food for breakfast may be difficult. A key question is 'How well are students' basic needs being met and what can schools do to better meet the basic needs of their Thai ethnic students who live in villages some distance from the school?'

6.3.15 How much do their family's self-sufficient self-reliant lifestyle, social isolation and independence influence a student's learning and coping strategies at school?

Rural Thai families live a self-sufficient, family-centred lifestyle. They have little time for leisure activities or socialising and family members are expected to perform their individual responsibilities as independent members of a family cooperative. Children are brought up to work independently, to be resourceful and relatively solitary.

There are many reasons why rural Thai ethnic students may be quiet in class, and not seek help or avoid attracting attention or believe they have to work things out for themselves by themselves.

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A key question is 'Are Thai ethnic students generally quiet in class and reluctant to ask for help, in part, because of their solitary lifestyle and the self-sufficient lives they live, and what can teachers do to encourage more collaborative interaction in the classroom with others?'

6.4 Recommendations

This study's second research question is 'What could be done to improve the learning experiences and the learning outcomes of rural Thai ethnic students?' The following recommendations respond to this question, and are based on an analysis of the four case studies, the interview data and a review of the related research literature.

In order to able to implement the following recommendations, staff will need further professional training and development, there will need to be policy changes, staff who can act as cultural mentors may need to be recruited, there may need to be changes to teacher workloads and permission will need to be given to teachers to allow them to adapt the curriculum to the needs of their students. Teachers would also need to be willing to change their teaching practices, and equipment and facilities acquired to enable the teaching of a wider range of practical and technical skills.

In order to meet the needs of Thai students it is important to meet the needs of their teachers and parents. While the focus of this study is on facilitating the education of Thai students, implementing these recommendations has the potential to benefit not only Thai students but Kinh students and those from other cultural groups as well.

6.4.1 Recommendation 1: Teachers need better insight and understanding of the needs and challenges of their rural Thai students

It is important that teachers do not blame Thai students for their learning difficulties, or lack of motivation and effort. If there are such difficulties, teachers need to explore the underlying reasons why students are unmotivated, or having difficulties in understanding lessons or in completing their homework. Developing a better understanding of the student's situation from the student's viewpoint is likely to enable teachers to know how to address these difficulties.

In some situations teachers may need to modify classroom tasks, provide more task scaffolding and instructional support, help overcome language difficulties, take steps to resolve social difficulties, and provide more encouragement and emotional support. Such strategies are more likely to be successful than simply expecting students to work harder and be more motivated, and punishing them if they are not.

6.4.2 Recommendation 2: Teachers need to work on improving their student's well-being as a key priority

Thai ethnic students who are unhappy, insecure, anxious, lacking in confidence, and feeling inferior, are likely to engage in avoidance coping. Teachers may interpret this as a lack of motivation. Avoidance coping undermines a student's engagement, learning and achievement at school.

Figuratively speaking students frequently wear masks at school to conceal their fears, anxieties and insecurities. By masking their fears and anxieties, students often hope to avoid attracting unwanted attention from others.

Teachers cannot afford to ignore their students' negative feelings. Ignoring students' feelings sends the message that their feelings do not matter, that teachers do not want to know who they really are, or perhaps even do not care about them.

In order for teachers to be aware of their students' feelings and well-being, they need to establish positive trusting relationships with their students, to listen to their students' feelings and concerns, and to be willing to work collaboratively with students to help them resolve their concerns. This is an area where teachers need further training and professional development.

6.4.3 Recommendation 3: It is very important that teachers establish positive peer and teacher-student relationships

Whether students are happy, motivated and engaged at school is very much dependent on their relationships with their peers and teachers. Problematic relationships with teachers and peers can be extremely stressful affecting motivation and engagement in class. Negative relationships can result in students dropping out of school or becoming depressed or alienated. For students who experience bullying there can be serious personal and educational consequences.

Positive relationships with teachers and peers have many social and educational benefits. Peer friendships can provide emotional and practical support, a sense of belonging, companionship, help shield people from problems such as bullying, provide intimacy, and help prevent loneliness.

Teachers need to see themselves as having an important role to play in facilitating and building positive relationships at school. They also need to monitor classroom dynamics and tackle issues such as bullying, prejudice and social rejection.

6.4.4 Recommendation 4: Thai students need to be provided with special teaching assistance and support in learning Vietnamese as a second language

Rural Thai students usually only start learning and using Vietnamese when they first begin school. Little or no special allowance is made for this at school. Thai students are expected to learn Vietnamese incidentally at school rather than in a planned systematic way. No links or comparisons are made with the Thai language and culture they know and use at home. Their teachers usually have very little or no knowledge of Thai language and culture. Since their parents usually have little or no knowledge of the Vietnamese language or culture, students are unable to get much support at home in learning Vietnamese.

Difficulties in pronouncing Vietnamese words correctly, in using correct Vietnamese grammar and in selecting appropriate Vietnamese words, was apparent for all participants in this study throughout their schooling. Helping students to minimise these difficulties needs to be seen as an important aim.

There is research evidence that ethnic minority students, who in the early school years can learn either in their mother tongue or are taught bilingually, have better learning outcomes at school (Cincotta-Segi, 2011; Hasmath, 2011; Lee et al., 2015). Alternative ways of supporting rural Thai students in learning and developing proficiency in Vietnamese needs to be considered.

6.4.5 Recommendation 5: The curriculum needs to be adapted to make it more relevant to the developmental needs and circumstances of rural Thai students and those with learning difficulties

There needs to be recognition that children grow, develop and learn at different rates. They are not all ready to learn the same things at the same age or at the same pace. Children of the same age from different cultural backgrounds have not all had the same experiences or opportunities to learn the same skills, vocabulary and knowledge. What may be relevant tasks for many Kinh students are not necessarily relevant for students from ethnic minorities.

Teachers need to adapt the curriculum so tasks are relevant for their Thai students and adjust the pace of lessons to enable students to be successful learners. Some students do not have the

pre-requisite skills, understanding or knowledge assumed by their curriculum workbooks and so teachers need to adapt their teaching, tasks and homework to the needs of these students.

6.4.6 Recommendation 6: More teaching support needs to be made available to Thai students as part of their normal lessons

When rural Thai students have learning difficulties at school they are unlikely to receive much assistance from their parents, family members or peers. They are usually dependent on receiving support from their teachers. If this support is unavailable then their difficulties will be unresolved.

Some schools in other countries cater for students with special instructional needs through the involvement of support teachers and voluntary homework clubs where students can get assistance with their homework. For Thai students in Vietnam it is important that students, especially from poor families, can access additional teaching support when they need it at no extra cost to their families.

6.4.7 Recommendation 7: Rural Thai students need to be given a more practical oriented education that emphasises the development of practical and technical skills

There are important skills and knowledge that rural Thai students want to learn that are not available in the present curriculum. For example, students in this study said they wanted to learn practical and technical skills not just theory-based instruction.

They wanted a more hands-on practical oriented curriculum. Students who may not go on to further education after school expressed interest in learning skills and knowledge they could use in their everyday lives such as setting up a small business in the local market.

Students would also benefit from being taught social and emotional skills. Learning life skills could help promote their resilience, well-being, communications and relationships.

There would be many benefits for Thai students if they had more opportunities to engage in play, physical education and sport. Play and sport can play a very important role in the development of children, in promoting their health and wellbeing, and in providing opportunities for students to learn about themselves, their peers, and the world around them. Play and sport can assist in breaking down cultural barriers, in forming friendships, and in preventing loneliness.

6.4.8 Recommendation 8: Schools need to publicly recognise and demonstrate a respect for and appreciation of Thai culture

Schools show little if any public recognition of the existence of Thai culture or language, or of cultural differences between their students. While teachers strive to treat all students the same and to give them the same educational opportunities, this does not mean they should ignore cultural differences in terms of differences in the resources and experiences different students bring with them to school. It does not mean they should ignore a student's cultural identity. Failure by schools to publicly recognise cultural differences and cultural identity results in Thai students thinking that they and their culture are inferior and unworthy.

There would be many benefits for Thai students in terms of their self-esteem, confidence, sense of worth, and well-being, if schools encouraged students to share their different cultures, customs and festivals at school, and to be proud of their cultural heritage and identity. This would also assist in promoting cross-cultural awareness and understanding.

6.4.9 Recommendation 9: Thai students, their families and their Kinh teachers need to be provided with cultural mentoring by a staff member who knows Thai culture and can communicate in the Thai language

Culture influences how people live their lives, how people expect others to act and react, what people value, and what people perceive to be normal behaviour. In order for Thai ethnic students to flourish in schools in Vietnam, they and their parents need help in learning the culture of schools and of their Kinh neighbours. Helping Thai ethnic families to better understand the school culture and of their Kinh neighbours can promote cross-cultural acceptance, communication, and interaction. This can help reduce cultural misunderstandings and break down negative stereotypes.

Teachers also need cultural mentoring to help them understand Thai culture and to assist them in communicating and working with Thai students and their parents. Lack of teacher awareness of Thai culture and of the needs of Thai students and their parents is a barrier to teacher-parent and teacher-student relationships.

Cultural mentors need to be staff members who can speak Thai and know Thai culture. It would be beneficial if a number of such staff members were appointed to rural schools with a significant number of Thai ethnic students.

6.4.10 Recommendation 10: Teachers need to take special measures to establish supportive home-school partnerships

Thai parents, like other parents, play key roles in the education of their children. Parental support and encouragement are regarded by Thai students as extremely important and valuable.

Establishing more supportive home-school partnerships would assist parents to be of more assistance in their childrens' education. But there are barriers to overcome in order to achieve this. Barriers include such things as a lack of a common language, the parents' lack of literacy skills and schooling, the teachers' lack of knowledge of Thai culture, the limited roles schools expect parents to perform, and the impact of economic hardship on rural Thai families.

There are things teachers can do to help reduce these barriers. These include having a staff member speak to parents in Thai, better informing parents about what their children are learning and doing at school, celebrating students' achievements and progress, listening to parent concerns and observations, and working collaboratively with parents to resolve concerns and support students.

6.4.11 Recommendation 11: Staff need to be provided with further professional training and development in areas relevant to the implementation of these recommendations.

Based on this study school staff need further training and professional development in the following areas:

- ➢ Cultural awareness training
- ➢ Working with parents and students from local ethnic communities
- ➢ Helping Thai ethnic students become proficient in Vietnamese as second language learners
- ➢ Counselling students
- ➢ Tackling issues such as bullying and conflict resolution
- ➢ Facilitating the development of peer friendships and building positive classroom environments
- ➢ Developing positive teacher-student relationships
- ➢ Building supportive home-school partnerships
- ➢ Learning student centred-teaching practices and the theories underpinning them

> ➢ Catering for diverse learners in the classroom
> ➢ Cultural mentoring

Further training and professional development needs to be part of an ongoing school program designed to enable teachers to learn new ideas, skills and teaching strategies and to support them in trialling and implementing them in the classroom. This is very different from one-off sessions with outside experts.

6.5 Strengths and limitations of this study

This study has a number of strengths and limitations. Time constraints played a key role in shaping many of the study's limitations.The study's strengths

6.5.1 The study's strengths

An important strength of this study is that the researcher had a Thai identity and was able to speak fluently in both Thai and Vietnamese. He also had lived in a rural Thai village as a child and had attended rural schools and was familiar with many of the frequent day to day challenges of rural Thai students.

Having multiple interviews with participants helped in establishing trust, rapport and positive relationships, and enabled the researcher to check out whether he accurately interpreted what participants said. This enhanced the credibility of the data collected.

Using a socio-ecological framework enabled the researcher to explore how educational experiences were shaped by influences from the family, school, culture, peer group, community, and geographical location. The study was not limited to a narrow range of influences or a study of intrapersonal factors.

6.5.2 Limitations associated with the methodology

The study was a cross-sectional design even though a qualitative longitudinal study would have provided a richer, more detailed account of how student schooling experiences unfolded over the school years. Use of a cross-sectional design meant the researcher had to rely on retrospective questions to explore earlier educational experiences. A concurrent longitudinal study would have enabled a dynamic study of changes as they actually occurred. Unfortunately time constraints prevented a longitudinal study.

This study only involves case studies of four senior high school students who were attending the same rural high school. There were no case studies of urban Thai students or Thai students

who had dropped out of school or who never have attended school. How well these case studies reflect the experiences or educational challenges of other Thai ethnic students requires further research.

Data were only gathered by means of semi-structured interviews with the four student participants, their parents and teachers. Gathering data from the participants' classmates and peers and from classroom observations would have shed more light on classroom relationships, teaching practices and their influence on the experiences of the four student participants. Collecting data from additional sources would have added to the credibility and quality of the study.

6.5.3 Practical challenges

There were practical challenges in organising meetings with parents and in explaining the study and its ethical guidelines to them. Parents lacked literacy skills, had little if any schooling, and worked long hours seven days a week on their family farm and either did not have a phone, or had no phone reception where they lived. They had no prior experience of being interviewed by a researcher and naturally were initially suspicious as to what it was all about. Meetings with parents were organised to be held in their village. It would have been asking too much to expect parents to meet the researcher at the school which is a significant distance from the village or family farm. Walking is the usual form of transport in this area because of a lack of sealed roads, cars, buses and public transport.

Many words in Thai, Vietnamese or English do not have equivalent words or phrases in the other languages. This posed challenges for the researcher when asking interview questions, and comparing and analysing answers. Interviews with the students and teachers were conducted in Vietnamese while interviews with the parents were in Thai.

In rural Vietnam, students are rarely if ever asked to express their own perspective, their feelings, their concerns or opinions, or to think aloud. Usually the aim when answering teacher questions is to work out what answer the teacher wants to hear and to give this to them (Jerfelt, Blanchin, & Li, 2016). As one study participant said 'I did not tell anyone about my feelings before because I did not think they wanted to hear them'. This made interviewing the student participants and listening to their perspectives more challenging.

Student participants in this study provided few details of their early school experiences. They may have forgotten the details or not understood what the researcher wanted to find out. Questions about their early school experiences were usually asked in the first interview.

Perhaps this question needed to be revisited at a later interview or it may be that the interview questions need to be reworded. Whatever the reasons, lack of details of early school experiences is a limitation of this study.

6.5.4 Limitations associated with the researcher

Prior to starting this study the researcher had never formally interviewed anyone, nor received any training in doing so, nor had watched anyone being interviewed. The researcher of this study had to learn how to conduct an interview from scratch. Becoming a proficient and confident qualitative interviewer takes time and practice and the researcher still sees himself as a very much a novice in this area. Training for interviewing students in the West does not necessarily adequately prepare someone to interview students in an Asian context where students are generally discouraged by their teachers from sharing their perspectives, opinions and feelings.

When the researcher first started this doctorate study he had a very limited knowledge of student-centred theories of learning and teaching practices currently used in countries such as Australia. As a teacher he had not received any training or professional development in areas such as the use of inclusive teaching, relationship building, counselling students, use of diagnostic and formative assessments, promoting student well-being or in addressing issues such as bullying. Learning to look at the educational experiences of students from different theoretical lenses such as these has been a valuable experience but learning to do so has taken much time.

The researcher initially set out to explore the issue of gender and its influence on the education of student participants. Unfortunately this was not very successful. On reflection a Thai female interviewer may have been much more successful in interviewing the female participants, especially if the interview had been conducted with a group of girls rather than as a one-on-one interview. The interview questions could also have been reworded to encourage more detailed gender perspectives.

6.6 Significance of this study

This is the first specific research study of the schooling experiences and educational needs of rural Thai ethnic students living in a remote mountainous village in Vietnam. These students come from an economically and socially disadvantaged community with its unique set of challenges and needs. A significant number of Thai ethnic children in Vietnam do not attend school even though compulsory school attendance has been legislated by the Government.

Currently only 2% of Thai ethnic students attending school in Vietnam complete their secondary schooling (Census, 2009).

The Thai ethnic community is one of the largest minority groups in Vietnam and the numbers of Thai ethnic people living in villages in rural mountain areas in Vietnam is 1,450,642 in total of 1,550,423 (Census, 2009). It means that only 99,781 Thai ethnic people live in cities or town centres. The majority of Thai ethnic people live in rural villages.

This is the first such study undertaken by a Thai ethnic researcher educated in Vietnam and who is a Vietnamese citizen. I was the first student in my Thai village to complete my secondary schooling and to graduate from university and to work as a teacher in Vietnam. Having a Thai identity and knowing the Thai culture and language and a working knowledge of the Vietnamese schooling system has many advantages in a study such as this.

This is one of the first socio-ecological studies into this issue. It sought to shed light on the influence of family, school, culture, community, geography and Government policies on the schooling of Thai ethnic students.

This study makes recommendations that if adopted could facilitate and enable more rural Thai ethnic students to attend school, to succeed academically, to experience well-being and happiness, to complete their secondary schooling and go on to further tertiary education and/or trade or professional careers. It opens up personal and career opportunities.

The research framework that is proposed hopefully will benefit future researchers to investigate educational issues within the Thai ethnic community. Further research is needed in many issues touched on in this study.

6.7 Recommendations for further research

1. More research is needed into what is influencing the high level of school non-attendance and high school dropout rate of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam, and what can be done to address and ameliorate this situation. Such a study needs to look at cultural and socio-economic as well as educational, historical and psychological factors.

2. Research is needed into the schooling experiences and challenges confronting Thai ethnic students starting school and attending primary school in remote rural schools. Early intervention in tackling educational and social difficulties is widely regarded as one of the most effective ways of addressing, avoiding and minimising later difficulties.

3. Research is needed into the schooling experiences and challenges confronting Thai ethnic children living in urban areas in Vietnam. There is a dearth of research in relation to this group of students. The experiences and set of challenges confronting urban Thai ethnic students may be very different to those in attending remote rural schools.

4. Research is needed into the professional development and training needs of staff working in remote rural schools, what their needs and priorities are, how they would like these needs met, and ways in which staff can be collaborative participants in their professional development and training.

6.8 Personal reflections

As a result of my study I have learnt to question things that I have previously taken for granted. Previously I thought academic achievement was all about student effort, hard work and motivation. I focused on learning as an internal process rather than in terms of social and cultural contexts, teaching practices, family finances and resources, social support, and serendipity. I now realise that I have previously taken too narrow a view of school progress, learning and achievement.

I now recognise in my own life story how much my motivation and achievement was influenced by my parents, family, individual teachers and the daily struggle involved in making a living as a farmer. Breaking my collarbone in an accident early on limited my future prospects as a farmer. It resulted in my parents encouraging me to attend and study at school and to explore a career outside of farming.

In South Africa they have a saying called the Ubuntu principle. It translates that we are who we are because of others (i.e., people are people only through other people). I have learnt to understand how this applies to my schooling and academic achievement.

Horses often have blinkers (called "blinders" in America) put on them that limit what they can see on either side of them. Looking back I can now see that I previously had blinkers on me limiting my perception as an educator and student.

In relation to my daughter's story, I now see that the teacher, my wife and I, took a very narrow view of her slow school progress as a six year old, and thought that more effort, hard work and motivation on my daughter's part was the way to achieve normal progress. Such a view is extremely common amongst teachers, parents and the school community in Vietnam.

I now see that there are other ways of looking at my daughter's apparent slow progress other than lack of effort and motivation on her part, or having a possible disorder such as autism.

Looking at my daughter's situation through a developmental theory lens would require considering her developmental readiness for what she was being taught. It is normal for children to develop at different rates in different areas of development. If children are not developmentally ready for what they are being taught then extra tuition to perform these tasks will be unsuccessful and will likely result in negative feelings and attitudes that will hinder future learning. We also know from developmental theory that play and social interaction is critically important for normal development. Lack of opportunities for play, fun and social interaction hinders child development.

Looking at my daughter's situation through a cognitive lens would mean considering her thinking, vocabulary, information processing, motivation, feelings and learning strategies. This involves listening to her thinking, feelings and problem solving. Not listening to her talk, feelings and 'voice' prevented us understanding her cognitive needs. In addition to these things we would also want to know how proficient she is in using the language of classroom instruction (i.e., Vietnamese) and her understanding of the mainstream Vietnamese culture.

Looking at my daughter's situation through a humanist lens would mean exploring whether her basic social and emotional needs were being adequately met. This would involve checking out whether at school she has a sense of belonging, acceptance and safety, positive relationships with her teacher and peers and a sense of well-being. If she does not feel safe or accepted, if she has negative relationships with her teachers or peers, if she does not have a good friend at school, if she is experiencing rejection by her peers, if she is not getting support from her teachers, if she is not happy, all of these will be hindering her learning and development.

Looking at my daughter's situation through an ecological lens would mean exploring a wide range of issues in the classroom, in the schoolyard, in the community, and at home, that may be influencing her learning. Cultural and family issues and even social isolation can seriously impede learning.

'Human beings have evolved to thrive in conditions in which they are accepted and languish when they are rejected. This is one of the few 'universals' in child development. Rejection is about actions that send the message 'You are not good enough' and thus offer a negative

definition of self to a child' (Garbarino, 2008, p. 86). Exploring the relational side is an important part of analysing student behaviour and learning.

6.9 Concluding remarks

Rural Thai ethnic students have to overcome many social, cultural, economic, geographical and educational challenges in order to complete their schooling and achieve their high school certificate. For rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam, education is the primary means of escaping the financial and daily hardship associated with near subsistence farming, providing them with an opportunity to access further education and training, and entry into careers that enable them to better participate in and share in Vietnam's development and growing economic prosperity. Education is a key investment in the future and development of Vietnam and its multicultural community.

Thai ethnic parents need to be recognised as key partners in the education of their children. They need to be given more opportunities to be better informed, more supportive, and to play a more active role in their childrens' schooling. There is ample evidence that parental influence, encouragement, support and involvement are critically important in shaping school attendance, learning, motivation and the achievement of students.

This study highlights the need for major changes to the education and schooling of Thai ethnic students. In order to bring about such change staff will need further professional development and ongoing professional support in areas such as: learning how to modify the curriculum to make it more inclusive and student centred; learning about modern teaching theories, practices and methodologies; learning the importance of positive relationships and how to develop and maintain them; learning to design the curriculum to address the holistic needs of students e.g., teaching life skills, teaching drama, art, technical studies; understanding local ethnic cultures and understanding the lives of local ethnic students and their communities; communicating with ethnic parents and working in partnership with them in the education of their children; and better addressing issues such as bullying, cultural prejudice and social rejection.

There also needs to be changes to school policies and practices to affirm and address the special learning needs of ethnic students, to recognise and respect their cultural identities and culture, to implement special measures to overcome socio-economic and educational disadvantages and difficulties, to broaden the scope of their curriculum and to expand notions of schooling success. Schooling aims need to include enhancing student well-being,

developing their knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to become successful and resilient human beings, to promote cultural understanding and acceptance, and the development of a more equitable multi-cultural society.

This study has been a very personal journey and one that has changed how I think about and look at learning and schooling and the challenges facing rural Thai ethnic students. These students have a unique set of social and educational challenges. I hope in writing this thesis I have adequately communicated the 'voices' and issues and concerns of the students, teachers and parents who participated in this study.

Appendices

Appendix 1: School-neighbourhood context in Vietnam

In Vietnam there are three levels of schooling i.e., small local primary schools, larger district middle schools and large regional senior secondary schools. As students move from one level of schooling to the next, in rural areas it usually means that students from ethnic villages have to travel further to school and the number of Kinh students in their classes also increases significantly.

In this study, the four student participants were in year 11 or 12 and attended the same senior secondary school but they were in different classes and came from different Thai villages. The school involved in this study is located in the remote rural mountains of Dien Bien Province, 30 kilometres from the border with Laos. It is surrounded by rice paddies and nearly half the school's students come from 150 Thai villages located in valleys, some of which are quite a distance from the school. Travel between these villages and the school is mostly on unsealed paths that cross over or through creeks and rivers. These paths are subject to flooding and erosion by rain. In the wet season, heavy rain can make them muddy and sometimes impassable.

The school involved in this study has a population of 894 students, 428 boys and 466 girls. It caters for students from year 10 to year 12. The student population is comprised of 449 Thai students, 440 Kinh students and 5 Hmong students. Every year about 15% to 18% of the students leave school from years 8, 9 and 10, and most of these are Thai.

The number of the families in each Thai village is small and there may only be one or two students from each village attending this school in any one year. Since the villages are some distance from each other and travel between them is difficult, villages do not have much interaction with each other. Villagers often only meet each other at the one or two Thai festivals each year. These festivals play an important role in maintaining contacts between Thai villagers and in preserving their Thai language and culture.

The school has 69 teachers teaching 14 subjects. These subjects are: Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computer Science, Technology (consists of Agriculture/ Horticulture, Mechanics, Electronics and Design), Vietnamese (Literature), History, Geography, English, Physical Education, Defence Education, Civics and Information Technology. Besides teaching staff the school has one librarian, one accountant and one person involved with health issues. Of the 69 teachers five are Thai (i.e., three females and two males). The five Thai teachers specialise in teaching subjects such as Physics, English, Physical Education and Agriculture.

The school which is the setting for this study was opened 30 years ago. Prior to this, secondary students had to travel much further to a high school in another town and some did not attend school because of the distance involved. The school has 30 classrooms, two computer rooms, one language room and a library. It has two toilets for both teachers and students; one for female and one for male. Most of the school area is taken up with classrooms and the playground is an open space without any play equipment or shelter sheds. Each class usually has 30 to 45 students and students are likely to stay together with the same group of students through most of their senior secondary schooling.

This school is a state school set up and funded by the Vietnamese Government. There are no private, alternative or bilingual schools in Dien Bien province. The level of school funding

depends on the number of teachers and student enrolments and does not take into account students with special needs or the fact that this is a remote rural school.

Families have to pay school fees from $A4 (60,000 VND) to $A20 (350,000 VND) a month depending on their family circumstances. Fees are waived for families who can prove their income is less than $A40 (700,000VND) per month (Government, 2015, p. 2). Besides paying school fees, students have to pay the school a number of other fees as well, such as costs associated with optional afternoon lessons, for insurance, and for school cleaning.

Students who live too far away from the school can qualify for a Government subsidy if their family income is less than $A40 a month. The subsidy is $A36 (582,000 VND) a month to pay for accommodation and living expenses (Government, 2013, p. 2). This subsidy enables many poor Thai students to attend school. Unfortunately students who live away from home usually have to live by themselves and this means looking after themselves. Parents living in villages are not necessarily able to ensure their children have adequate supervision and care after school. These students are highly vulnerable to experiencing harassment and negative attention from other young people who are usually no longer at school.

School operates six days a week from Monday to Saturday, with a one month break at the end of the year. There are five 45 minute lessons each day. Students get up at sunrise in order to get to school by 7.00 a.m. when school starts. School finishes at 11.30 a.m. with 5 minute breaks between lessons for teachers to move between classes. There is a 15 minute break mid-morning and this time is often used for whole school assemblies and activities.

After finishing school at 11.30 a.m. students usually go home for lunch. There is no canteen at the school and no shops on the way home for Thai students. The local town shops and food stalls are 1 kilometre from the school and Thai children usually cannot afford to buy food or snacks.

Students return to school after lunch if they are going to attend the optional afternoon lessons, though normally, Thai students help their parents by carrying out labouring work on the family farm in the afternoons. This includes digging, weeding, and collecting firewood. It is only when the sun sets at around 7.30 pm that the family starts to go home to prepare and have dinner. Students usually do not start their homework until after they have eaten their dinner and often they go to bed quite late.

The school offers optional lessons in the afternoon for students who want to clarify or consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the morning's lessons. These lessons cost an additional fee. One advantage of attending optional lessons is that teachers have more freedom to choose what material they cover and more time to answer questions.

Appendix 2: Student interview questions

Student Interview Topics and Starting Questions

1. **Family and Village**

   Please tell me about yourself, your family and your village.

   Where do you live? What do your parents do for a living?

   Do you have brothers and sisters? How old are they?

   How much schooling have your parents had?

   How fluent and literate are your parents in Vietnamese and Thai?

   How far is your home from the school?

2. **Experiences of school**

   Which schools have you attended?

   What have been your happiest times at school?

   What have been unhappy times at school?

3. **Interests**

   What are your interests? What activities do you like doing?

4. **Opportunities to play and socialise**

   What opportunities do you have to play with and have fun with your friends?

5. **Likes and dislikes**

   What subjects do you like and dislike at school?

   What are your reasons for liking and disliking these subjects?

6. **After school tasks and responsibilities**

   What tasks and responsibilities do you do at home and on the farm after school?

   How much time do you usually spend on these tasks each day?

7. **Impact of Weather**

   How does the weather affect your schooling?

   Does bad weather ever stop you from attending school?

8. **Experiences in learning Vietnamese**

   How difficult was it for you to learn to speak, read and write in Vietnamese?

   What difficulties did you have in doing this?

   What helped you learn Vietnamese?

   Do you still have difficulties at times in using Vietnamese in class?

9. Relationships with teachers

Are there teachers you get on extremely well with?

If so, what makes your relationship with them so positive?

Do you have difficult relationships with any of your teachers?

If so, what makes these relationships difficult?

Do you ever get upset at what your teachers say or do? If so, what upsets you?

10. Relationships with peers

How well do you get on well with your classmates?

Do you have good friends at school?

Do you have Thai friends? Do you have Kinh friends?

Do any classmates dislike you?

11. Social difficulties

Do you have social difficulties at school? If so, what were they?

12. Support at home

How much can your parents help you with your school work and homework?

Are there other family members who can help you understand what you are learning?

Does your family encourage your studying? If so, how do they do it?

13. Support at school

When you don't understand the work do you ask for help from teachers or classmates?

If you don't ask questions or seek help in class what are the reasons for this?

What support and encouragement do you get from your teachers?

What support would you have liked to receive from your teachers but didn't?

What support do you get from your friends and classmates?

How do classmates respond when you make mistakes in class?

14. Worries

How often do you worry about your schoolwork, exams or things happening outside of school? What things worry and stress you?

How stressful is school at times for you?

Does anyone recognise when you are worried or stressed?

15. School work difficulties

What subjects do you find it hardest to learn?

How difficult is it to keep up with the pace of lessons?

How often do you have difficulties in understanding school work?

How often do you find it difficult to complete your homework?

What are some of the things you have difficulty doing at school?

16. Teaching methods

What teaching methods do you like?

What teaching methods don't you like?

17. Communication with your parents

How often do you talk with your parents about what you are doing at school, what is happening there, and any difficulties you might be having?

18. School success

How successful do you think you are at school?

How important is it for you to be successful at school?

How motivated are you to be successful at school?

19. Thai Identity

What does being Thai mean to you?

How important is your Thai identity to you?

20. Wishes and Hopes

What, if anything, would you like to change at school?

What do you hope to do when you leave school?

Appendix 3: Teacher interview questions

Teacher Interview Topics and Starting Questions

1. **Information about the school and its resources**

    How well is the school resourced?

    Which areas, if any, need better resources?

2. **Professional training and development**

    What training have you had in teaching ethnic students, in teaching students with learning difficulties, in teaching Vietnamese as a second language, and in using student-centred teaching practices?

3. **Knowledge of Thai language and culture**

    What cultural awareness training have you received in relation to reaching Thai ethnic students?

4. **Teaching challenges**

    What are the main challenges you face as a teacher in meeting the needs of Thai ethnic students at this school?

5. **Support available**

    What support do you give to students who have problems in understanding the work?

    How do you respond to students who fail to learn what they are taught?

    What support would you like to provide but can't?

6. **Perceptions of the student participant**

    Is this student experiencing any difficulties at school? If so what are they?

    Are there any obstacles and barriers to this student's learning?

    What support is or has been provided to this student at school?

    What extra support may this student need?

    Does this student get on well with other students and teachers?

    Are there any social difficulties? If so what are they?

    How well is this student progressing at school?

    What, if any challenges do you have in communicating with this student's parents?

7. **Desired changes**

    What changes would you like to see that would better meet the needs of Thai students and other minority students at your school?

Appendix 4: Parent interview questions

Parent Interview Topics and Starting Questions

1. **Satisfaction**

   How well do you think your son/daughter is progressing at school?

   How satisfied are you with your son/daughter's progress?

2. **Difficulties**

   What makes it hard for children from your village to do well at school?

   Do you think your son/daughter has difficulties at school?

   If so, what do you think these difficulties are?

3. **Home support**

   What do you do to support your son/daughter's learning at home?

   What support would you like to give but can't?

   What stops you giving more support?

4. **School news**

   How much does your son/daughter talk with you about what is happening at school and about any difficulties he/she might be having?

5. **Communication with the school**

   How easy is it for you to communicate with the school?

   What makes it hard for you to communicate with teachers?

6. **Peer contact**

   How much contact does your son/daughter have with other children out-of-school for socialising, play and fun?

7. **Worries or concerns**

   Do you have any worries or concerns about your son/daughter's schooling or future?

   If so, what are they?

8. **Need for extra support**

   What extra support would you like the school to give your son/daughter?

9. **Hopes for the future**

   What are your hopes for your son/daughter's future?

Appendix 5: Personal introduction script

My name is Mr Van Pang Lo. I am a member of the Thai ethnic community in Vietnam. I grew up in a village in Dien Bien Province and had to work hard to be successful at school. I am currently studying in Australia and am exploring the school experiences of Thai students in Vietnam. I know that many Thai students in Vietnam have special challenges in learning Vietnamese, English and mathematics, and in getting high enough grades to go onto University. I know that many Thai students in Vietnam do not regularly attend school. In my study I want to talk with four Thai students in year 11 or year 12. I want to talk with both boys and girls as I recognise that boys and girls can have very different school experiences.

If you want to know more information about my study or might be interested in being involved, please let your class teacher know and he or she will let me know. I will then meet with you, to answer any questions you might have and to check out whether you want to take part. It is important that you do not feel under any pressure to take part.

If you decide to take part in this study and your parents agree, I will ask you to meet with me up to three times to talk about your experiences of school and what has helped or hindered your schooling. Each meeting will be held at the school and last around 30 minutes. You can choose whether we talk in Thai or Vietnamese. What you say at these meetings will be confidential. These meetings will be arranged to try and avoid others knowing that you are involved in this study. But it is not always possible to prevent others finding out that you are taking part in this study. I will be writing up the findings of this study but will not include your name or any information that will identify you.

If you are under 18 years of age, I need to get your parents' permission before you can take part in this study. In order to do this I am happy to meet with them in your village and to talk with them in Thai.

If you agree to take part in this study you can pull out of it at any time. You will not be asked to continue if you do not want to.

I hope that this study will help teachers better understand what influences the education of Thai students in Vietnam. This has not been closely studied before. Hopefully this might result in teachers better understanding the needs of Thai students and of what teachers and schools do that helps.

Appendix 5.1: Personal introduction script (Vietnamese)

Tôi tên là Lò Văn Pắng, là một người con của dân tộc Thái. Tôi sinh ra và lớn lên từ làng bản ở tỉnh Điện Biên và tôi đã cố gắng để thành công trong học tập. Hiện tại tôi đang học tập tại Úc và đang tìm hiểu về Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam.Tôi biết nhiều bạn học sinh dân tộc Thái gặp nhiều khó khăn trong việc sử dung tiếng Việt, học tiếng Anh, Toán và có kết quả cao để đi học đại học. Tôi cũng biết rằng nhiều em học sinh không đi học đều đặn.

Trong nghiên cứu của tôi, tôi muốn nói chuyện với bốn bạn học sinh dân tộc Thái đang học lớp 11 và lớp 12. Tôi muốn nói chuyện với cả các bạn nam và nữ vì tôi biết rằng Kinh nghiệm học tập của các bạn khác nhau.

Nếu như bạn muốn biêt thêm thông tim về nghiên cứu của tôi hoặc muốn tham gia, làm ơn nói với giáo viên chủ nhiệm của bạn và giáo viên của bạn se liên lạc với tôi. Sau đó tôi sẽ gặp bạn để trao đổi cũng như giải đáp các thắc mắc trước khi tham gia. Các bạn nên nhớ rằng việc tham gia là hoàn toàn tự nguyện.

Nếu bạn muốn tham gia thì cần có sự đồng ý của cha mẹ bạn. Tôi sẽ gặp các bạn khoảng ba lần để nói về việc học tập của bạn. mỗi cuộc nói chuyện sẽ kéo dài khoảng 30 phút. Bạn có thể nói chuyện với tôi bằng tiếng Thái hoặc tiếng Việt.Những gì bạn nói với tôi sẽ được giữ bí mật. Nhưng cũng hơi khó để giữ bí mật việc bạn tham gia nghiên cứu. Tôi sẽ viết về kết quả nghiên cứu nhưng tôi sẽ không đề cặp gì đến tên của các bạn và tôi cũng sẽ cố gắng tránh để người khac nhận ra các bạn.

Nếu bạn dưới 18 tuổi tôi cần sự cho phép của bố mẹ bạn cho bạn tham gia nghiên cứu của tôi. Tôi sẵn lòng đến gặp bố mẹ của các bạn ở trong bản và nói chuyện với họ bằng tiếng Thái.

Nếu bạn đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu, bạn có thể rút khỏi nghiên cứu bất kỳ lúc nào mà không có sự rang buộc hay anh hưởng gì cả.

Tôi hy vọng rằng nghiên cứu này sẽ giúp giáo viên hiểu hơn những yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến việc học tập cũng như giảng dạy cho học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam. Vấn đề này trước đây chưa được nghiên cứu một cách kỹ lưỡng. tôi hy vọng rằng, kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ giúp giáo viên hiểu thêm về những khó khăn của học sinh dân tộc Thái và giúp họ có kết quả tốt hơn trong học tập.

Appendix 6: Family letter of introduction

Dr Neil Welch
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Fax: +61 08 8201 3184
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www.flinders.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Date: 13 July 2015

Letter of Introduction

Dear parent,

This letter is to introduce Mr Van Pang Lo, a member of the Vietnamese Thai community, who is a Doctorate student in the School of Education at Flinders University, Australia. He will produce his University student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of his identity.

As part of his Doctorate studies Pang is required to carry out a research study. Pang has chosen to research "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies".This study is being carried out in a number of rural high schools. It is an area where there has been no previous research. The findings of this study are expected to be of interest to the Department of Education in Dien Bien Province in Vietnam, teachers and schools in Vietnam, the research community and members of your community.

Pang would like to talk with both you and your son or daughter as part of his study. He is willing meet with you at your home at a time convenient to you and to talk with your son or daughter at their school at a time convenient to them. In order to do this he needs your agreement and permission. Meetings with Pang are expected to last 30-45 minutes.

If you are willing to talk with Pang he is willing to talk with you in your preferred language i.e., Thai or Vietnamese.

In order to take part in this study you need to volunteer to do so. If you might be interested in volunteering please let Pang know, and he will give you more information about his study and what taking part involves.

Any information collected in this study will be treated confidentially and neither your name nor the name of your son or daughter will appear in any report of the study findings.

Information from this study will be kept securely and confidentially.

This study has been approved by the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee at Flinders University and is being supervised by Associate Professor John Guenther and myself. We are both lecturers in the School of Education at Flinders University

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to either contact me using the details above or to make contact with Pang. Pang's email address is Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au

I hope you will assist Pang in carrying out this very important study. Yours sincerely,

Dr Neil Welch Adjunct Lecturer

School of Education, Flinders University

inspiring
achievement

Appendix 6.1: Family letter of introduction (Vietnamese)

Dr Neil Welch
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CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Ngày 13 tháng 07 năm 2015

<div align="center">

Thư giới thiệu

</div>

Gửi phụ huynh

Tôi viết thư này để giới thiệu anh Lò Văn Pấng, một thành viên của dân tộc Thái đang học nghiên cứu sinh tại khoa Sư phạm, Đại học Flinders, Úc. Anh Pấng sẽ trình thẻ có ảnh với anh chị khi giới thiệu.

Theo yêu cầu của khóa học nghiên cứu sinh, anh Pấng phải triển khai một nghiên cứu trong việc học tập của mình. Anh Pấng đã chọn đề tài "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu". Nghiên cứu này sẽ được triển khai ở một số trường Trung học phổng thông của tỉnh. Đây là lĩnh vực trước kia chưa ai nghiên cứu. kết quả nghiên cứu hy vọng sẽ hữu ích cho nghành giáo dục của tỉnh Điện Biên, giáo viên các trường phổ thông ở Việt Nam, cộng đồng nghiên cứu cũng như cộng đồng các anh/chị.

Anh Pấng muốn được nói chuyện với anh/chị và con anh/chị về việc học tập của các cháu. Anh ấy tình nguyện đến gặp anh/chị ở những chỗ thuận tiện nhất cho anh/chị để nói chuyện với anh/chị và sẽ nói chuyện với các cháu ở trường vào thời gian thuận tiện nhất. Anh Pấng cần sự cho phép của anh/chị để nói chuyện với các cháu. Mỗi cuộc nói chuyện kéo dài khoảng 30-45 phút.

Nếu như anh chị đồng ý nói chuyện với anh Pấng, anh ấy sẽ nói chuyên với anh chị bằng tiếng Việt hoặc tiếng Thái.

Để tham gia vào nghiên cứu này, anh/chị và con anh chị phải tự nguyện. Nếu anh/chị đồng ý tham gia, hãy cho anh Pấng biết để anh ấy cung cấp thêm thông tin về nghiên cứu cũng như những vấn đề sẽ nói trong cuộc nói chuyên.

Những thông tin trong nghiên cứu này sẽ được giữ bí mật, mọi thông tin cá nhân của anh/chị cũng như của con anh/chị sẽ không được tiết lộ trong nghiên cứu.

Nghiên cứu này đã được phê duyệt bởi trường đại học Flinders dưới sự hướng dẫn của phó giáo sư John Guenther và tôi. Chúng tôi đều là giảng viên tại khoa sư phạm, trường đại học Flinders.

Nếu như anh/chị muốn biết thêm chi tiết về nghiên cứu này xin hãy liên hệ với tôi hoặc anh Pâng theo địa chỉ cung cấp dưới đây. Địa chỉ email của anh Pấng:Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au

Tôi hy vọng anh/chị sẽ giúp đỡ anh Pấng trong việc triển khai nghiên cứu rất quan trọng này.

Trân trọng

TS. Neil Welch

Giảng viên

Khoa Sư phạm, Đại học Flinders

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Appendix 6.2: Family letter of introduction (Thai)

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CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Mự 13 bươn 07 pi 2015

Chỉa giới thiệu

Pha hưa phụ huynh

Khỏi phá xư ny vạy giới thiệu ai Lo Van Pâng, phủ côn Tay nưng đang ép nghiên cứu sinh dú cơ Úc nắng chương đai học Flinders. Ai Pâng ha ầu chỉa mi ảnh hửa ai nọng le chơ giới thiệu.

Toi yêu cầu chương trình ép nghiên cứu sinh, ai Pâng cho dệt nghiên cứu nưng. Ai Pâng lựa tang nghiên cứu "Kinh nghiệm ép học khong luk phủ Tay dú Việt Nam: xí lụ học". Nghiên cứu ny chi dệt nắng pưng chương cấp ba nắng Mương Thanh hau ny. Vịak ny vơ hê my phưa dệt tê chau ma khay. Kết quả nghiên cứu ny mong cong vạy choi nghanh giao dục khong tỉnh Điện Biên, giáo viên vok nắng chương phổ thông nắng mương Việt Nam, py nong nghiên cứu, cắp va ải nọng bản mương hâu.

Ai Pâng chi ổ tô chầu cắp luk chầu tang vịa ép hiên khọng lan. Ai Pâng hak y pày po py nong nắng bón đưa đì hửa chầu nhất cắp va ổ tô sum lan ơ sầu nắng hươn chương. Cón chơdệt vịak ny, ai Pâng cân đẩy phép khong py nọng. Ai chi ổ tô dan 30-45 phút.

Va py nong xôm chưa ổ tô ai Pâng, py nong ổ quam Kiều hoặc quam Tay toi chưa chầu.

Vịak choi dừa nghiên cứu ny đo toi hùa chưa hùa co khong chầu. Va py nong vơ mặc chi dặng chơ đưa cở đẩy vơ pên xăng. Va py nọng xôm chưa choi dưa nghiên cứu lo lở hửa ai Pâng hụ, ai hak chi ầu hửa tứm thông tin ma tang vịak nghiên cứu cắp vịak ổ tô.

Vịak ổ tô nắng nghiên cứu ny lo chi đẩy dặm xia, vơ mi phưa chi hu đẩy thông tin cá nhân cắp chư khong py nong cắp khong luk chầu.

Nghiên cứu ny đẩy chương đại học Flinders phê duyệt. Phó giáo sư John Guenther cắp khỏi bok xon. Pưng khỏi dệt giáo viên nắng khoa Sư pham, chương Đại học Flinders.

Va my vịak xăng chi ổ tô tứm py nong lien lac xứa khỏi cắp ai Pâng toi địa chỉ dú tưả ny.. Địa chỉ email khong ai Pấng:Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au

Khỏi mong cong py nọng choi dưa ai Pâng dệt nghiên cứu ny.

Trân trọng

TS. Neil Welch

Giảng viên

Khoa Sư phạm, Đại học Flinders

Appendix 7: Letter of introduction to principal

Dr Neil Welch
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www.flinders.edu.au

CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Date: 13 July 2015

Letter of Introduction

Dear [Principal],

This letter is to introduce Mr Van Pang Lo, a member of the Vietnamese Thai community, who is a Doctorate student in the School of Education at Flinders University, Australia. He will produce his University student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of his identity.

As part of his Doctorate studies Pang is required to carry out a research study. Pang has chosen to research "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies". This study is being carried out in a number of rural high schools. It is an area where there has been no previous research. The findings of this study are expected to be of interest to the Department of Education in Dien Bien Province in Vietnam, teachers and schools in Vietnam, the research community and members of the general public.

Pang is seeking your permission to allow him to recruit two of your Thai ethnic students in year 11 or 12, and their class teachers, and to interview them at your school. If you are willing to give Pang permission to do this, we will be extremely grateful. Pang is happy to provide you with much more information about his study.

Participants in Pang's study need to be volunteers and to give their informed consent. When participants are students under 18 years of age, their parents are required to give their informed consent too.

Any information collected in this study will be treated confidentially and none of the participants nor the name of your school will be identifiable in any report or publications of the study's findings. Data from this study will be kept securely and confidentially.

This study has been approved by the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee at Flinders University and is being supervised by Associate Professor John Guenther and myself. We are both lecturers in the School of Education at Flinders University

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to either contact me using the details above or to make contact with Pang. Pang's email address is <lo0078@uni.flinders.edu.au>

Thank you for considering this request. I hope that you will be willing to assist Pang in carrying out his valuable research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Neil Welch

Adjunct Lecturer

School of Education, Flinders University

Appendix 7.1: Letter of introduction to Principal (Vietnamese)

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CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Ngày 13 tháng 07 năm 2015

Thư giới thiệu

Kính gửi Hiệu trưởng nhà trường,

Tôi viết lá thư này để giới thiệu anh Lò Văn Pắng, một thành viên của dân tộc Thái, đang học nghiên cứu sinh tại khoa Sư phạm, trường Đại học Flinders, Úc. Anh ấy sẽ trình thẻ có ảnh với anh chị khi anh ấy giới thiệu.

Theo yêu cầu của khóa học nghiên cứu sinh, anh Pắng phải triển khai một nghiên cứu trong việc học tập của mình. Anh Pắng đã chọn đề tài "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu". Nghiên cứu này sẽ được triển khai ở một số trường Trung học phổng thông của tỉnh. Đây là lĩnh vực trước kia chưa ai nghiên cứu. Kết quả nghiên cứu hy vọng sẽ hữu ích cho nghành giáo dục của tỉnh Điện Biên, giáo viên các trường phổ thông ở Việt Nam, cộng đồng nghiên cứu cũng như cộng đồng nói chung.

Anh Pắng muốn xin phép anh/chị được nói chuyện với bốn học sinh dân tộc Thái đang học lớp 11 và lớp 12, giáo viên của các em và cuộc nói chuyện sẽ diễn ra tại trương anh/chị. Nếu anh/chị cho phép, anh Pắng sẽ rất biết ơn và anh ấy rất vui lòng cung cấp cho anh/chị thêm thông tin về nghiên cứu của anh ấy.

Để tham gia vào nghiên cứu này, anh/chị và con anh chị phải tự nguyện và ký vào bản cam kết tình nguyện. Nếu học sinh dưới 18 tuổi, thì việc cho phép và cam kết tình nguyện tham gia của phụ huynh là cần thiết.

Những thông tin trong nghiên cứu này sẽ được giữ bí mật, mọi thông tin cá nhân của anh/chị cũng như của của trường sẽ không được tiết lộ trong nghiên cứu. kết quả nghiên cứu sẽ được giữ bí mật.

Nghiên cứu này đã được phê duyệt bởi trường đại học Flinders dưới sự hướng dẫn của phó giáo sư John Guenther và tôi. Chúng tôi đều là giảng viên tại khoa sư phạm, trường đại học Flinders.

Nếu như anh/chị muốn biết thêm chi tiết về nghiên cứu này xin hãy liên hệ với tôi hoặc anh Pâng theo địa chỉ cung cấp dưới đây. Địa chỉ email của anh Pắng: Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au

Tôi xin chân thành cảm ơn sự lưu tâm của anh chị và hy vọng anh/chị sẽ giúp đỡ anh Pắng trong việc triển khai nghiên cứu rất quan trọng này

Yours sincerely,

Dr Neil Welch

Adjunct Lecturer

School of Education, Flinders University

inspiring
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Appendix 8: Information sheet for parents

Mr Van Pang Lo
School of Education
Faculty of Education,
Humanities and Law Education
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Tel: +61 4 1519 4989
Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

INFORMATION SHEET

(For parents)

Title: "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies"

Investigator:

Mr Van Pang Lo

School of Education

Flinders University

Ph: +61 4 1519 4989

Supervisor(s):

Dr Neil Welch

Flinders University

Ph: +61 08 8356 5759

Assoc Prof John Guenther

Flinders University

Ph: +61 8 89467207

Information about the researcher:

Van Pang Lo is a member of the rural Vietnamese Thai community who has grown up Dien Bien Province. He is currently studying in Australia and wants to research the challenges and obstacles that Thai students have in attending and being successful at school in Vietnam. He recognises that Thai students have special challenges in learning Vietnamese, English and Mathematics, and in getting high enough grades to go onto to University. Pang also knows that many Thai students in Vietnam students don't attend school, have difficulties in getting good grades and frequently have difficulties in being accepted by non-Thai students. He wants to explore possible reasons for this. In order to carry out his research Pang wants to talk with four Thai students in year 11 or 12 in rural High schools in Dien Bien province. He wants to talk with both boys and girls as he recognises that boys and girls may face different school challenges.

Description of the study:

This study is part of the project entitled "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies" This project is supported by School of Education, Flinders University.

Purpose of the study:

- What influences the educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Dien Bien province in Vietnam?
- What can be done to improve the learning experiences and the learning outcomes of the rural Thai ethnic students?

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to attend a to meet with the researcher with the researcher who will ask you a questions about your child's schooling, the relationships between your child and his/her teachers, peers. The subjects, which he/she like or dislike, your background as well as the support you and your child have. The meeting may last from 30 to 45 minutes if participants are agreeable this meeting will be tape recorded so that the researcher can study in detail what has been said. No one but the researcher will listen to these tape recordings. Once the researcher has finished studying the tape recordings they will be destroyed. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may decline to answer questions and withdraw from the study at any time.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The hope is that this study will help identify the challenges and obstacles that Thai students face in their education in Vietnam. The findings hopefully will make educators and people in authority more awareness of the challenges that Thai students face at school. But you will not gain any other benefit from being involved in this study.

Will you be identifiable by being involved in this study?

Anything you say will be kept confidential and any reports of the findings will not include your name, your child's name, or the name of your child's school.

Are there any risks or discomforts if you are involved?

There are no identified risks or discomforts.

How do I agree to participant in this project?

If you agree to participate let the researcher know. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. You will need to sign the consent form before taking part in this study.

How will you receive feedback?

At the end of the study participants will be given a summary of the findings. The summary won't include anyone's name or the name of their school. Participants will be invited to comment on the summary.

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact the researcher Mr. Van Pang Lo by phone on +61 4 1519 4989 or by email to Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au or the supervisor Dr Neil Welch on +61 08 8356 5759 or by email to Neil.Welch@flinders.edu.au.

Support for this study

This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Flinders University and is supported by the Dien Bien Education Department.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation.

Appendix 8.1: Information sheet for parents (Vietnamese)

Mr Van Pang Lo
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Humanities and Law Education
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Tel: +61 4 1519 4989
Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

BẢN THÔNG TIN CÁ NHÂN
(Đối với phụ huynh)

Đế tài: "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu"

Người nghiên cứu: Ông: Lò Văn Pắng

School of Education, Flinders University

Điện thoại: +61 415 194 989

Giáo viên hướng dẫn: TS. Neil Welch

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Điện thoại: +61 8 8946 7207

Thông tin về nghiên cứu viên

Lò Văn Pắng là một người con của dân tộc Thái, anh ấy sinh ra và lớn lên ở tỉnh Điện Biên. Hiện nay anh ấy đang học nghiên cứu sinh ở Úc và anh ấy muốn nghiên cứu về những khó khan mà học sinh dân tộc Thái phải vượt qua để thành công trong học tập. Anh ấy cũng nhận ra rằng, học sinh dân tộc gặp rất nhiều khó khan trong việc học tiếng Việt, Toán và tiếng Anh. Chính vì thế anh ấy muốn nghiên cứu xem những khó khăn đó la gì và họ đã làm thế nào để vượt qua trong học tập. Để có số liệu cho nghiên cứu, anh ấy sẽ phỏng vấn 4 học sinh dân tộc Thái bao gồm cả nam và nữ.

Mô tả về đề tài:

Đề tài này là 1 phần của dự án "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu" Đề tài được sự hỗ trợ từ Khoa Sư phạm của Đại Học Flinders.

Mục tiêu của đế tài:

1. Điều gì đã ảnh hưởng đến Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của tỉnh Điện Biên, Việt Nam?

2. Làm cách nào để nâng cao kết quả học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của Tỉnh?

Những điều mà chủ thể nghiên cứu được yêu cầu?

Anh/chị sẽ được mời tham gia vào đề tài qua việc đồng ý tham gia vào cuộc phỏng vấn với nghiên cứu viên về việc học tập của con bạn. Cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ tập trung vào các chủ đề như: mối quan hệ của con bạn với giáo viên, các bạn trong lớp cũng như gia đình. Những khó khăn mà con đang gặp phải trong việc học tập. Cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ kéo dài trong vòng 30-45 phút và nó sẽ được ghi âm để phục vụ nghiên cứu. Sau đó nội dung phỏng vấn sẽ được lưu lại dạng văn bản và lưu trữ trong máy tính. Việc tham gia vào đề tài đều là sự tự nguyện, vì vậy anh/chị đều có thể từ chối tham gia hoặc dừng bất cứ thời gian nào.

Những lợi ích mà anh/chị có được khi tham gia vào đề tài?

Anh/chị sẽ không có được lợi ích trực tiếp nào từ nghiên cứu này nhưng nó sẽ giúp cải thiện việc dạy và học cho học sinh dân tộc thiểu số. Bạn sẽ có cơ hội để chia sẻ Kinh nghiệm với những người khác. Những thông tin mà bạn chia sẻ sẽ hữu ích cho học sinh dân tộc Thái ở các trường vùng sâu vùng xa để có được thành công nhiều hơn trong học tập.

Vấn đề bảo mật thông tin?

Tên của anh/chị tham gia cũng như những thông tin cung cấp sẽ được mã hóa và giữ bí mật hoàn toàn.

Việc tham gia vào đề tài này, có an toàn haykhông?

Sẽ không có bất cứ 1 rủi ro nào, trong việc tham gia vào đề tài này bởi vì anh/chị cũng như con của anh/chị sẽ không bị phát hiện, Những thông tin hoàn toàn không liên quan đến vấn đề chính trị hay cá nhân. Tuy nhiên, các anh/chị có thể cảm thấy một chút bất tiện về thời gian trong việc tham gia vào đề tài này.

Làm cách nào tôi có thể tham gia vào đề tài?

Việc tham gia là hoàn toàn tự nguyện**.** Anh/chị có thể yêu cầu rút khỏi cuộc phỏng vấn hoặc từ chối trả lời các câu hỏi nếu mong muốn bất cứ lúc nào. Hy vọng rằng anh/chị đồng ý tham gia vào đề tài.

Làm cách nào tôi có thể nhận được ý kiến đóng góp?

Nội dung tóm tắt của cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được chuyển thành văn bản và sẽ gửi đến anh/chị, nếu có yêu cầu.

Nếu bạn có câu hỏi nào thêm liên quan đến nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với tác giả Lò Văn Pắng thông qua điện thoại: +61415194989 hoặc email: Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au hoặc giáo viên hướng dẫn của anh ấy: Tiến sỹ Neil Welch điện thoại: +610883565759 hoặc email: Neil.Welch@flinders.edu.au.

Cảm ơn thời gian của các thầy cô và mong rằng anh/chị sẽ đồng ý tham gia

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CHỈA THÔNG TIN

(Hửa ải êm)

Chư nghiên cứu: "Kinh nghiệm ép hiên khong luk học côn Tay dú Việt Nam: xí trường hợp nghiên cứu"

Côn dệt nghiên cứu:

Lo Văn Pâng

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Thông tin côn dệt nghiên cứu

Lo Văn Pâng í men côn tay nưng, kin dú nắng bản mương hâu dú nắng mương thanh ny. Khay ny ai đang ép tiến sỹ dú cơ Úc hăm va ai y ma nghiên cứu tang viak ép viak hiền luk học côn tay nắng mương thanh ny. Ai chi xao le y hưa măn kinh nghiệm ép học khong luk côn Tay hau dú nắng bản pá mương pu dú nắng Mương Thanh ny. Ai hu phủ tay my đai khó khan nắng ép học. Pên xư nặn ai chẳng chi ổ tô xí luk học côn tay ép lớp 11 cấp 12 dú nắng mương thanh hau.

Tang viak nghiên cứu:

Vịak nghiên cứu y lở men ăn nọi nưng nắng dự án "Kinh nghiệm ép hiên khong luk học côn Tay dú Việt Nam: xí trường hợp nghiên cứu" Dự án ny đẩy trương School of Education, Flinders University choi dệt.

Nghiên cứu y yk dệt xăng:

- Ăn đưa ảnh hưởng xứa vịa ép hiên khong luk hiên côn Tay dú bản pá mương pu khong tỉnh Điện Biên, Việt Nam?
- Dệt pe đưa chắng chi hửa luk học côn Tay dú bản pá mương pu nắng tỉnh Điện Biên ép đẩy đang đi?

Khỏi y đẩy dệt xăng?

Pi nong y đảy mơi khẩu ổ tô pay tang vịa ép học cuông trương, say giáo, xính cu cắp ải êm khong luk chẩu. Luk chẩu mặc ép môn xăng cắp môn xăng luk chẩu vơ mặc cắp viak choi dèng khòng luk chẩu nhặn đẩy. Viak ổ tô y y mết dan 30 - 45 phút đông hô, vịak hâu ổ căn yk đây ghi âm vây sứa nghiên cứu. Tốc lăng ma y đảy dệt pên file ầu sứa máy tinh vây. Họt chơ đưa liệu viak đở y xoá xia. Viak khẩu nghiên cứu y toi hua chưa hua co chẩu, va chẩu cắp luk chẩu chi dặng chơ lưa cở đẩy vơ pên xăng.

Khỏi chi đẩy lợi xăng nắng nghiên cứu ny?

Chẩu chi vơ đẩy lợi xăng trực tiếp hăm va lo viak ny chi choi viak ép học cắp vok xon dú đom trương đẩy đang đi. Luk chẩu đẩy vậu hửa côn ứn hụ ăn ki năn ép khong chẩu. Viak ổ tô ny y choi đẩy luk học cônTay dú năng bản pá mương pu,Điện Biên huk ép hiên đẩy đang đi.

Vịa bảo mật thông tin

Chư chẩu cắp chư luk chẩu chi bơ my phâu huk đẩy. Viak ổ viak tô chi đẩy ầu xưa máy tinh vây năng trương bơ my phâu hu đẩy.

Khẩu nghiên cứu ny mi vịa xăng hai é à?

Bơ my viak xăng hại chơ khẩu nghiên cứu ny, pựa va chẩu cắp luk chẩu y bơ my phâu huk đẩy. Nghiên cứu ny bơ tít xưa ăn hai đưa. Hăm va lo chẩu cắp luk chẩu y áo duk dạ pưa va ổ tô áo hâng hy.

Dệt niêu đưa khỏi chắng chik hẩu nghiên cứu ny đẩy?

Khẩu nghiên cứu ny lo toi hua chưa hua co khong chưa, xăng năn lo chẩu chi ok chơ đưa cở đẩy vơ pên xăng. Chẩu cắp luk chẩu my quyên vớ ổ quan tham đưa chẩu vơ xôm chưa. Chi xôm chưa khẩu nghiên cứu dú năng pưng chỉa ny, va chẩu xôm chưa lo ký chư xứa.

Dệt niêu đưa khỏi chắng chi đẩy góp ý?

Viak ổ tô ny chi đẩy tẻm ok pên xư choi pưng ăn cân thiết, xư ny y đẩy phá họt chẩu va chẩu yêu cầu.

Va chẩu my vịak xăng hê chảnh lở tham ha ai Pâng toi số điện thoại +61415194989 bơ cok toi sư điện tử Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au bơ cok tham xay giáo cở đẩy Dr Neil Welch on +61 0883565759 or by email to Neil.Welch@flinders.edu.au.

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INFORMATION SHEET

(For teachers)

Title: "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies"

Investigator:

Mr Van Pang Lo

School of Education Flinders University

Ph: +61 4 1519 4989

Supervisor(s):

Dr Neil Welch

Flinders University

Ph: +61 08 8356 5759

Assoc Prof John Guenther

Flinders University

Ph: +61 8 89467207

Information about the researcher:

Van Pang Lo is a member of the rural Vietnamese Thai community who has grown up Dien Bien Province and attended school here. He is currently studying in Australia and wants to research the challenges and obstacles that Thai students have in attending and being successful at school in Vietnam. He recognises that Thai students have special challenges in learning Vietnamese, English and Mathematics, and in getting high enough grades to go onto to University. Pang also knows that many Thai students in Vietnam students don't attend school, have difficulties in getting good grades and frequently have difficulties in getting into a larger community. He wants to explore possible reasons for this. In order to carry out his research Pang wants to talk with four Thai students in year 11 or 12 in rural High schools in Dien Bien province. He wants to talk with both boys and girls as he recognises that boys and girls may face different school challenges.

Description of the study:

This study is part of the project entitled "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies"

Purpose of the study:

1. What influences the educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Dien Bien province in Vietnam?
2. What can be done to improve the learning experiences and the learning outcomes of the rural Thai ethnic students?

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to attend a one-on-one meeting with the researcher who will ask you questions about your Thai students such as their relationships with teachers, peers and parents, the difficulties they are facing, and your experience in working with these students. The subjects, which they like or dislike, their background as well as any special support or assistance that teachers or schools have given them. The interviews will last from 30 to 45 minutes. If participants are agreeable these meetings will be tape recorded so that the researcher can study in detail what has been said. No one but the researcher will listen to these tape recordings. Once the researcher has finished studying the tape recordings they will be destroyed. Participation is voluntary and you can decline to answer questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The hope is that this study will help identify the challenges and obstacles that Thai students face in their education in Vietnam. The findings hopefully will make educators and people in authority more awareness of the challenges that Thai students face at school. But you will not gain any other benefit from being involved in this study.

Will you be identifiable by being involved in this study?

The contribution participants make will be confidential and any reports of the findings will not include the name of participants or their school, or be traceable to them.

Are there any risks or discomforts if you are involved?

Given that the contribution of participants is confidential and anonymous, there are no identified risks or discomforts.

How do I agree to participant in this project?

Participation is voluntary. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. Participants need to sign the consent form before taking part in this study.

How will you receive feedback?

At the end of the study participants will be given a summary of the findings. The summary won't include anyone's name or the name of their school. Participants will be invited to comment on the summary. This will include identifying anything that has been left out or questioning what has been included. Participant feedback will be very much appreciated.

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact the researcher Mr. Van Pang Lo by phone on +61 4 1519 4989 or by email to

Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au or the supervisor Dr Neil Welch on +61 08 8356 5759 or by email to Neil.Welch@flinders.edu.au.

Support for this study

This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Flinders University and is supported by the Dien Bien Education Department.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation.

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BẢN THÔNG TIN CÁ NHÂN

(Dành cho giáo viên)

Đề tài:"Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu"

Người nghiên cứu: Ông: Lò Văn Pắng

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Giáo viên hướng dẫn: Dr Neil Welch

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Thông tin về nghiên cứu viên

Lò Văn Pắng là một người con của dân tộc Thái, anh ấy sinh ra và lớn lên ở tỉnh Điện Biên. Hiện nay anh ấy đang học nghiên cứu sinh ở Úc và anh ấy muốn nghiên cứu về những khó khăn mà học sinh dân tộc Thái phải vượt qua để thành công trong học tập. Anh ấy cũng nhận ra rằng, học sinh dân tộc gặp rất nhiều khó khan trong việc học tiếng Việt, Toán và tiếng Anh. Chính vì thế anh ấy muốn nghiên cứu xem những khó khan đó là gì và họ đã làm thế nào để vượt qua trong học tập. Để có số liệu cho nghiên cứu, anh ấy sẽ phỏng vấn 4 học sinh dân tộc Thái bao gồm cả nam và nữ.

Mô tả về đề tài:

Đề tài này là 1 phần của dự án "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu" Đề tài được sự hỗ trợ từ Khoa Sư phạm của Đại Học Flinders.

Mục tiêu của đề tài:

1. Điều gì đã ảnh hưởng đến Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của tỉnh Điện Biên, Việt Nam?

2. Làm cách nào để nâng cao kết quả học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của Tỉnh?

Tôi sẽ phải làm gì?

Các bạn sẽ được mời tham gia vào đề tài qua việc đồng ý tham gia vào cuộc phỏng với nghiên cứu viên về học sinh dân tộc Thái của bạn. Cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ tập trung vào các chủ đề như: mối quan hệ của học sinh dân tộc Thái với giáo viên, các bạn trong lớp và gia đình. Những khó khăn mà các học sinh này đang gặp phải cũng như kinh nghiệm của bạn trong việc giảng dạy với học sinh dân tộc. Cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ kéo dài trong vòng 30- 45 phút và sẽ được ghi âm để phục vụ nghiên cứu. Sau đó nội dung phỏng vấn sẽ được lưu lại dạng văn bản và lưu trữ trong máy tính. Việc tham gia vào đề tài đều là hoàn toàn tự nguyện, vì vậy các thầy cô đều có thể từ chối tham gia hoặc dừng bất cứ thời gian nào.

Những lợi ích mà các thầy cô có được khi tham gia vào đề tài?

Các thầy cô sẽ không có được lợi ích trực tiếp nào từ nghiên cứu này nhưng nó sẽ giúp cải thiện việc dạy và học cho học sinh dân tộc thiểu số. Bạn sẽ có cơ hội để chia sẻ kinh nghiệm với những người khác. Những thông tin mà bạn chia sẻ sẽ hữu ích cho học sinh dân tộc Thái ở các trường vùng sâu vùng xa để có được thành công nhiều hơn trong học tập.

Bảo mật thông tin

Tên của các thầy cô tham gia cũng như những thông tin cung cấp sẽ được mã hóa và giữ bí mật hoàn toàn.

Việc tham gia vào đề tài này, có an toàn hay không?

Sẽ không có bất cứ 1 rủi ro nào, trong việc tham gia vào đề tài này bởi vì các thầy cô sẽ không bị nhận dạng, Những thông tin hoàn toàn không liên quan đến vấn đề chính trị hay cá nhân. Tuy nhiên, các thầy cô có thể cảm thấy một ít sự bất tiện về thời gian trong việc tham gia vào đề tài này.

Làm cách nào tôi có thể tham gia vào đề tài?

Việc tham gia là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. Các Thầy Cô có thể yêu cầu rút lui khỏi cuộc phỏng vấn hoặc từ chối trả lời các câu hỏi nếu muốn bất cứ lúc nào. Hy vọng rằng các thầy cô đồng ý tham gia vào đề tài.

Làm cách nào tôi có thể đóng góp ý kiến?

Nội dung tóm tắt của cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được chuyển thành văn bản và sẽ gửi đến các thầy cô, nếu có yêu cầu.

Nếu bạn có câu hỏi nào thêm liên quan đến nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với tác giả Lò Văn Pắng thông qua điện thoại: +61 04 1519 4989 hoặc email: Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au hoặc giáo viên hướng dẫn của anh ấy: Tiến sỹ Neil Welch điện thoại: +61 08 8356 5759 hoặc email: Neil.Welch@flinders.edu.au.

Cảm ơn thời gian của các thầy cô và mong rằng các thầy cô sẽ đồng ý tham gia.

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Appendix 10: Information sheet for student

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![Flinders University logo]

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INFORMATION SHEET
(For students)

Title: "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies"

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Ph: +61 8 89467207

Information about the researcher:

Van Pang Lo is a member of the rural Vietnamese Thai community who like you has grown up Dien Bien Province and attended school here. He is currently studying in Australia and wants to research the challenges and obstacles that Thai students have in attending and being successful at school in Vietnam. He recognises that Thai students have special challenges in learning Vietnamese, English and Mathematics, and in getting high enough grades to go onto to University. Pang also knows that many Thai students in Vietnam students don't attend school, have difficulties in getting good grades and frequently have difficulties in being accepted by non-Thai students. He wants to explore possible reasons for this. In order to carry out his research Pang wants to talk with four Thai students in year 11 or 12 in rural High schools in Dien Bien province. He wants to talk with both boys and girls as he recognises that boys and girls may face some different school challenges.

Description of the study:

This study is part of the project entitled "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies"

Purpose of the study:

- What influences the educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Dien Bien province in Vietnam?

- What can be done to improve the learning experiences and the learning outcomes of the rural Thai ethnic students?

What will I be asked to do?

Participants will be invited to meet with Pang on at least two separate occasions and to talk with him about their schooling experiences and the challenges they have had at school and how they have dealt with them. This will include talking about the challenges they had in learning Vietnamese, English, Maths and Science. Each meeting will occur in a private one-on-one situation and last 30-45 minutes. Participants can choose whether their meetings are conducted in Thai or Vietnamese. What participants say at these meetings will be kept confidential.

If participants are agreeable these meetings will be tape recorded so that the researcher can study in detail what has been said. No one but the researcher will listen to these tape recordings. Once the researcher has finished studying the tape recordings they will be destroyed.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw or decline to answer questions at any time.

If you are to participate in this study the University in Australia where Pang is studying requires him to get informed permission from parents when students are under 18 years of age. Pang is happy to visit your parents at home to explain his study and to seek their permission for you to take part in this study. He is very happy talk with them in Thai.

Meetings will be arranged so that other students won't know you are participating in this study unless you tell them. Pang will be writing a paper on his research findings about schooling challenges but it won't include any information that will identify you.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The hope is that this study will help identify the challenges and obstacles that Thai students face in their education in Vietnam. This has never been studied before. The findings hopefully will make educators and people in authority more awareness of the challenges that Thai students face at school, and result in more support for future Thai students.

Apart from contributing to knowledge of the challenges that rural Thai students face in attending and succeeding at school, you won't receive any other benefits yourself from participating in this study.

Will you be identifiable by being involved in this study?

Your contribution will be strictly confidential and any reports of the findings will not include your name, the name of your school or be traceable to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if you are involved?

The researcher will make special arrangements so that participating students can meet with the researcher without other students or the general school community knowing they are taking part in this study. In a school setting though it is very difficult to ensure that other students don't find out that you are participating in this study.

How do I agree to participant in this project?

Participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without effect or consequences if there are any questions that you do not want to answer. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you want to participate you will need to sign the consent form before taking part in this study.

How will you receive feedback?

At the end of the study you will be given a summary of the findings. The summary won't include anyone's name or the name of your school. You will be invited to comment on the summary. This will include identifying anything that has been left out or questioning what has been included. Your feedback will be very much appreciated.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact the researcher Mr. Van Pang Lo by phone on +61 415 194 989 or by email to Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au or his supervisor Dr Neil Welch on +61 08 8356 5759 or by email to Neil.Welch@flinders.edu.au.

Support for this study

This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Flinders University and is supported by the Dien Bien Education Office

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will decide to participate in this study.

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Appendix 10.1: Information sheet for student (Vietnamese)

Mr Van Pang Lo
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Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

BẢN THÔNG TIN CÁ NHÂN
(Dành cho học sinh)

Tên đề tài: "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu"

Người nghiên cứu:

Lò Văn Pắng

School of Education

Flinders University

Điện thoại: +61 415 194 989

Giáo viên hướng dẫn:

Dr Neil Welch

Flinders University

Điện thoại: +61 08 8356 5759

Assoc Prof John Guenther

Flinders University

Điện thoại: +61 8 89467207

Thông tin về người nghiên cứu:

Anh Lò Văn Pắng là một thành viên của cộng đồng dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của tỉnh Điện Biên. Cũng như các bạn anh ấy sinh ra, lớn lên và đi học ở đây. Hiện nay anh ấy đang làm nghiên cứu sinh tại Úc và anh ấy muốn nghiên cứu về kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của tỉnh Điện Biên. Anh ấy biết rằng nhiều học sinh dân tộc Thái gặp nhiều khó khan trong việc học tiếng Việt, Toán và tiếng Anh để có kết quả cao trong học tập và để vào đại học. Anh Pắng cũng được biết rằng nhiều học bạn dân tộc Thái không đi học và gặp nhiều trở khó khăn trong việc hoà nhập với các bạn học sinh khác.Anh ấy muốn tìm hiểu xem nguyên nhân là gì. Để triển khai nghiên cứu của mình anh Pắng muốn nói chuyện với bốn học sinh dân tộc Thái đang học lớp 11 và 12 ở vùng cao của tỉnh Điện Biên. Anh ấy muốn nói chuyện với cả các bạn nam và nữ vì các bạn có những trải nghiêmk học tập khác nhau.

Mô tảvềđềtài:

Đề tài này là 1 phần của dự án "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu". Đề tài được sự hỗ trợ từ Khoa Sư phạm của Đại Học Flinders.

Mục tiêu của đề tài:

1. Điều gì đã ảnh hưởng đến Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của tỉnh Điện Biên, Việt Nam?

2. Làm cách nào để nâng cao kết quả học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của Tỉnh?

Tôi sẽ phải làm gì?

Các bạn sẽ được mời tham gia ít nhất hai cuộc nói chuyện về kinh nghiệm học hành cũng như những khó khăn trong học tập mà bạn gặp và bạn đã làm cách nào để vượt qua nó. Những khó khăn mà bạn gặp phải trong việc học tiếng Việt, Toán, tiếng Anh và các môn khoa học khác. Mỗi cuộc nói chuyện sẽ kéo dài từ 30 đến 45 phút. Các bạn có thể nói chuyện với anh ấy bằng tiếng Việt hoặc tiếng Thái. Những gì bạn nói sẽ được giữ bí mật.

Nếu như bạn đồng ý tham gia thi cuộc nói chuyện sẽ được ghi âm lại đê cho tác giả nhớ được chi tiết các cuộc nói chuyện. Sẽ không ai ngoài tác giả nghe được các cuộc nói chuyện này. Sau khi nghiên cứu hoàn thành thì nội dung băng sẽ được xoá hoàn toàn.

Việc tham gia nghiên cứu này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện vì vậy bạn có thể dừng bất kỳ lúc nào hoặc từ chối trả lời những câu hỏi mà bạn không thích.

Nếu như bạn đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu này, trường đại học ở Úc nơi anh Pằng đang học yêu cầu anh ấy xin phép bố mẹ các bạn để cho các bạn tham gia vi các bạn chưa đến 18 tuổi. Anh Pằng sẵn sang đến gặp bố mẹ các bạn tại nhà và giải thích nghiên cứu với bố mẹ các bạn và xin phép cho bạn tham gia. Anh ấy sẵn sang nói chuyện với họ bằng tiếng Thái.

Cuộc nói chuyện sẽ cố gắng sắp xếp để không cho các bạn học sinh khác biết trừ khi bạn kể với họ. Anh ấy sẽ viết báo cáo về kết quả nghiên cứu của mình nhưng sẽ không có bất kỳ thông tin cá nhân nào của bạn được tiết lộ để cho người khác có thể nhận ra bạn.

Tôi sẽ có được lợi ích gì khi tham gia nghiên cứu này?

Với hy vọng sẽ tìm ra những khó khăn và trở ngại mà học sinh dân tộc Thái gặp phải trong việc học tập của mình ở Việt Nam. Vấn đề này chưa ai nghiên cứu trước đây. Kết quả nghiên cứu hy vọng sẽ giúp cho các nghành giáo dục cũng như mọi người biết được những khó khăn mà học sinh dân tộc thái đang gặp ở trường và có thể giúp cho các bạn có kết quả học tập tôt hơn trong tương lai.

Ngoài việc đóng góp sự hiểu biết của bạn về những vấn đề khó khăn mà học sinh dân tộc Thái ở vùng cao của tỉnh đang gặp phải, bạn sẽ không nhận được những lợi ích cá nhân nào.

Bảo mật thông tin?

Sự đóng góp của ban sẽ được giữ hoàn toàn bí mật. Tên, trường, cũng như các đặc điểm khác của bạn sẽ không được đề cặp đến trong nghiên cứu và sẽ không ai nhận ra bạn.

Có rủi ro nào trong việc tham gia nghiên cứu này không?

Nghiên cứu viên sẽ cố gắng sắp xếp để bạn tham gia mà không cho các bạn khac biết, nhưng thực sự điều này rất khó để đảm bảo rằng không ai biết được trong việc tham gia nghiên cứu này.

Làm cách nào để tôi tham gia nghiên cứu này?

Việc tham gia nghiên cứu là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. Bạn có thể dừng bất kỳ lúc nào nếu bạn muốn mà không hề có một ảnh hưởng gì đến bạn. Bạn cũng có thể từ chối trả lời những câu hỏi mà bạn không thích. Biên bản đồng ý tham gia được gửi đi kèm với bản thông tin này và bạn cần phải ký trước khi tham gia nghiên cứu.

Làm cách nào để tôi được góp ý?

Khi kết thúc các cuộc nói chuyện một bản tóm tắt về nội dung sẽ được gửi đến bạn để bạn xem lại và góp ý. Trong bản tóm tắt đó sẽ không có bất kỳ thông tin nào về bạn cả. Ý kiến đóng góp của bạn rất có ý nghĩa và rất được trân trọng.

Nếu bạn có câu hỏi nào thêm liên quan đến nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với tác giả Lò Văn Pắng thông qua điện thoại: +61 04 1519 4989 hoặc email: Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au hoặc giáo viên hướng dẫn của anh ấy: Tiến sỹ Neil Welch điện thoại: +61 08 8356 5759 hoặc email: Neil.Welch@flinders.edu.au.

Hỗ trợ nghiên cứu

Nghiên cứu này được sự hỗ trợ của trường đại học Flinders và sở giáo dục và đào tạo tỉnh Điện Biên.

Cảm ơn các bạn đã đọc tin và mong rằng các bạn sẽ đồng ý tham gia.

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Appendix 11: Student consent form

<table>
<tr><td>

![Flinders University logo]

</td><td>

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Pang.Lo@flinders.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

</td></tr>
</table>

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

I …..consent to participate in the study"The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies".

1. I have been given a copy of the information sheet and a letter of introduction in both Vietnamese and Thai.

2. I have been told about the study and I understand what it is about and what is involved.

3. I have been able to ask questions about the study, and have been given answers that I understand.

4. I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time, and can choose not to answer questions.

5. I understand that if I withdraw from the study, there will be no negative consequences.

6. If at any time, I have questions about the study, I know who to contact to discuss them.

7. I am happy for the interviews to be taped recorded.

8. I understand the Pang will write a report of this study and that he will not use my name or family name and that all information will be kept confidential.

9. I understand that I will not receive any special advantages of benefits by taking part in this study.

10. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the information sheet and consent form for future reference.

Student's signature ……………………… Date ………………..............

I have provided and explained the information set out in the information sheet and Letter of introduction and believe that the parent understands what is involved and freely consents to their own participation and that of their child.

Researcher's name: Van Pang Lo

Appendix 11.1: Student consent form (Vietnamese)

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>
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CRICOS Provider No. 00114A
</td></tr>
</table>

BẢN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

(Dành cho học sinh)

Tôi: .... đồng ý tham gia phỏng vấn trong đề tài nghiên cứu "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu"

1.Tôi đã được đưa bản thong tin về nghiên cứu và bản đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứubằng cả tiếng Việt và tiếng Thái.

2.Tôi đã được giải thích về nghiên cứu và hiểu nó sẽ nghiên cứu về cái gì và liên quan đến vần đề gì.

3.Tôi đã được hỏi về nghiên cứu và đã được trả lời một cách thấu đáo.

4.Tôi hiểu rằng tham gia nghiên cứu này là tự nguyện và tôi có thể rút khỏi đề tàinghiên cứu bất cứ lúc nào và có thể từ chối trả lời những câu hỏi tế nhị.

5.Tôi hiểu rằng nếu như tôi rút khỏi nghiên cứu sẽ không có hậu quả tiêu cực nào.

6.Nếu như tôi có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào về nghiên cứu, tôi biết ai để hỏi và thảo luận.

7.Tôi đồng cho ghi âm hội thoại.

8.Tôi hiểu rằng anh Pấng sẽ viết một báo cáo về nghiên cứu này và anh ấy sẽkhông sử dụng tên thật của tôi và thông tin cá nhân sẽ được bảo mật.

9.Tôi hiểu rằng tôi sẽ không được hưởng lợi gì từ việc tham gia vào nghiên cứunày.

10.Tôi đã giữ lại bản thong tin nghiên cứu và bản đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu đểtham khảo sau này.

Chữ ký…………………………………ngày ………………….............

Tôi chứng thực rằng đã giải thích đầy đủ về đề tài tới người tham gia và họ đồng ý tham gia một cách tự nguyện.

Tên tác giả nghiên cứu: Lò Văn Pấng

Appendix 12: Parent consent form

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PARENT CONSENT FORM

I …..consent to my own participation and that of my son/daughter …………….. in this study, as requested, in the Letter of Introduction and Information Sheet for the project "The educational experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies".

1. I have been given a copy of the Information Sheet and a Letter of Introduction in both Thai and Vietnamese.

2. I understand what this study is about, what is involved, and any risks have been explained.

3. I have been able to ask questions about the study, and have been given answers that I understand.

4. I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and that I or my son/daughter can withdraw at any time, and can choose not to answer questions.

5. I understand that if I or my son/daughter withdraws from the study, there will be no negative consequences.

6. If at any time, I have questions about the study, I know who to contact to discuss them.

7. Provided that my son/daughter agrees, I am happy for our interviews to be tape-recorded.

8. I understand the Pang will write a report of this study and that he will not use my son/daughter's name, my own name or our family name and that all individual information will be kept confidential.

9. I understand that my son/daughter will not receive any special advantages of benefits by taking part in this study.

10. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.

Parent/guardian's signature …………………………… Date ……………….............

I have provided and explained the information set out in the information sheet and Letter of introduction and believe that the parent understands what is involved and freely consents to their own participation and that of their child.

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Appendix 12.1: Parent consent form (Vietnamese)

BẢN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

(Dành cho phụ huynh)

Tôi: .... đồng ý cho con trai/gái của tôi và bản thân tôi tham gia phỏng vấn trong đề tài nghiên cứu "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu"

1. Tôi đã được đưa một bản thông tin nghiên cứu và một bản giới thiệu cả tiếng Việt và tiếng Thái

2. Tôi đã được giải thích về nghiên cứu và hiểu nó sẽ nghiên cứu về cái gì và liên quan đến vần đề gì.

3. Tôi đã được hỏi về nghiên cứu và đã được trả lời một cách thấu đáo.

4. Tôi hiểu rằng tham gia nghiên cứu này là tự nguyện và con trai/gái của tôi có thể rút khỏi đề tài nghiên cứu bất cứ lúc nào và có thể từ chối trả lời những câu hỏi tế nhị.

5. Tôi hiểu rằng nếu như con trai/gái của tôi rút khỏi nghiên cứu sẽ không có hậu quả tiêu cực nào.

6. Nếu như tôi có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào về nghiên cứu, tôi biết ai để hỏi và thảo luận.

7. Nếu như con trai/gái của tôi đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu, tôi đồng cho ghi âm hội thoại.

8. Tôi hiểu rằng anh Pấng sẽ viết một báo cáo về nghiên cứu này và anh ấy sẽ không sử dụng tên thật của con tôi và thông tin cá nhân sẽ được bảo mật.

9. Tôi hiểu rằng con trai/gái của tôi sẽ không được hưởng lợi gì từ việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

10. Tôi đã giữ bản thong tin nghiên cứu và bản đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu để tham khảo sau nay.

Chữ ký……………………………ngày ……………….............

Tôi chứng thực rằng đã giải thích đầy đủ về đề tài tới người tham gia và họ cùng với con họ đồng ý tự nguyện tham gia nghiên cứu.

Tên tác giả nghiên cứu: Lò Văn Pấng

Appendix 12.2: Parent consent form (Thai)

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CHỈA NHẬN KHẨU NGHIÊN CỨU

(Khong phu huynh)

Khỏi .... nhặn
hửa luk trai/nhinh cắp khỏi………………………….. khẩu nghiên cứu toi dự án "Kinh
nghiệm ép hiên khong luk học côn Tay dú Việt Nam: xí nghiên trường hợp nghiên cứu"

1. Khỏi ha đẩy phát chỉa thông tin nghiên cứu cắp chỉa giới thiệu cá quan kiềucánh quam tay.

2. Khỏi ha đẩy phăng cắp huk chảnh tang vịak nghiên cứu cắp huk y lở men viakxăng

3. Khỏi ha đẩy tham côn nghiên cứu cánh đẩy khan chảnh liêu

4. Khỏi huk chảnh vịa khẩu nghiên cứu í lở men toi hùa chưa cắp vớ đẩy xăng,luk khỏi tó heng dặng cắp vớ khan khót tham đưa vớ xôm chưa.

5. Khỏi huk chảnh ăn vịak luk khoi ok khói nghiên cứu vơ pên xăng.

6. Chơ đưa khỏi mi quam tham khỏi huk phưa pak xú.

7. Khỏi xôm chưa vịa ghi âm quan pak khong khỏi cắp khong luk khỏi.

8. Khỏi huk chảnh ai Pâng y tẻm nghiên cứu cắp ai y vơ âu chư luk khỏi cắp xínhluk khỏi xửa nghiên cứu. Chư tên luk khỏi y bơ mi phâu huk.

9. Khỏi hụk chảnh luk khỏi y vơ đẩy xăng nắng nghiên cứu y.

10. Khỏi huk ầu vây chỉa thong tin cắp chỉa xôm chưa hầu khẩu nghiên cứu tốcđăng chi ha le.

Ải/êm ………………………… Mự ………………….............

Khỏi xác nhận vậu chảnh xửa côn khẩu nghiên cứu khong khỏi chu thỏi chu quan ma tang vịa nghiên cứu chi dệt cắp ải nọng khẩu nghiên cứu do hùa chưa cắp vớ đẩy xăng.

Côn nghiên cứu: Lo Văn Pâng

Appendix 13: Teacher consent form

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

I ….. being
over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate in this study "The educational
experiences of rural Thai ethnic students in Vietnam: Four case studies".

> 1. I have read and understand the information provided.

> 2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

> 3. I give permission for my interviews with the researcher to be tape recorded.

> 4. I have been asked to retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for
> future reference.

> 5. I understand that:

>> ➢ I can withdraw from this study at any time and am free to decline to answer
>> particular questions.
>> ➢ While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I
>> will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
>> ➢ I will not receive any special advantage of benefit by taking part in this
>> study.
>> ➢ If I withdraw from the study there will be no negative consequences.
>> ➢ I may ask that the recording be stopped at any time, and that I may
>> withdraw at any time from the session or the research without
>> disadvantage.

Participant's signature…………………………………Date………………............

I have provided and explained the information set out in the information sheet and Letter of
introduction and believe that this participant understands what is involved and freely consents
to participation in this study

Researcher's name: Van Pang Lo

Appendix 13.1: Teacher consent form (Vietnamese)

BẢN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU
(Dành cho giáo viên)

Tôi: .... trên 18 tuổi đồng ý tham gia phỏng vấn và giúp đỡ người nghiên cứu trong đề tài nghiên cứu "Kinh nghiệm học tập của học sinh dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam: bốn trường hợp nghiên cứu"

1. Tôi đã đọc toàn bộ thong tin được cung cấp.

2. Những chi tiết về qui trình và những rủi ro đã được giải thích đầy đủ.

3. Tôi đồng ý cho việc ghi âm các thông tin trong cuộc phỏng vấn.

4. Tôi sẽ lưu giữ 1 bảng photo của Bảng Thông Tin và Văn Bảng Đồng Ý.

5. Tôi hiểu rằng:

- Tôi có thể rút khỏi đề tài nghiên cứu bất cứ lúc nào và có thể từ chối trả lời những câu hỏi tế nhị.
- Những thong tin được cung cấp trong nghiên cứu này sẽ được phổ biến, tôi sẽ không bị nhận diện và những thông tin cá nhân sẽ được bảo mật.
- Tôi không được hưởng lợi từ việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.
- Tôi có thể rút khỏi nghiên cứu bất kỳ lúc nào mà không ảnh hưởng gì
- Tôi có thể yêu cầu ngừng ghi âm bất kỳ lúc nào mà không cần sự đồng ý của người nghiên cứu.

Chữ ký……………………………………ngày ……………….............

Tôi chứng thực rằng đã giải thích đầy đủ về đề tài tới người tham gia và họ đồng ý tham gia một cách tự nguyện.

Tên tác giả nghiên cứu: Lò Văn Pắng

inspiring achievement

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