

**STUDENTS' VIEWPOINTS ON MARRIAGE IN HO CHI MINH CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The article is about viewpoints of students in Ho Chi Minh City on marriage. The findings show that besides the material and personal life, students want to live a family life mentally most; the requirements of the characteristics from the prospective spouse are ranked in order of reliability, family care, society, and intellect; and students have their parents consult about prospective spouse before marriage though they are free to choose one.*

**Keywords:** getting married, family life, requirements, characteristics, prospective spouse.

**TÓM TẮT*****Quan điểm của sinh viên ở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh về hôn nhân***

*Bài viết trình bày kết quả khảo sát quan điểm của sinh viên về hôn nhân. Kết quả khảo sát cho thấy ngoài cuộc sống về gia đình và cá nhân, sinh viên muốn sống đời sống gia đình về mặt tinh thần nhiều nhất; những yêu cầu về những đặc điểm nhân cách của người bạn đời tương lai được xếp lần lượt: đáng tin cậy, lo cho gia đình, mang tính xã hội và mang tính trí thức; và sinh viên nhờ cha mẹ tư vấn về người hôn phối tương lai của bản thân trước khi kết hôn mặc dù họ được tự do lựa chọn.*

**Từ khóa:** lập gia đình, đời sống gia đình, yêu cầu, đặc điểm, người hôn phối tương lai.

**1. Introduction**

As usual, most young people get married when they have prepared well for it. In Vietnam, marriage is considered as one of the most important events in life, so young people try their best so that they will be able to live happily after marriage. During the adolescent period, young people try to figure out ideal images on their own, on their future spouses and family. Hereby, they attempt to train themselves to gain appropriate personality traits for their family life. This is the way to help young people become mature in life and have the right direction to live in the future. Therefore, it is important to do research on this theme.

There are many factors to be considered in a family; but before marriage, young people usually think about the following: (1) the reason why they get married; (2) how they can meet the requirements from the family; (3) who decides on the marriage. These are presented in detail in the survey results.

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## 2. Procedures

### 2.1. Questionnaire

To develop the questionnaire for the survey, the three following open questions are asked on 85 students at 3 universities in Ho Chi Minh City: Finance –Marketing, Saigon, and Open in HCMC

- What do you think about marriage?
- What personality traits of your future spouses do you expect?
- Who decides on your marriage?

After collecting these answers, the research group developed 43 items into three parts of the Likert scale via the content analysis.

#### 2.1.1. Questionnaire of “Students’evaluation on reasons to get married”

+ Reliability Index: (Guttman Split-Half Coefficient) 0.278

+ Discrimination index

Item	DI	Item	DI
1	0.489	7	0.578
2	0.255	8	0.580
3	0.489	9	0.558
4	0.350	10	0.523
5	0.504	11	0.533
6	0.479	12	0.570

The Discrimination index of the items in Questionnaire of “Students’evaluation on reasons to get married”:

- Good with the items: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12
- Pretty good with the items: 2 and 4.

#### 2.1.2. Questionnaire of “Students’evaluation on requirements from the prospective spouse”

+ Reliability Index: (Guttman Split-Half Coefficient) 0.853

+ Discrimination index:

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI
1	0.219	9	0.631	17	0.442	25	0.446
2	0.287	10	0.623	18	0.545	26	0.504
3	0.296	11	0.664	19	0.425	27	0.559
4	0.439	12	0.649	20	0.406	28	0.699
5	0.347	13	0.678	21	0.488	29	0.691
6	0.514	14	0.668	22	0.584	30	0.669
7	0.658	15	0.595	23	0.569	31	0.678
8	0.561	16	0.544	24	0.418	32	0.690

The Discrimination index of the items in Questionnaire of “Higher education young people’s evaluation on requirements from the prospective spouse”:

- Good with the items: 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32.

- Pretty good with the items: 5

- Average with the items: 1, 2, and 3.

## 2.2. Sample

Total: 510 students

The survey is conducted at

University of	N	%
NA	1	0.2
Finance -Marketing	138	27.1
Saigon	194	38.0
Open in HCMC	177	34.7

Gender	N	%
NA	32	6.3
Male	106	20.8
Female	372	72.9

Students of	N	%
NA	6	1.2
Freshman	122	23.9
Sophomore	238	46.7
Junior	82	16.1
Senior	62	12.2

Residents of	N	%
NA	47	9.2
City	154	30.2
Rural areas	309	60.6

### 3. Results

#### NB:

Mean is ranked as the following:

\* mean from 4.5 to 5.0: extremely high/extremely correct/extremely necessary (>80%)

\* mean from 3.5 to 4.99: pretty high/correct/necessary (from 60% to 79%)

\* mean from 2.50 to 3.49: high/correct/necessary (from 40% to 59%)

\* mean < 2.49: low/incorrect/poor (< 39%)

#### 3.1. Students' viewpoints on marriage in general

*Figure 1. Students' evaluation on reasons to get married*

The reason to get married	M	SD	Ranking
You and your love have understood together deeply before determining to get married	4.24	0.78	1
You determine to get married because you love your love very much	3.74	1.06	2
Your love sympathizes with you very well	3.71	0.99	3
You have met up a person you expected	3.62	1.05	4
You are appealed by your love's gestures (appearance, behaviors)	2.78	1.13	5
Your love has lived in the same situation as yours	2.58	1.06	6
You are appealed by your love's material conditions	2.39	1.04	7

(richness)			
You get married to your love with the hope to get rid of singleness, boredom, frustration	1.78	0.87	8
You get married to your love because you feel sorry for him/her	1.75	0.84	9
You get married to your love because you are afraid that you cannot marry anybody else	1.64	0.85	10
You get married to your love because you want to take advantage of him/her	1.62	0.86	11
You get married to him/her because of the pressure from the two families	1.60	0.84	12

The results of figure 1 show that students' evaluation on reasons to get married is ranked according the level of correctness to them:

- Pretty correct level: you and your love have understood together deeply before determining to get married; you determine to get married because you love your love very much; your love sympathizes with you very well; and your love has met your expectation.
- Correct level: you are appealed by your love's appearance and behaviors; and your love has lived in the same situation as yours.
- Incorrect level: you are appealed by your love's material conditions (richness); you get married to your love with the hope to get rid of singleness, bored-some, frustration; you get married to your love because you feel sorry for him/her; you get married to your love because you are afraid that you cannot marry anybody else; you get married to your love because you want to take advantage of him/her; and you get married to him/her because of the pressure from the two families.

**Discussion:**

It can be said the most important reasons for students to get married are based on their understanding and love. In the other words, they marry their love; firstly, because of love and of the true persons he/she is; secondly, their love's gestures and same situation; thirdly, not because of material life, their own personal benefits from marriage, and their families.

In short, they get married because of love, and of their love's personality traits; that is, students tend to live a family life mentally. What's more, we can see the family plays an important role in young people's marriage, but parents don't interfere much in their marriage.

*Figure 2. Students' requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse*

<b>Requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Loving and respecting you	4.56	0.62	1
Sharing, listening, empathizing and yielding in life	4.53	0.67	2
Fidelity	4.52	0.66	3
Being responsible, caring, constructive for the family	4.51	0.66	4
Being true	4.44	0.71	5
Thinking maturely	4.40	0.68	6
Being tolerant	4.37	0.72	7
Being filial piety with parents	4.36	0.70	8
Having a stable job	4.35	0.67	9
Being altruistic	4.34	0.68	10
Being diligent	4.34	0.70	11
Not being brute	4.22	1.01	12
Being funny, sociable	4.18	0.75	13
Being healthy	4.17	0.65	14
Having tough stance	4.04	0.77	15
Being intelligent	3.88	0.86	16
Being resourceful, gentle, sweet	3.88	1.07	17
Being romantic	3.86	0.92	18
Being progressive in life	3.83	0.93	19
Being successful, prosperous	3.83	0.91	20
Being well communicative	3.82	0.87	21
Being in a educational family	3.67	0.95	22
Getting higher education	3.58	0.99	23
Not being talkative	3.52	1.07	24
Having beautiful appearance	3.15	1.12	25
Being ambitious	2.78	1.15	26
Living in the city	2.70	1.20	27

The results of figure 2 show that the requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse are ranked according the level of necessity to them:

- Extremely necessary level: loving and respecting you; sharing, listening, empathizing and yielding in life; fidelity; and being responsible, caring, constructive for the family.
- Pretty necessary level: being true; thinking maturely; being tolerant; being filial piety; having a stable job; being altruism; being diligent; being not brute; being funny, sociable; being healthy; having tough stance; being intelligent; being resourceful, gentle, sweet; being romantic; being progressive in life; being successful, prosperous; being well communicative; being in a educational family; getting higher education; and not being talkative.
- Necessary level: having beautiful appearance; being ambitious; and living in the city.

**Discussion:**

The requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse are ranked from top to bottom as following:

- ✓ The one who is a close friend such as: loving, respecting, listening, empathizing, didelity, responsibility, and caring; i.e., students expect their love to be fair, responsible, understanding in the family life.
- ✓ The one who is a mature person such as: when you get married, you should be mature. A mature person should show gratitude to your parents. This could be different from other cultures but in Vietnam this characteristics must be the most important one for a mature person. What’s more, other characteristics belong to a mature person.
- ✓ The one who is an apparent person: appearance, ambition, and living in the city.

In short, students expect their prospective spouse to be a close friend, fair, understanding, responsible in the family life. What’s more, they want their prospective spouse to be a mature person, ie., independent in many aspects of life. They pay the least attention to apparent characteristics of their prospective spouse.

*Figure 3. Students’ opinion on people deciding on the marriage*

People deciding on the marriage	TB	DLTC	Thứ bậc
You decide, but consult your parents	4.14	0.99	1
You totally determine yourself	3.06	1.28	2
Your parents decide on the marriage but ask for your opinion	2.81	1.22	3
Your parents decide entirely	2.06	1.02	4

The results of figure 3 show that people deciding on the marriage are ranked in level according the level of correctness to them:

- *Pretty correct level*: you decide, but consult your parents;
- *Correct level*: you totally determine yourself; and
- *Poor level*: your parents decide on the marriage but ask for your opinion; and your parents decide entirely.

Discussion:

It can be said students would like to benefit from their parents' experiences; so they consult their parents about marriage; some of them want to determine their marriage themselves; and some of them don't want parents decide on their marriage.

In short, today young people have rights to decide on their marriage, but most of them still want to consult their parents about their marriage.

### 3.2. Comparing students' viewpoints on marriage

In order to compare students' viewpoints on marriage more conveniently, factor analysis is used to reduce the items in the two figures.

#### ➤ They marry their love:

- To live their family life mentally includes the items: 1, 2, 3, and 4
- To live their family life materially includes the items: 5, 6, 7, and 8
- To live their family life personally includes the items: 9, 10, 11, and 12

#### ➤ The requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse:

- Characteristics of a reliable person includes the items: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10
- Characteristics of a family taking care person includes the items: 3, 7, 11, and 12
- Characteristics of a social person includes the items: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
- Characteristics of an intellectual person includes the items: 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28

(The rank of these items is in the questionnaire)

#### ❖ By school

**Figure 4.** Evaluation of students at the universities on reasons to get married by school

<b>They marry their love</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
To live their family life mentally	3.8325	0.68308	1
To live their family life materially	2.3389	0.69364	2
To live their family life personally	1.7053	0.69134	3



The results of figure 4 show that students evaluate the factors that they marry their love ranked from top to bottom as following – mental, material, and personal; ie., they get married because they want to live their mental life most, then material one secondly, and personal one the least.

**Figure 5.** Comparing evaluation of students at the universities on reasons to get married by school

They marry their love	University of						F df=2	P
	Finance - Marketing		Saigon		Open in HCMC			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
To live their family life mentally	3.8967	0.52729	3.6778	0.70707	3.9520	0.73360	8.537	0.000
To live their family life materially	2.4022	0.62377	2.1727	0.60531	2.4718	0.79544	9.713	0.000
To live their family life personally	1.5906	0.57862	1.5863	0.58197	1.9251	0.82036	14.448	0.000

The results of figure 5 show that there are statistically significant differences in evaluation between students at the three different schools ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). In the three factors, students at University of Open in HCMC evaluate the highest; the ones at University of Finance – Marketing secondly; and the ones at University of Saigon thirdly.

**Figure 6.** Evaluation of students at the universities on requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse by school

The requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse	M	SD	Ranking
Characteristics of a reliable person	4.3816	0.50653	1
Characteristics of a family taking care person	4.1602	0.56920	2
Characteristics of a social person	3.5900	0.63398	3
Characteristics of an intellectual person	3.4784	0.73477	4

The results of figure 6 show that the students at three universities evaluate the factors of the requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse that are ranked from top to bottom as following: the ones of a reliable person; of a family person; of a social person; and of an intellectual person; ie., they get married because they want their prospective spouse to be a reliable person the most; a family taking care one secondly; a social one thirdly; and an intellectual one the least.

*Figure 7. Comparing evaluation of students at the universities on requirements from the prospective spouse by school*

The requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse	University of						F (df=2)	P
	Finance - Marketing		Saigon		Open in HCMC			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Characteristics of a reliable person	4.4828	0.32434	4.3589	0.42239	4.3277	0.67193	3.998	0.019
Characteristics of an intellectual person	3.4257	0.57026	3.2732	0.67341	3.7444	0.82957	21.055	0.000
Characteristics of a social person	3.7053	0.46197	3.4888	0.59529	3.6111	0.76369	4.926	0.008
Characteristics of a family taking care person	4.1884	0.53760	4.0956	0.41630	4.2090	0.71591	2.077	0.126

The results of figure 7 show that:

+ There are statistically significant differences in evaluation between the students at the three different schools in the factors of requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). In the factor of:

- A reliable person: students at University of Finance – Marketing evaluate the highest; the ones at University of Saigon secondly; the ones at University of Open in HCMC thirdly;

- An intellectual person: students at University of Open in HCMC evaluate the highest; the ones at University of Finance – Marketing secondly; the ones at University of Saigon thirdly;

- A social person: students at University of Finance – Marketing evaluate the highest; the ones at University of Open in HCMC secondly; the ones at University of Saigon thirdly.

+ There is no statistically significant difference in evaluation between the students at the three different schools in the ones of a family taking care person.

❖ **By sex**

**Figure 8.** Evaluation of students at the universities on reasons to get married by sex

<b>They marry their love</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
To live their family life mentally	4.1574	0.57782	1
To live their family life materially	3.5959	0.62922	2
To live their family life personally	3.4712	0.73229	3

The results of figure 8 show that male and female students at three universities evaluate the factor of the reasons to get married that are ranked from top to bottom as following – they want to live a family life mentally the most, materially secondly, and personally the least.

**Figure 9.** Comparing evaluation of students at the universities on reasons to get married by sex

<b>They marry their love</b>	<b>Sex</b>				<b>F df=1</b>	<b>P</b>
	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>			
	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>		
To live their family life mentally	30.8349	0.75031	30.8206	0.67759	0.035	0.851
To live their family life materially	20.5448	0.66350	20.3078	0.69583	90.767	0.002
To live their family life personally	10.9033	0.71512	10.6579	0.68736	100.325	0.001

The results of figure 9 show that

+ There are statistically significant differences in evaluation between students at the two different schools ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) on the factors of material and personal: male students evaluate higher than female ones.

+ There is no statistically significant difference in evaluation between male and female students on the personal factor.

**Figure 10.** Evaluation of students at the universities on requirements from the prospective spouse by sex

<b>The requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Characteristics of a reliable person	4.3750	0.51408	1
Characteristics of a family taking care person	3.8237	0.69358	2
Characteristics of a social person	2.3604	0.69513	3
Characteristics of an intellectual person	1.7123	0.70033	4

The results of figure 10 show that male and female students of at three universities evaluate the factors of requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse that are ranked from top to bottom as following: reliable, family taking care, social, and personal; ie., they get married because they want his/her prospective spouse to be reliable the most, family taking care secondly, social thirdly, and intellectual the least.

*Figure 11. Comparing evaluation of students at the universities on requirements from the prospective spouse by sex*

The requirements of characteristics from the prospective spouse	Sex				F df=1	P
	Male		Female			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Characteristics of a reliable person	40.3031	0.49158	40.3955	0.51913	20.676	0.103
Characteristics of an intellectual person	30.5047	0.66992	30.4617	0.74969	0.284	0.594
Characteristics of a social person	30.6478	0.56826	30.5811	0.64549	0.927	0.336
Characteristics of a family taking care person	40.2275	0.51853	40.1374	0.59277	20.009	0.157

+ There are no statistically significant differences in evaluation between male and female students on all the factors of requirements from the prospective spouse. This can prove that female students have the same thinking levels on marriage as male ones.

**Conclusions:**

1. The students in HCMC are serious about their family life by thinking of their marriage and of the ideal images of their prospective spouse;
2. They tend to live their family life mentally the most;
3. They require the characteristics from the prospective spouse ranked in order of reliable, family taking care, social, and intellectual;
4. They are free to choose their spouse, but most of them want to consultate their parents about prospective spouse before marriage.

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