



## The Correlation between Gender Problems and Gender Counseling's Need of Vietnamese Students

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### ABSTRACT

The relation between gender problems and the need for gender counseling of high school students is an unidentified issue which should be paid more attention in Vietnam. This study is performed to verify the hypothesis that whether there is no connection between gender problems and gender counseling's need for Vietnamese high school students. The survey on 1,200 high-school students in Vietnam, from grade 6 to grade 12, shows that the average point of gender problems is 2.39 equivalent to under average. Different school levels result in different gender problems. The average point of students' need for gender counseling is 2.86 equivalent to optional. Differences in gender and school levels results in differences in the needs of gender counseling. There is a close connection between gender problems and gender counseling's need for Vietnamese high school students. This data proves that the more gender problems the students face, there is a higher need for gender counseling.

**Keywords:** Problem, Need, Counseling, Gender, High-school students

### INTRODUCTION

School counseling to students is comprised of 3 main domains: career, study, and individual/society, in which, gender counseling is one issue [1-3]. During puberty period, students' behavior issue is connected to changes in human beings and related to the changes in gender hormone [4]. Gender counseling is one crucial educational issue that should not be ignored or solved carelessly [5].

Gender problems (listing as unexpected pregnancy, the condition of being infected with sexually transmitted diseases or sexual harassment and so on) are a completely serious issue because of the negative impacts on students' life. In a schooling environment, students face problems in sentiment, society, and study as well as the connection between individuals and schools/nations. In schooling environments for girls, most students face complicated problems [6]. Facing any problems, most students require counseling service at schools [6].

Recent researches show that counseling assists students in adjusting themselves at schools, at home and in society [6], as well as encourages all students to develop in study, self-development, and society for achieving the highest scores [7]. Appropriate gender counseling supports teenager students in recognizing themselves, their gender and the world outside in a precise way, solving obstacles related to gender like schooling bully or staying away from cheating and failures [5]. That's how the gender problems are correlated with Vietnamese students' need for gender counseling and what the connection between the two elements which is like an unidentified question and should be researched further. Therefore, this research is performed to identify the gender problems in correlation with Vietnamese students' need for gender counseling as well as to verify this connection between the two elements above.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Research Design

Questionnaires and situations are designed to survey on 1,200 students from grade 6 to grade 12 in Can Tho City, Vietnam. This research lasts from January 2019 to April 2019.

The questionnaire is designed as below:

- An introduction of survey aim and the instruction on how to reply to questions
- The objective information, including the questions on participants’ fundamental information, listing as gender, year of birth, school level, and class with whom he/she is living
- Survey content includes question system which collects data related to the current obstacles and students’ counseling need on gender. The question system is comprised of 18 questions: 9 questions concentrate on the gender problems whereas the other 9 questions focus on students’ need for gender counseling. Responses for students to answer are designed based on 5 levels (Likert-scale) [8]

**Data Analysis**

Responses and solutions are judged on the Linkert scale and coded by SPSS tool for windows version 16.0; particularly: Level 1=1, Level 2=2, Level 3=3, Level 4=4, Level 5=5.

Range is calculated as below:

$$\text{Range}=(\text{Maximum}-\text{Minimum})/n=(5-1)/3=0.8$$

Therefore, the meanings of the rankings are judged as below:

- +1-1.8=None/Totally unnecessary
- +1.81-2.61=Under average/Unnecessary
- +2.62-3.42=Average/Optional (Necessity is optional)
- +3.43-4.23=Rather problematic/Necessary
- +4.24-5=Very problematic/Totally necessary

SPSS version 16 for windows software is applied to analyze data with the help of the following calculations: Analysis of ANOVA test, Pearson correlation, calculation of mean, std. deviation, percentage, frequency.

**Participants**

The participants with 1,200 students are selected randomly from 7 schools (4 secondary school (SS), and 3 high schools (HS)) in Vietnam as below in Table 1.

**Table 1 An overview of the participants**

Content		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	449	37.4%
	Female	751	62.6%
School	SS1	117	9.8%
	SS2	168	9.8%
	SS3	51	4.3%
	SS4	132	11.0%
	HS1	156	13.0%
	HS2	90	7.5%
	HS3	96	8.0%
School-level	Secondary level	726	60.5%
	High school level	474	39.5%
Grade	Grade 6	68	5.7%
	Grade 7	9	0.8%
	Grade 8	325	27.1%
	Grade 9	324	27.0%
	Grade 10	69	5.8%
	Grade 11	246	20.5%
	Grade 12	159	13.3%

<b>Living condition (family situation)</b>	With both parents	1026	85.5%
	With father	35	2.9%
	With mother	52	4.3%
	With relatives or others	87	7.3%

**RESULTS**

**The Gender Problems of Vietnamese High School Students**

Table 2 presents the results of the gender problems of Vietnamese students.

**Table 2 Students’ problems in gender**

No	Expression		Level					Mean	SD	Order
			1	2	3	4	5			
1	Keeping a distance from friends of the opposite gender	N	382	229	488	67	34	2.29	1.06	8
		%	32.0%	19.0%	41.0%	5.6%	3.0%			
2	Balancing between sentiment affair and study duty	N	314	188	513	101	84	2.54	1.17	1
		%	26.0%	16.0%	43.0%	8.4%	7.0%			
3	Building an innocent friendship/love	N	437	161	451	66	85	2.33	1.22	6
		%	36.0%	13.0%	38.0%	5.5%	7.0%			
4	Controlling positive emotions during communicating with friends of the opposite gender	N	441	174	460	81	44	2.26	1.13	9
		%	37.0%	15.0%	38.0%	6.8%	4.0%			
5	Understanding friends of the opposite gender and gender distinctiveness	N	326	216	481	113	64	2.48	1.14	2
		%	27.0%	18.0%	40.0%	9.4%	5.0%			
6	Understanding and controlling gender sentiments	N	348	238	442	129	43	2.4	1.12	5
		%	29.0%	20.0%	37.0%	11.0%	4.0%			
7	Understanding huge changes in teenager puberty	N	357	198	474	77	94	2.46	1.2	4
		%	30.0%	17.0%	40.0%	6.4	8.0%			
8	Handling abnormal bodily problems during puberty period	N	360	206	429	119	86	2.47	1.22	3
		%	30.0%	17.0%	36.0%	9.9%	7.0%			
9	Understanding and behaving appropriately to LGBT members	N	419	198	433	85	65	2.32	1.18	7
		%	35.0%	17.0%	36.0%	7.1%	5.0%			
<b>Total</b>							2.39	0.98	6	

1=Absolutely no; 2=Under average; 3=Average; 4=Rather difficult; 5=Very difficult

The total mean of gender problems that students face is 2.39 equivalents to “under average”. Although the results only reflect the extent of the gender problems encountered are under average, but when looking at the percentage details of the 3-5 (average to very difficult) levels, it is possible to see a number of students have many problems related to gender. Especially the expression “balancing between sentiment affair and study duty” with a total of 58.2% of students feel it difficult to handle.

In order to understand more about the relationship between the students’ gender problems with relevant indicators such as gender, school level, family situation (living condition), we conduct quantitative testing in Table 3.

**Table 3 The difference between the students’ gender problems with relevant indicators**

	Indicators		Mean	ANOVA test		Sum of Mean	SD
				Sig.	Difference		
<b>Gender problems</b>	Gender	Male	2.428	0.36	-	2.3944	0.98
		Female	2.375				
	School level	High school	2.557	0.00	+		
		Secondary	2.288				
	Living condition	With parents	2.416	0.22	-		
		With father	2.21				
		With mother	2.372				
With relatives or others		2.226					

The difference is significant at Sig.<0.05; The difference is not significant at Sig. >0.05

With gender indicator, Sig.=0.364 affirms no significant difference. The mean of male problems is 2.4276 whereas that of the female is 2.3746. The range is 0.053, implying that male’s mean is higher than female’s but this difference is not significant. In other words, the level of gender problems between male and female students is equivalent.

With school level indicator, Sig.=0.000 affirms a significant difference between high school students and secondary school students. The gender problems’ mean of high school students is 2.5570 and secondary school students’ is 2.2883. The range is 0.2687. High school students’ mean is higher than that of secondary school students’. Therefore, high school students face more gender problems than secondary school students. In other words, the higher the grades students are in, the more gender problems they face. This proves that high school students’ need for gender counseling is existing.

With living condition indicator, Sig.=0.224 affirms no significant difference. Therefore, high school students face similar gender problems despite the fact that their living conditions are different.

**The High School Students’ Need for Gender Counseling**

Table 4 presents the results of the students’ need for gender counseling in school.

**Table 4 the students’ need for gender counseling**

No.	Expression		Level					Mean	SD	Order
			1	2	3	4	5			
1	Keeping a distance from friends of the opposite gender	N	308	184	286	277	145	2.81	1.363	6
		%	25.7%	15.3%	23.8%	23.1%	12.1%			
2	Balancing sentiment affair and study duty	N	293	150	340	255	162	2.87	1.356	3
		%	24.4%	12.5%	28.3%	21.3%	13.5%			
3	Building an innocent friendship/love	N	273	170	345	287	125	2.85	1.299	5
		%	22.8%	14.2%	28.8%	23.9%	10.4%			
4	Controlling emotions well in communicating with friends of the opposite gender	N	289	173	291	321	126	2.85	1.332	5
		%	24.1%	14.4%	24.3%	26.8%	10.5%			
5	Understanding friends of the opposite gender and gender distinctiveness	N	265	214	287	293	141	2.86	1.326	4
		%	22.1%	17.8%	23.9%	24.4%	11.8%			
6	Understanding and controlling sexual sentiments during puberty period	N	223	204	318	309	146	2.96	1.287	1
		%	18.6%	17.0%	26.5%	25.8%	12.2%			
7	Understanding huge gender bodily changes during puberty period	N	296	210	299	245	150	2.79	1.350	7
		%	24.7%	17.5%	24.9%	20.4%	12.5%			
8	Handling abnormal bodily changes during puberty period	N	294	132	294	312	168	2.94	1.381	2
		%	24.5%	11.0%	24.5%	26.0%	14.0%			
9	Understanding and behaving appropriately to LGBT members	N	300	217	292	234	157	2.78	1.360	8
		%	25.0%	18.1%	24.3%	19.5%	13.1%			
		<b>Total</b>						2.86	1.164	5

1=Totally unnecessary; 2=Unnecessary; 3=Optional; 4=Necessary; 5=Totally necessary

The total mean of gender counseling’s need is 2.86-equivalent as optional, and the total SD=1.164 indicated significant differences between the 5 levels of gender counseling’s need. This is similar to when looking at the percentages of the needs; we see a range of levels. In particular, the total level 3-5 (optional and totally necessary) is over 50%, especially the “understanding and controlling sexual sentiments during puberty period” and “handling abnormal bodily changes during puberty period” expressions with a total rate of 64.5% of students want to be counseled on this problems.

To understand the relationship between the students’ need for gender counseling with relevant indicators such as gender, school level, family situation (living condition), we conduct quantitative testing in Table 5.

**Table 5 The difference between the students' need for gender counseling with relevant indicators**

Indicators		Mean	Anova		Sum of mean	SD
			Sig.	Difference		
Gender	Male	2.6845	0.00	+	2.8553	1.165
	Female	2.9574				
School levels	High school	3.1491	0.00	+		
	Secondary	2.6635				
Living condition	With parents	2.8346	0.01	+		
	With father	3.4413				
	With mother	3.0449				
	With relatives or others	2.7497				

With the gender indicator, Sig.=0.000 affirms a significant difference between male and female students in gender counseling's need. The male's mean is 2.6845 whereas the females are 2.9574. The range is 0.2729 which implied a statistical meaning. In other words, gender counseling's need between male and female is different. Female students have a higher need than male students do. Therefore, different genders decide different gender counseling needs.

With school level indicator, Sig.=0.000 affirms a significant difference between high-school students and secondary school students. The secondary school students' mean is 2.6635 and that of high-school students' is 3.1491. The range is 0.4856 which implies a statistical meaning. In other words, high school students' need is different from secondary school students'. High school students have higher gender counseling's need than those from secondary schools. Different school levels decide different gender counseling needs.

With living condition indicator, Sig.=0.010 affirms a significant difference among different living conditions (family situation). Particularly, students living with a single father and single mother have a higher need of counseling than those living with both parents of relatives. Therefore, different living conditions decide different gender counseling needs.

The correlation between gender problems and gender counseling's need for high school students. By using the Pearson correlation test, we found the significant correlation results between the gender problems and need for gender counseling in Table 6.

**Table 6 The correlation coefficient between gender problems and students' gender counseling need**

		Gender problems	Gender counseling's need
Gender problems	Pearson Correlation	1	0.579**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0
	N	1200	12000
Gender counseling's need	Pearson Correlation	0.579**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0
	N	1200	1200

\*\* : Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There is a positive correlation between gender problems and gender counseling's need (Sig.=0.000). The more gender problems students face, the higher the gender counseling's need becomes. This crucial data must be handled as soon as possible for students to build their capacity in solving any gender problems for a well-being life.

## DISCUSSION

Previous studies find out the correlation between self-esteem and risky sexual behaviors [9]. Alcoholic consumption is closely connected to sexual intercourse decisions as well as risky and uncontrolled sexual intercourse forms [10]. Students face obstacles in sentiment, society, and study; in which, some students struggle with individual connection with schools and nations. With the female, most students face more complicated problems, related to these problems at schools, with higher schooling counseling need. School counseling assists students in adjusting themselves in school, at home and in society [6]. Ahmed Elhassan Hamid Hassan, et al., identify the need for school counseling that is comprised of study, social connection and gender needs [11]. Gysber HC identifies that a professional school counseling program provides an overall general consulting program with the purpose of encouraging all students to

better themselves in study, society, and individuals for the best outcomes [7]. Nottelmann, et al., confirmed that, during puberty period, behavioral problems are connected to bodily changes and resulted from gender hormones [4]. While The American School Counsellor Association identifies 3 content domains which should be emphasized in schooling counseling program; they are studying enhancement, career development and individual betterment [1]. Beatrice O. Ajidahun introduced the concept of gender counseling that should be neither ignored nor handled cautiously by emphasizing the importance of this concept towards our current society [5]. Appropriate gender counseling assists teenager students to be fully aware of his/her genuine gender and the world outside so as to solve any individual gender obstacles arisen. I Putu Agus Apriliana asserted the role of school counseling towards handling the issue of sexual harassment at schools [12]. Mostly, these studies supported us with a general view of students' need for counseling about sexual problems, sentiment, and academic pressure, which is only a part of the gender category. No findings proved the whole need of students' gender counseling, which contained a lot of issues including sexual orientation, sexual attraction, puberty change, emotional life, sexual behavior, gender awareness, etc. [13].

Our hypothesis arisen is whether there does not exist any correlation between gender problems and gender counseling's need for Vietnamese high school students. Our results deny this hypothesis. Especially, two gender counseling's needs with the highest ratio "understanding and controlling sexual sentiments during the puberty period" and "handling abnormal bodily changes during puberty period". This is entirely true for the school environment in Vietnam [14,15] as well as around the world [16,17] when high school age is a very strong transition period in the psychological life of students [18,19]. Moreover, young people in recent years tend to grow faster both psychologically and physically than the previous generations [20,21] because of the influence of technology [22,23] and changing educational methods (family education and school education) [24,25]. Many students (female) have been pubescent at 10-11 years old [26], so it is strongly necessary for them to be counseled about gender and be fully provided with knowledge about the sexual growth [27]. In addition, this is the age at which students have their first-vibes with their opposite gender friends [28], they feel confused by these feelings and often think about it, these thoughts affect mostly their lives and learning outcomes [29]. Therefore, the school counselor should pay special attention to these two problems when taking gender counseling, as well as to equip themselves with good knowledge and skills in this field.

Furthermore, our research does find out the significant difference between gender problems and gender counseling's need. High school students have a higher gender problem than secondary students and they need more psychological support (school counseling). The author Jung HJ also agreed on this statement, in American junior high school (equal to high school in Vietnam), students develop psychologically and physically better than their previous ages, they want to become adults and participate in adult activities, thus entailing many new age issues [30]. But with their life experiences, they are still unable to solve the problems that are difficult to solve by themselves due to the lack of skills and experience. With a profound change in emotional life, high school students tend to look for their best soul mate [31], share and sympathize with each other in life [32]. Sexual emotion at this age is more mature than secondary school age and often leaves unforgettable memories in life [33]. In particular, this is when their first love appears [34], these new feelings make them think more about the relationships of friends, family, and society [35], also strengthen the need of their gender counseling. Understanding this trait of high school students will help the school counselor plan to implement counselings, as well as providing psychological support for their gender problems easily and more smoothly.

In addition, we found several issues between family background (living condition) and gender problems, as well as the needs of students' gender counseling. Students living in families with both parents have more gender problems than other groups. This result is similar to the findings of the author Kirk, et al., when studying the expectations of parents for children about gender [36]. Although the father and mother themselves have certain influence to the gender development of the child, the excessive intervention, even imposing the child on gender prejudices (especially for LGBT children) sometimes constitutes psychological pressure and barriers in the relationship between parents and children. Moreover, for students living in single-father families, there is a need for more gender counseling than other groups. In the study of the author Leininger, et al., about the relationship in the single-father family, children who reside in single - father families exhibit poorer access to health care (both physical and mental health) than children in other family structures [37]. It has been shown that most children have witnessed violence or adulterous father and this has had a serious impact masonry to their gender trends and family relationships later [38]. Lamb when studying the psychological development of children in the single-father family also made similar comments [39]. Most of the

children will have many problems in their relationship and their family; they even become like their fathers and might have an incomplete family life. Therefore, the need for gender problems' counsel in these students is strongly high. This is similar for students who live with single mothers even though the need for counseling is lower with single-father families. This is perfectly acceptable because, with single-mother families, they are provided with more love [40], so their level of gender counseling's needs is lower, but still accounts for a large proportion because, after all, the nature of their family is still an incomplete family with certain psychology [41-43].

This crucial data must be solved as soon as possible because high school students are being in their gender development period; therefore, they must be assisted with gender counseling so as to solve his/her personal gender problems and to organize his/her life in a more appropriate and efficient way.

### CONCLUSION

In general, high school students in Vietnam are experiencing gender problems and need to be counseled about these issues. They show their desire to learn about the transformation of puberty, sexual emotions, emotional relationships as well as balancing measures for emotion and learning. There is a strong and positive correlation between gender problems and the need for gender counseling. The more gender problems a student has, the more likely he or she needs to be counseled.

However, the fact that schools in Vietnam have not met the standards for implementing school counseling to support students in this matter. On both the quantity and quality aspects of the team of school counselors as well as the proper investment in this activity of the regional management levels, the board of management, etc., is still not really drastic and a breakthrough. Therefore, in the upcoming renovation phase of Vietnamese education, school counseling activities need to be taken care of and developed in the right direction. In particular, gender counselings need to be strengthened to help students establish a balance in life and study.

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