

Understanding the education landscape and growth opportunities in Vietnam



SUMMARY REPORT

MAY 2024

Foreword

On behalf of BritCham Vietnam and the Education Working Group, I am excited to announce the launch of our Annual Education Survey, this joint project between the Chamber and the British Embassy and Consulate General, undertaken by Decision Lab and sponsored by British University Vietnam, starts a commitment by the Chamber to support education providers, business and Government understand the wants and desires of parents and students as well as the areas of opportunity for British business to further contribute to the education landscape here and benefit from the excellent reputation of our education offerings.

Some of the main points found in the 2024 survey are:

1. Educational Objectives

It's evident that Vietnamese parents are increasingly prioritising holistic development for their children. Beyond academic excellence, they aspire to cultivate well-rounded individuals equipped with self-reliance, ethical values, critical thinking, and a passion for lifelong learning. This paradigm shift emphasises the importance of creating learning environments that foster these qualities over a mere focus on exam-based achievements.

2. School Choice Triggers

The decision-making process for parents in selecting schools is influenced by several factors, including facilities, a healthy learning environment, and the quality of teachers. These elements significantly impact the overall educational experience and should be central considerations in educational policy and investment decisions.

3. Expected Skillsets

Parents place high value on a diverse set of skillsets for their children, including effective communication, proficiency in foreign languages, self-directed study skills, and problem-solving abilities. Aligning educational curricula and methodologies with the development of these skills is paramount for preparing students for success in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

4. Integrated Programmes

The growing preference for integrated programmes among parents underscores the need for accessible options that combine international standards with Vietnamese language proficiency. While cost remains a barrier, state schools can bridge this gap by offering integrated programmes at lower fees and implementing comprehensive teacher training initiatives to ensure quality education delivery.

5. Popular Majors and University Choices

Recent surveys indicate a strong inclination towards degrees in Computer Science, Engineering, and Business among students. Additionally, while state universities continue to be favored, there is a noticeable uptick in demand for private and international institutions, reflecting evolving aspirations and preferences among Vietnamese youth.

The Chamber will continue to advocate with Government as well as working with national partners, the development of well-rounded educational frameworks that nurture essential skills alongside academic knowledge. Investing in infrastructure and teacher training to enhance the quality of learning environments across all educational institutions. Supporting innovative financing models to make integrated programmes more accessible to a broader segment of the population. Finally fostering partnerships with private and international universities to broaden educational opportunities and align curricula with global standards as well as professional qualifications to support the development of the country.

I hope you find the report both insightful and interesting. As the Education Working Group we value members participation and would welcome you to participate. We are also open to partnership and sponsorship of reports and initiatives and please do get in touch if you are interested in finding out more details or joining the working group.

Chris Jeffery

Chair Education Working Group
Board Member BritCham Vietnam

British University Vietnam (BUV) is proud to co-present this research report on the education landscape and growth opportunities in Vietnam. This comprehensive report is the result of collaboration between BUV, Decision Lab, and BritCham, with support from the British Embassy in Vietnam.

In recent years, Vietnam has emerged as a dynamic and rapidly evolving hub for education in Southeast Asia, marked by significant reforms, investments, and a growing commitment to international standards of excellence.

This report highlights tremendous opportunities for growth within Vietnam's education sector, driven by a young, ambitious population and an increasing demand for high-quality, globally recognised degrees. It underscores the vital role that institutions like BUV play in shaping the future of education in the region, fostering international collaboration, and driving innovation.

Founded on the legacy of British educational rigor and innovation, BUV's mission is to nurture a new generation of lionhearted individuals who are highly employable, caring, resilient and able to not only survive, but thrive in a changing world. BUV is committed to excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement.

We believe that education is the key to unlocking the potential of individuals and societies, and that international education can bring mutual benefits and understanding between nations. We hope this report will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, educators, investors, and students who are interested in the development and innovation of the education sector in Vietnam.

We look forward to continuing our long-term commitment to the growth and development of Vietnam's education.

Warm regards,

Professor, Dr. Raymond Gordon

Vice-Chancellor and President

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to understand parents and students' aspiration, their educational journey from the start of K12 education to the higher education, and their perception about international/transnational programmes.

The survey is conducted using an online questionnaire, scripted and managed by Decision Lab's surveying and data management platform, with specifications:

- Sample size: n = 1,682
- Data collection period: 12 – 20/04/2024
- The target audience includes both Parents and Students.



PARENTS

Who are main or joint decision-makers for their children's education and have at least one child currently enrolled in nursery/ preschool/ kindergarten, K12 school or university/ college.



STUDENTS

18-25 year olds in Vietnam who are currently studying for a vocational/ undergraduate degree or fresh graduates (within past 3 years)

Key findings

01.

Beyond grades:
Vietnamese families
value well-rounded
education

02.

The pursuit of a
nurturing
environment with
global exposure

03.

Significance of
parental influence on
the students' higher
education choices

04.

Growing demand for
international and
transnational higher
education

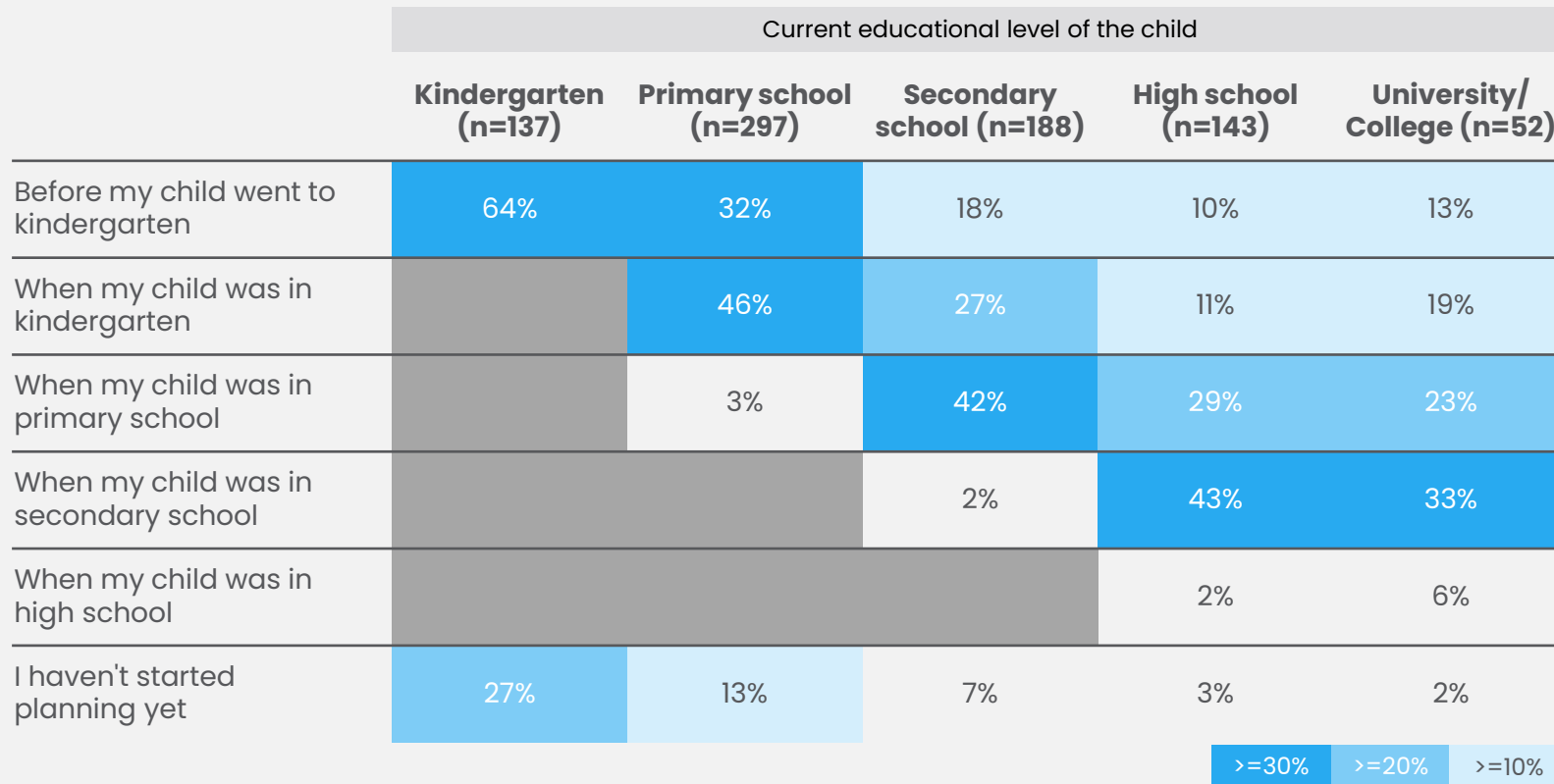


01.

Beyond grades: Vietnamese families value well-rounded education




When do parents start planning their child's education?



Q. When did you start planning your child's educational program? (e.g. complete Undergraduate/ Postgraduate programme, study at state/ international school, study in Vietnam or abroad, etc.)

Vietnamese parents exhibit a well-defined, long-term vision for their child's educational journey, often planning one or two stages ahead.



Vietnamese parents seek to cultivate well-rounded individuals in their children, fostering their self-reliance, ethical values and core competencies, like critical thinking and lifelong learning.

They are moving away from the traditional and old-fashioned achievement-driven culture.

Top 5 educational objectives

Be able to take care of themselves and their physical & mental health	74%
Build a strong foundation of ethics to guide the children as they grow up	72%
Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills	68%
Obtain soft skills & learning to build positive social relationships	65%
Have a passion and curiosity for learning, exploring new knowledge, and developing creative skills	64%

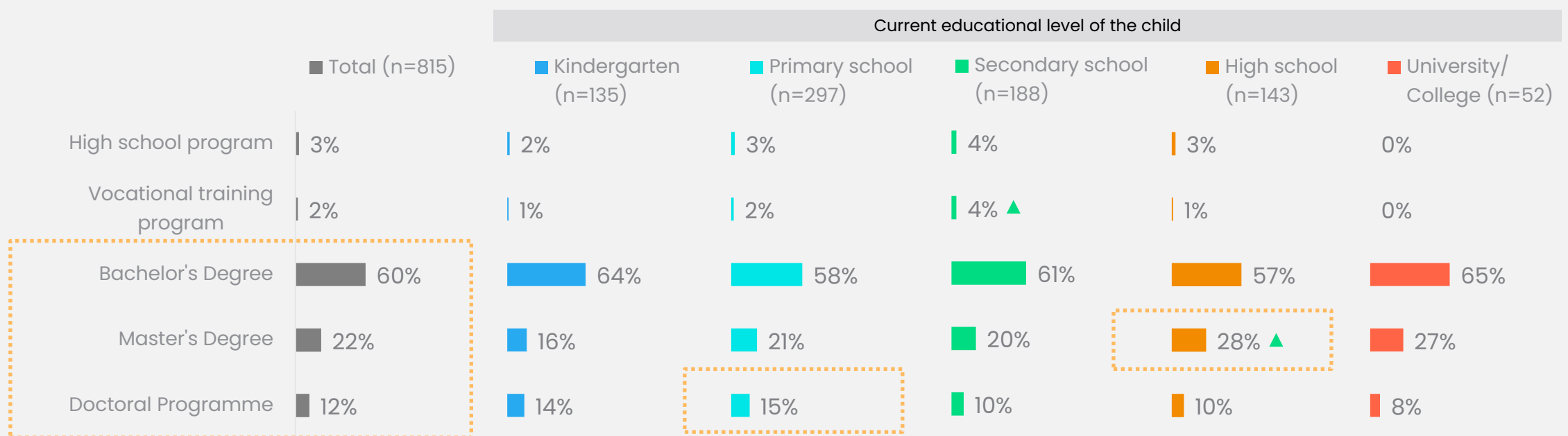
Q. What is your main goal for your child's education?

n=815

94% of parents aspire for their child to attain a higher education institution degree

Parents' interest for the child to study Master's Degree grows progressively throughout the years and peaks among the parents with children at the high school level. On the other hand, the interest in their children attaining a doctorate degree decreases as the child grows.

Desired last stage of education



Q. What type of institution do you envision for your child to enter as the last stage of education?

Parents that aim for their offspring to finish their education at the Bachelor’s degree stage prioritize immediate job security & financial stability for their child. However, parents with aspirations of having their children obtain post-graduate degrees prioritize knowledge foundation and expertise, with job stability becoming less important.

Top 5 reasons for parents to choose their child’s last stage of education

Bachelor’s Degree as the final stage

Get a stable job	▲ 68%
Get many job opportunities	▲ 66%
Have a solid professional knowledge foundation	64%
Get a higher salary	50%
Develop critical thinking & problem-solving skills	48%

n = 487

Master’s Degree as the final stage

Have a solid professional knowledge foundation	▲ 73%
Get many job opportunities	63%
Become an expert in one field	▲ 60%
Get a higher salary	▲ 56%
Facilitate future career advancements	▲ 54%

n = 176

Doctorate Degree as the final stage

Have a solid professional knowledge foundation	70%
Become an expert in one field	▲ 67%
Develop critical thinking & problem-solving skills	▲ 58%
Get many job opportunities	56%
Learn more about the world and themselves	51%

n = 99

Q. What are the main reasons you want your child to complete [final stage of education]?

▲ Higher than Total at 95% confidence level
▼ Lower than Total at 95% confidence level

Summary

Key takeaways

- Vietnamese parents have a long-term perspective on their child's education, planning ahead for future academic stages.
- Their goal is to raise well-rounded individuals with strong ethics, critical thinking skills, and a lifelong love of learning, which indicates a mindset shift away from the academic achievement-driven culture.
- Nearly all Vietnamese parents prioritize university degree education for their children.
- For the Bachelor's degree, parents expect their child to have better chances for job stability. For Master's and Doctorate degrees, the expectation goes further into specialized knowledge and skillset development.



Implications

- **Highlighting the long-term benefits of degree programmes:** it's important for higher education institutions to showcase how their curriculum equips students for life and career beyond graduation.
- **Emphasizing well-roundedness:** showcasing programmes that go beyond academics and foster critical thinking and strong values.
- **Catering to different aspirations:** depending on the last stage of education, programmes need to emphasize the practical outcome that suits aspirations of its graduates



02.

The pursuit of a nurturing environment with global exposure



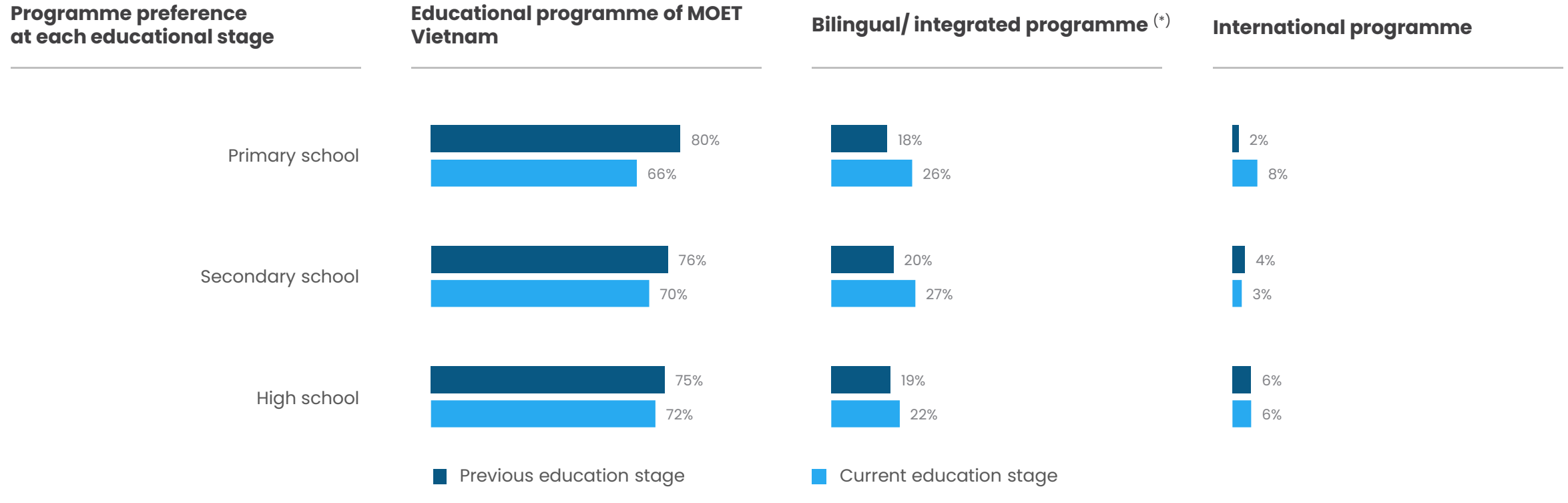
On average, Vietnamese parents consider 6 to 8 factors when choosing a school for their child. They prioritize a healthy learning environment for their children’s early education, while the academic factors, like teacher quality, gaining importance later on in the key stages of K12 education.

Top triggers for school choice

Nursery/Kindergarten/Preschool	Primary school	Secondary school	High school
Good facilities 56%	School location is close to home 62%	Healthy learning environment 55%	Suitable admission requirements 59%
Healthy learning environment 54%	Healthy learning environment 55%	Reasonable tuition fees/ cost 52%	Good facilities 59%
Reasonable tuition fees/ costs 52%	Good facilities 53%	Good teacher quality 50%	Good teacher quality 59%
School location is close to home 52%	Reasonable tuition fees/ cost 51%	School location is close to home 48%	Healthy learning environment 59%
Good teacher quality 51%	Good teacher quality 49%	Good facilities 46%	Reasonable tuition fees/ cost 57%
There are many physical development activities 47%	Admission requirements are suitable for my child 45%	Suitable admission requirements 46%	Good teaching results of the school (e.g. graduation results) 48%
Safe school area 41%	Safe school area 42%	Safe school area 39%	Safe school area 43%
Diverse and rich curriculum content 37%	There are many physical development activities 39%	Good teaching results of the school (e.g. graduation results) 37%	School location is close to home 43%
n = 135	n = 297	n = 188	n = 143

Q. Please indicate the main reasons that influenced your decision to choose [current school that the child is studying at]?

In search of a healthy learning condition for their child, more and more parents are enrolling their offspings into bilingual/ integrated/ international programmes across education stages.



Q. For each education stage below, please select all of school types that your child has attended and is currently attending.

Q. Please select your child's current education level

(*) **Bilingual programme:** An educational approach that employs two languages, the native language and a second language, for teaching and learning, enabling students to pursue both national and international curricula | **Integrated programme:** An educational approach in Vietnam that combines Vietnamese national curriculum standards with those of another country, ensuring alignment with Vietnamese educational goals and avoiding duplication of content and knowledge.

Present experience:
Kindergarten n=135, Primary school n=297, Secondary school n=188, High school n=137

Past experience:
Kindergarten n=680, Primary school n= 383, Secondary school n= 195, High school n= 52

These programmes are being considered by parents due to its ability to provide a nurturing environment, which in turn will allow the children’s English proficiency to flourish, along with the development of soft and communication skills. The parental expectation for the children to become global citizens is evident.

Top 5 triggers to choose bilingual/ integrated/ international programmes (*)

Nursery/Kindergarten/Preschool		Primary school		Secondary school		High school	
Improve English proficiency	74%	Improve English proficiency	71%	Improve English proficiency	56%	Improve English proficiency	61%
Develop the ability to adapt, communicate interculturally	73%	Help my child to become more confident	63%	Develop the ability to adapt, communicate interculturally	55%	Develop the ability to adapt, communicate interculturally	56%
Develop soft skills and personal talents	64%	Develop soft skills and personal talents	61%	Help my child to become more confident	55%	Combine many foreign exchange/ transnational programmes	56%
Internationally-accredited education programme	52%	Develop the ability to adapt, communicate interculturally	56%	Develop soft skills and personal talents	48%	More cost-effective than studying high school abroad	53%
Help my child to become more confident	50%	Advanced, balanced and methodical curriculum	55%	The quality of education is better than other programmes	47%	International programme diplomas are widely recognized worldwide	50%
n = 66		n = 147		n = 94		n = 70	

Q. Please indicate the main reasons that influenced your decision to choose [current school that the child is studying]? (*) **Bilingual programme:** An educational approach that employs two languages, the native language and a second language, for teaching and learning, enabling students to pursue both national and international curricula | **Integrated programme:** An educational approach in Vietnam that combines Vietnamese national curriculum standards with those of another country, ensuring alignment with Vietnamese educational goals and avoiding duplication of content and knowledge.

Summary

Key takeaways

- Vietnamese parents value a nurturing environment for early childhood education, with a shift of focus towards academia in the later education stages.
- There's a growing interest towards bilingual/ integrated/ international programmes to develop English proficiency and global culturalisation competencies.
- Exchange programmes and international exposure become more important during the high school stage.



Implications

- **Offering nurturing environments for early learners:** this can include play-based learning, social-emotional learning programmes, and small class sizes.
- **Developing strong bilingual or integrated programmes:** showcasing the benefits of English language acquisition and global citizenship skills.
- **Considering to increase the volume of high school exchange programmes and/or international collaborations:** cater the growing demand for global exposure at this education stage.



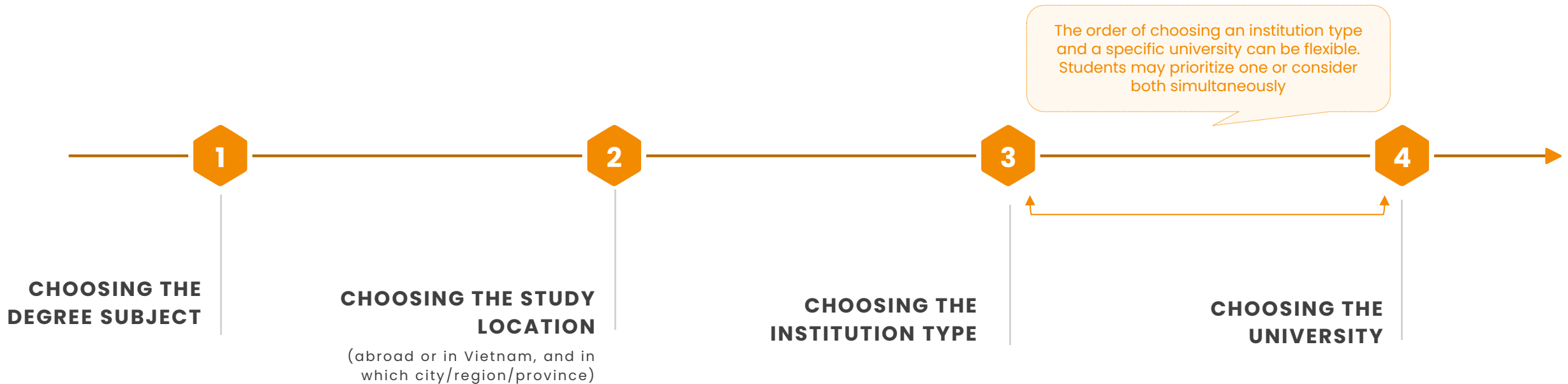
03.

Significance of parental influence on the students' higher education choices



Students have a fully top-down approach when choosing a university, starting with choosing the subject and/or the degree they would like to pursue.

Decision-making journey for choosing a university/ major

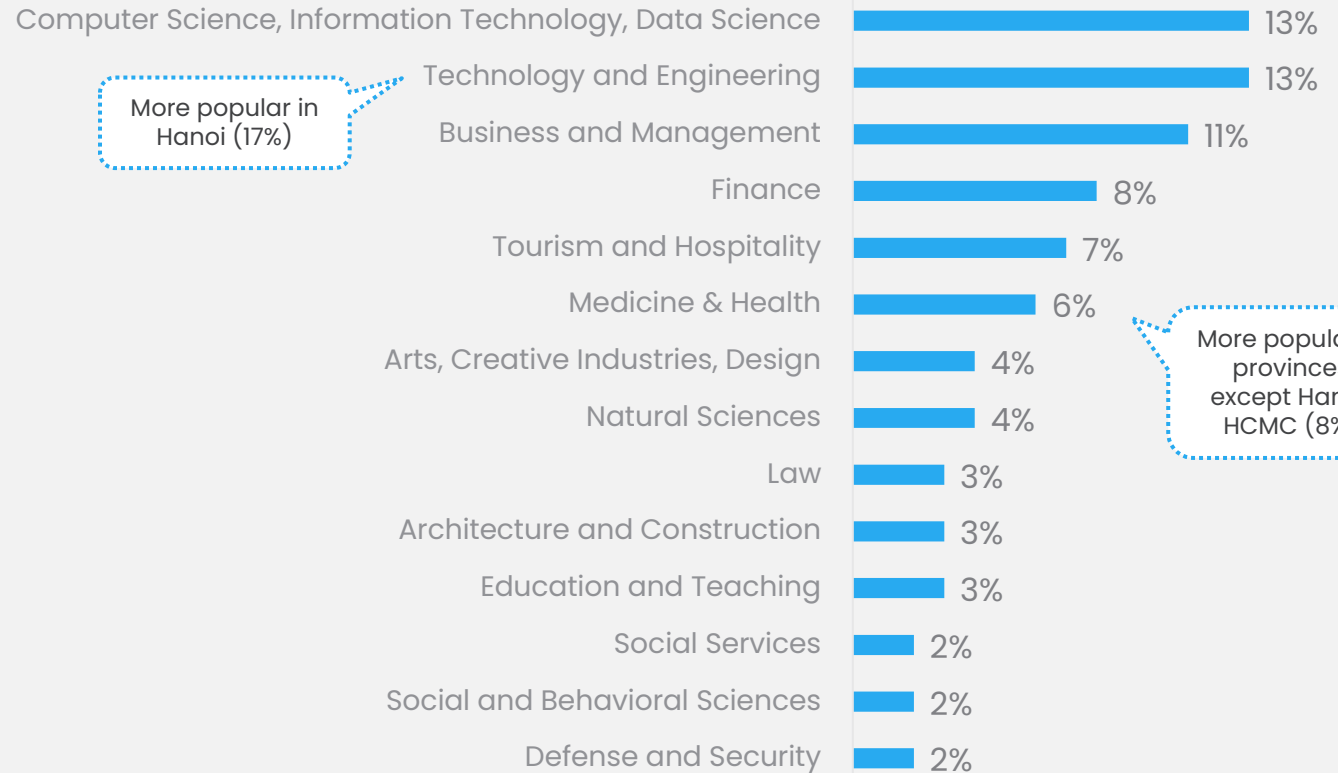


Q. Please select and sort in order the steps involved in the process of deciding a University/ College and your degree subject? (You don't need to choose a step that is not included in the process) n=862

Source: Education market landscape in Vietnam Study 2024

Computer Science, IT, Data Science, Technology and Engineering take the lead among most desired degree study areas, followed closely by Business, Management and Finance areas of study.

Top degree subjects students intend to/ have studied



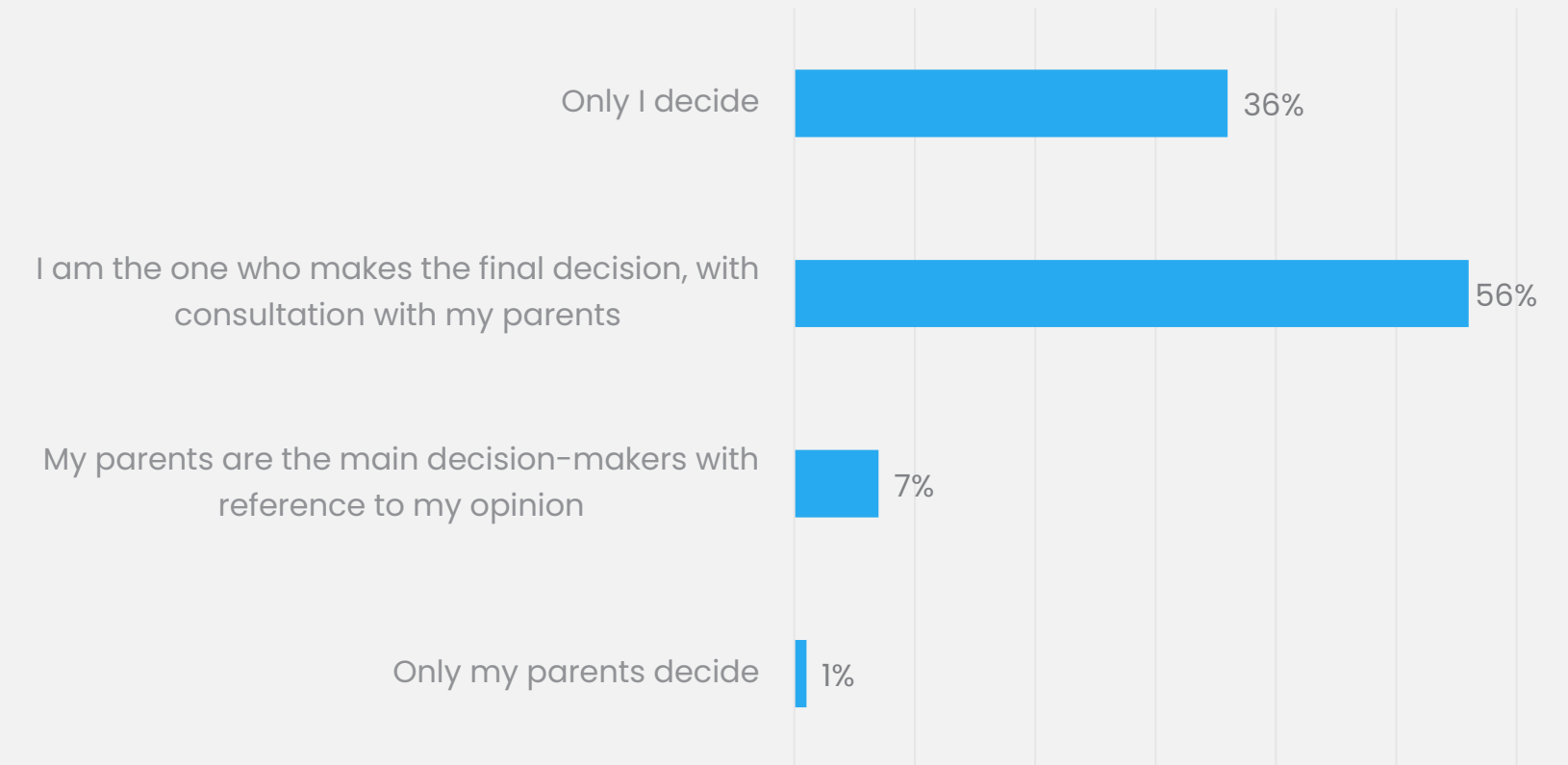
Q. Which of the following degree subjects did you studied/ are studying/ intend to study? Hanoi n=234, HCMC n=256, Other provinces n=373

Total n=862

More than a third of students make their university/degree choice decision on their own.

However, the parental influence remains strong in Vietnam, with 64% of students rely on the parents' advisory with the decision-making process

Decision maker for final university/degree choice



Q. Please choose a statement that best describes the person who influenced your decision to choose a University/ College & degree subject

n=862

Summary

Key takeaways

- In the journey of planning the options for higher education, choosing the subject/degree is the first key stage in the decision-making process. Vietnamese students prefer Computer Science, IT and Engineering degrees the most, followed by the cohort of Business, Management and Finance degrees.
- Parental influence on the university/degree choice is significant (64%) in Vietnam. Students rely on their parents' guidance and expertise to make a more well-rounded choice.



Implications

- **Strengthening programme offerings** in Computer Science, IT, Engineering and Business, Management and Finance programmes to meet the the high student demand.
- **Targeted communication:** develop communication plans that resonate with both Students and Parents, e.g. highlighting the factors that focus on the passion of the Student for the field, and at the same time emphasize the career prospects of the degree/subject to appease Parents.

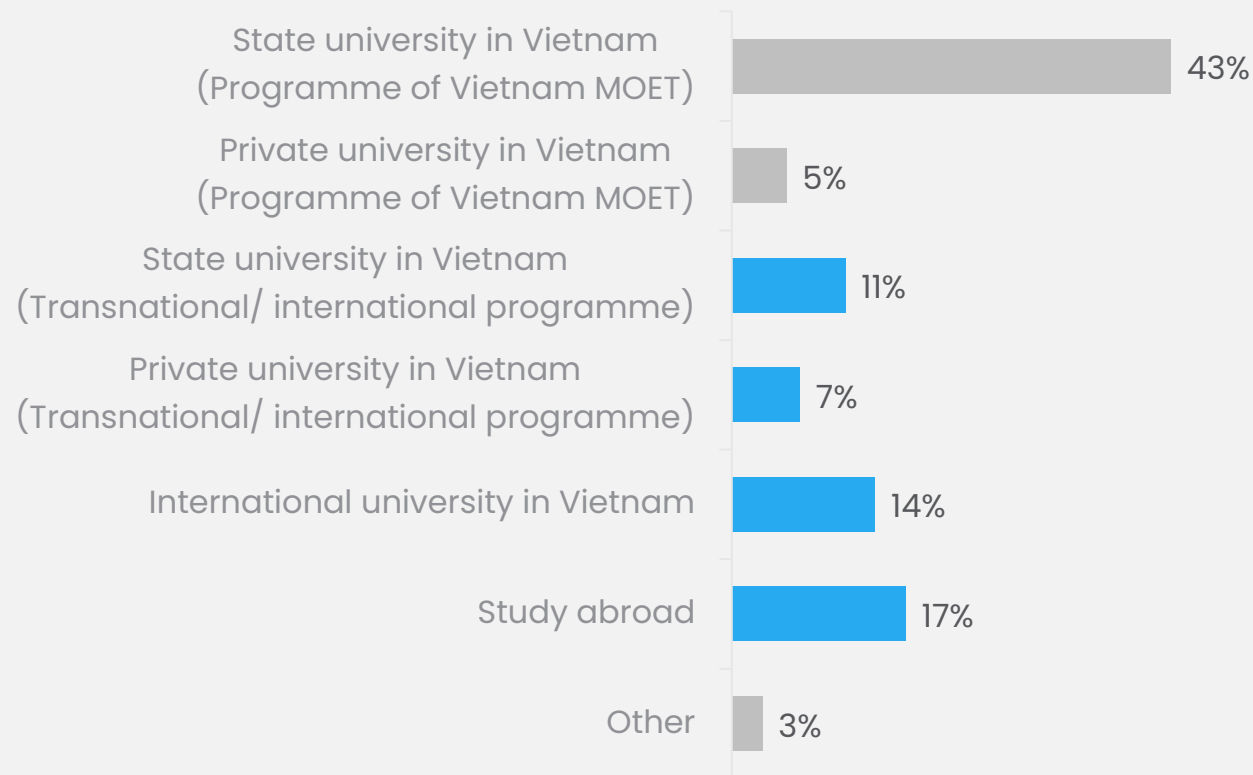


04.

Growing demand for international and transnational higher education



University type preference of parents for their child



Q. Which of the following types of universities did you let your child study/ do you intend to let your child study at?

n=135

48% of parents value the traditional Vietnamese higher education provided by MOET.

While the other half (49% of parents) aim to provide their children with transnational and international education experiences, whether in Vietnam or abroad.

Developing English skills, global adaptability, becoming more confident and the course prestige are the factors that drive students to international university programmes, but the high costs and insecurity about the current English proficiency level are the biggest hurdles of consideration.

Triggers and barriers to choose international/ transnational university programmes in Vietnam

Triggers

Improve my English proficiency	41%
Develop the ability to adapt, communicate interculturally	40%
Help me to become more confident	40%
International programme diplomas are widely recognized worldwide	38%
Many scholarship opportunities to study abroad at prestigious universities	34%
Internationally-accredited education programme	34%

Q. Please tell us the main reasons why you intend/decided to study an international/transnational program in Vietnam? n = 187

Barriers

The cost is too high	68%
My English proficiency is not good	49%
I have no intention to study abroad	35%
Admission requirements are difficult to meet	25%
Learning environment is not suitable for my personality	20%
The curriculum is too difficult/ heavy	16%

Q. Please tell us the main reasons why you DON'T intend/ DIDN'T decide to study an international/transnational program in Vietnam? n = 675

Summary

Key takeaways

- There's a high potential of growth for transnational and international education market in Vietnam.
- The desire for higher English language proficiency, global adaptability and course prestige drives the student interest. However, high costs and insecurity about English proficiency limitation still remain the key challenges of student recruitment.



Implications

- Capturing the student interest during their initial information gathering stage by:
 - Leveraging digital communication and creating collaboration opportunities between universities, schools and counselors to drive exposure of institutions that provide international/transnational programmes
 - Providing more guidance to both students and parents during crucial decision-making periods, especially regarding cost concerns and English language support. For example, English language development courses can be integrated into the programmes to support students' language proficiency.

Final summary

01.

BEYOND GRADES: VIETNAMESE FAMILIES VALUE WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION

- Education programme must showcase the well-rounded and long-term development the child
- Job security and financial stability are the expected education outcome for undergraduate study. At the same time, postgraduate degree most expected outcome is solid professional knowledge foundation.

02.

THE PURSUIT OF A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT WITH GLOBAL EXPOSURE

- The search for bilingual/ integrated/ international programmes is rooted in the parents' need to find an environment for their children to obtain English communication and soft skills to become global citizens in the future.

03.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON THE STUDENTS' HIGHER EDUCATION CHOICES

- The highest demand on the market is for the Computer Science, IT, Engineering, Business, Management and Finance degrees.
- Parents in Vietnam have a certain level of influence on their children's degree and university choices, helping to provide their offspring with a more well-rounded view on the degree/subject choice.

04.

GROWING DEMAND FOR INTERNATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL STUDIES

- 49% of the parents aim to provide their child with an international or transnational higher education experience.
- Global adaptability is one of the key drivers. Cost, however, is the top barrier.

Appendix



THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Achieved Sample

QUANTITATIVE

Survey timeline:
12 – 20/04/2024

1682

TOTAL ACHIEVED SAMPLE SIZE

Demographics

Target group	Parents	815
	Students/recent graduates	867

Target profile

PARENTS WITH CHILDREN AGED 2–22 YO

- Age: 25 y/o and above
- Household status: have children aged 2–22 y.o.
- Location: online nationwide population
- Gender: Both (natural fall)
- SEC (Household): ABCD
- Location: nationwide
- Behaviour:
 - Main or joint decision maker in the education of their children
 - Must have at least 1 child going to preschool, K12 school or 1st year in university

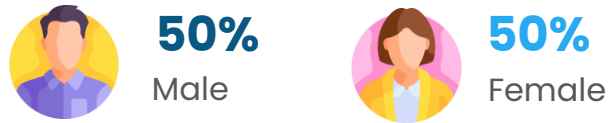
STUDENTS/RECENT GRADUATES AGED 18–25 YO

- Age: 18–25 y.o.
- Location: online nationwide population
- Gender: Both (natural fall)
- SEC (Household): ABCD
- Behaviour:
 - Currently studying for a vocational/undergraduate degree
 - First jobbers, recently graduated vocational/higher education institution

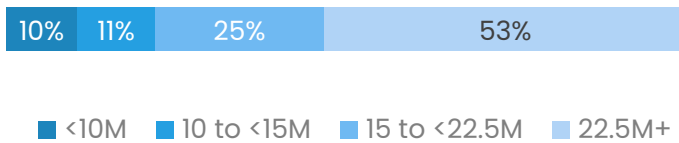
Parents' profile (n=815)

(*) If parents have multiple kids, the study only focuses on one oldest child to avoid confusion.

Gender

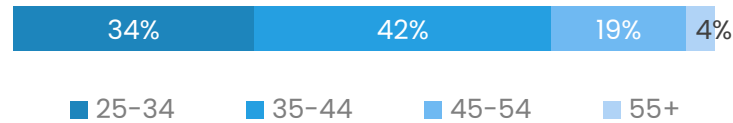


Monthly household income (VND)

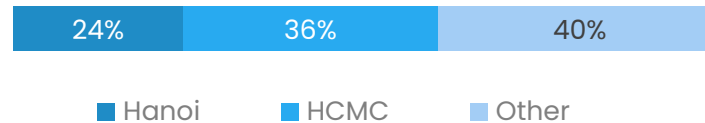


Q. What is your gender?
Q. What is your monthly household income?

Age

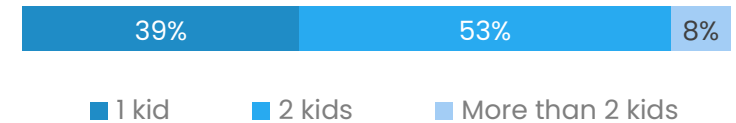


Location

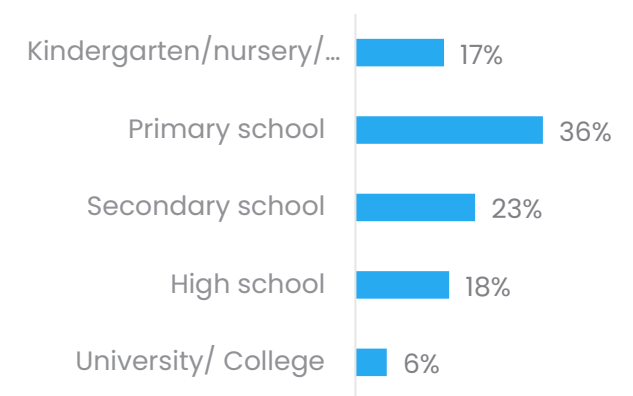


Q. How old are you?
Q. Where are you currently living?

The number of kids



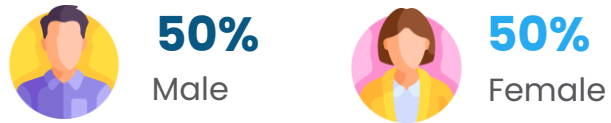
Their child's educational level (*)



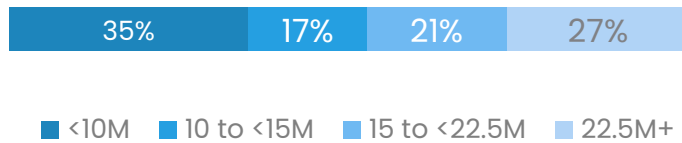
Q. Do you have kids?
Q. Please select your child's current education level

Students'/ First jobbers' profile (n=867)

Gender



Monthly household income (VND)

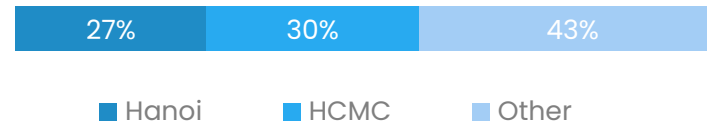


Q. What is your gender?
Q. What is your monthly household income?

Age

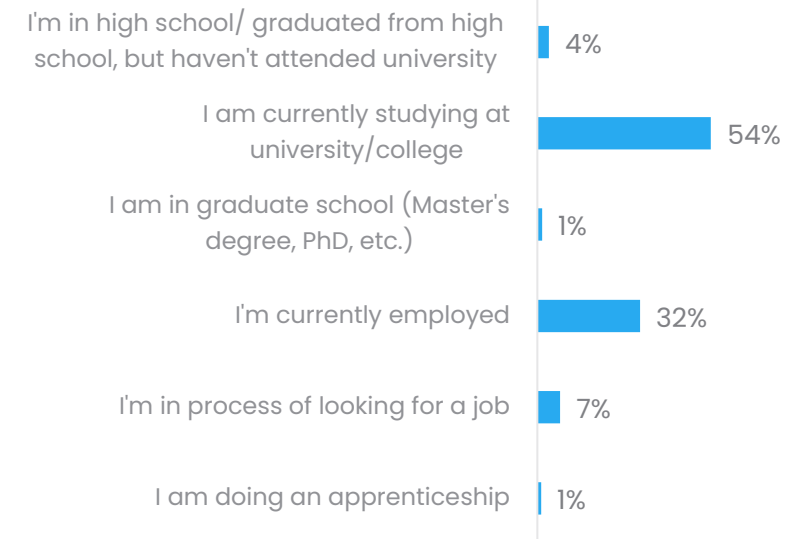


Location



Q. How old are you?
Q. Where are you currently living?

Educational level



Q. Please choose the statement that best describes you?

EXPERIENCE

A WORLD CLASS BRITISH EDUCATION

IN VIETNAM



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