

## RESEARCHING CONSULTATION DEMAND OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CAO LANH CITY, DONG THAP PROVINCE

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### Abstract

*The satisfaction of the consultation demand in schools is essential and urgent to indirectly prevent negative behaviors of students when they cannot control themselves, thereby helping students regulate their emotions and behaviors, and guide them to make appropriate directions and choices and improve their situation in a positive direction. The research surveyed 450 students at high schools in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province. Research findings show that high school students have quite high consultation demand with a variety of different demands that need to be satisfied. However, reality shows that students do not have access to consultation activities to satisfy their demand due to being influenced by many subjective and objective factors. This requires practical solutions to satisfy students' consultation demand.*

**Keywords:** *Cao Lanh city, consultation, demand, Dong Thap province, high school students.*

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## NHU CẦU THAM VẤN CỦA HỌC SINH TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG Ở THÀNH PHỐ CAO LÃNH, TỈNH ĐỒNG THÁP

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### Tóm tắt

Công tác đáp ứng nhu cầu tham vấn trong học đường là hết sức cần thiết và mang tính cấp bách nhằm gián tiếp ngăn chặn những hành vi tiêu cực của học sinh khi không kiểm soát được mình, giúp học sinh điều chỉnh cảm xúc, hành vi, định hướng cho họ có những hướng đi, sự lựa chọn phù hợp và cải thiện tình trạng theo hướng tích cực. Nghiên cứu được khảo sát 450 học sinh tại các trường trung học phổ thông trên địa bàn thành phố Cao Lãnh, tỉnh Đồng Tháp. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy học sinh trung học phổ thông có nhu cầu tham vấn khá cao với sự đa dạng về nhiều nhu cầu khác nhau cần được đáp ứng. Tuy nhiên, thực tế cho thấy các em chưa được tiếp cận với các hoạt động tham vấn để thỏa mãn nhu cầu của mình do bị ảnh hưởng bởi nhiều yếu tố chủ quan và khách quan. Điều này đòi hỏi cần có những giải pháp thiết thực để thỏa mãn nhu cầu tham vấn của học sinh.

**Từ khóa:** Học sinh trung học phổ thông, nhu cầu, tham vấn, thành phố Cao Lãnh, tỉnh Đồng Tháp.

## 1. Introduction

In the current context, the strong development of economics, society, science, and technology has impacted all areas of human life, especially adolescents, who are mainly students. Many researches show that students encounter many difficult problems such as learning, career orientation, behavioral control skills, emotions and relationships with teachers, friends, and family (cited in Tran et al., 2019; Tran, 2021; Tran & Ngo, 2021). Facing these difficulties, sometimes students cannot solve it by themselves because they fall into a state of confusion, and lack of self-control, limiting the performance of social functions and roles; meanwhile trying to get out of their difficulties, they might have caused problems or consequences for themselves, their families and society (cited in Nguyen, 2018; Nguyen et al, 2016; Tran, 2016; Aziz & Sumangala, 2015). Negative behaviors often stem from difficult problems that are not shared or resolved (cited in Le, 2019; Le & Tran, 2021).

For students in general and high school students in particular, the above difficulties become even more important. In adolescence, unstable psychology along with problems from relationships with friends, teachers, family, society, etc., pressure from studying or family as well as worries or confusion in terms of choosing a suitable future career or direction after graduating from high school put them in a state of psychological crisis and confusion. At this time, they need solid spiritual support, or more accurately, they need consultation and advice from experts, teachers, or social workers to help them overcome difficulties, reduce stress and find solutions (cited in Nguyen et al, 2019).

When those demands are not satisfied, difficulties are not shared; pressure is not relieved, and problems do not have answers, they are unable or unwilling to face them and have to try on their own. In such situations, destructive deviant behaviors will arise to relieve pain, overwhelm feelings of despair, anger, etc. such as: drinking alcohol, using stimulants, taking violence against surrounding people, and even committing suicide to escape unbearable pain (cited in Le, 2019). Therefore, school consultation is extremely necessary and

urgent to indirectly prevent negative behaviors of students when they cannot control themselves, thereby helping students regulate their emotions and behaviors, guiding them to make appropriate directions and choices and improving their situation in a positive direction (cited in Bui, 2014).

School consultation appeared very early and affirmed its important role in the development of education in developed countries around the world (cited in Popov & Spasenovic, 2020; Nguyen, 2021). In Vietnam, in recent years, school consultation has begun to receive attention since the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) issued Circular No. 31/2017/TT-BGDĐT on instructions for implementing psychological consultation for students in high schools (cited in MOET, 2017) and Circular No. 33/2018/TT-BGDĐT on social work guidance in schools (cited in MOET, 2018b) and Consultation capacity training program for high school teachers working as a counselor for students according to Decision No. 1876/QĐ-BGDĐT (cited in MOET, 2018a). With the above practice, many schools have developed plans and organized psychological consultation activities for students. Although the implementation of this activity still has certain limitations, the results achieved by school consultation at a several high schools across the country have brought positive moves in solving students' difficult problems.

In Dong Thap province, the Department of Education and Training issued Guidance No. 69/HD-SGDĐT dated August 20, 2015 on guiding the organization and activities of School Consultation Teams in educational facilities in Dong Thap Province (cited in Department of Education and Training of Dong Thap province, 2015) and Official Dispatch No. 229/SGDĐT-CTTT on implementing the Circular guiding the implementation of psychological consultation for students in high schools (cited in Department of Education and Training of Dong Thap Province, 2018) to carry out consultation activities to support disadvantaged students. On such basis, currently, many educational facilities in the province are interested in investing and organizing school consultation with different forms of activities. However, the activities of the

School Consultation Teams mainly stop at learning and career guidance consultations. In other words, the implementation of school consultation activities is still fragmented, only mentioning a certain aspect and angle of student consultation that is integrated into group activities and extracurricular activities. Especially for high school students, the consultation demand is essential since they are students in the stage of adulthood with major changes in psychology and being affected and influenced by many aspects of family, school and society, pressure from exams or family forcing them to pursue a career that they do not like, not to mention that they may encounter difficulties in relationships with friends of the opposite sex, family events, addiction to social networks, smartphones, or easily falls into depression, anxiety disorders, etc.

The article “*Researching Consultation Demand of High School Students in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province*” aims to analyze the current situation, level and expression of consultation demand of high school students, thereby pointing out factors affecting the satisfaction of consultation demand of students. The research findings are the basis for proposing solutions to satisfy the consultation demand of students in the future.

## 2. Research methodology

We conducted this research using the cross-sectional descriptive method and randomly selecting 450 high school students from grades 10 to 12 at high schools in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province (Nguyen Quang Dieu High School for the Gifted, Cao Lanh City High School, Do Cong Tuong High School, Thien Ho Duong High School and Tran Quoc Toan High School). Among them, 40.9% were male participants; meanwhile, female participants accounted for 59.1%; the basic section had 220 students (48.9%), accounting for the highest percentage, followed by the natural science section with 125 students (27.8%), and the social science section had 105 students, accounting for the lowest percentage of 23.3%.

The research investigate through survey questionnaires, then the questionnaire will be sent to students to answer the questions contained in the

questionnaire. The questionnaire includes personal information such as: gender, school, grade, and section. The questions about school consultation are designed consisting of the following contents: (1) Consultation demand related to career guidance activities, career selection and enrollment information with 6 questions; (2) Consultation demand related to sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health with 9 questions; (3) Consultation demand related to emotional psychology, friendship and love with 15 questions; (4) Consultation demand related to relationships with teachers with 10 questions; (5) Consultation demand related to the relationship with family with 11 questions; (6) Consultation demand related to learning activities with 11 questions; (7) Consultation demand related to mental health with 10 questions and (8) Consultation demand related to life skills education with 27 questions.

The questions about the consultation demand of students are designed on a 5-point Likert scale, with values ranging from 1 to 5, of which 1 is “Absolutely Undesirable”, 2 is “Undesirable”, 3 is “Normal/Confused”, 4 is “Desirable”, and 5 is “Strongly Desirable”. We use descriptive statistical tools to assess the current status and expression of the consultation demand of high school students, and analyze factors that hinder the ability to satisfy the consultation demand of high school students in Cao Lanh City, Dong Thap Province.

## 3. Results and Discussions

### 3.1. Actual consultation demand of high school students in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province

#### 3.1.1. Consultation demand of high school students

Through the process of reviewing the research literature, to survey the current status of consultation demand of high school students in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province, we have synthesized and proposed 08 different consultation demands appropriate to high school students' ages (cited in Bui, 2006; Maqsood et al., 2020). We also contacted the school's consulting office to ask about which demands students would like to satisfy. The survey results are shown in the following table:

**Table 1. Consultation demands of high school students in the study area**

Consultation Demands	Ratio (%)					Mean
	Absolutely Undesirable	Undesirable	Normal	Desirable	Strongly Desirable	
Life skills education	2.4	4.4	23.3	43.1	26.7	3.87
Learning methods	2.9	2.9	25.1	41.8	25.3	3.84
Career guidance, career selection and enrollment information	2.9	4.2	22.9	45.6	24.4	3.84
Mental health care	4.4	4.2	31.1	40.4	19.8	3.67
Sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health	3.6	8.4	25.6	44.9	17.6	3.64
Emotional psychology, friendship and love	4.2	6.9	25.3	48.7	14.9	3.63
Difficult problems in relationships with teachers	3.3	7.3	27.1	49.1	13.1	3.61
Difficult problems in relationships with family	5.3	7.3	27.3	43.8	16.2	3.58

Statistical results from Table 1 show that students of high schools in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province have a high desire to satisfy consultation demand which shows that the results in all the problems we raised were chosen by the majority of students at a desirable and strongly desirable level. Among them, students are most interested in the demand for life skills education (mean 3.87). Next is the demand for consultation on learning methods and career guidance, career selection and enrollment information (mean 3.84). In the third rank is the demand for consultation on mental health care (mean 3.67), followed by the demand for consultation on sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health (mean 3.64, rank 4). The last one is the demand for consultation on social relationships such as: Emotional psychology, friendship and love (mean 3.63, ranked 5); Difficult problems in relationships with teachers (mean 3.61, ranked 6); Difficult problems in relationships with family (mean 3.58, ranked 7).

In general, the consultation demand of high school students in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province are rich and diverse. They all have consultation demand with assessment at many different levels. However, it can be seen that the demands that students need the most consultation are essential needs since they are students in the stage of perfecting their psychology and future career

orientation, the demand for consultation on life skills education, mental health care, career guidance, career selection, and enrollment information, as well as the demand for consultation on learning methods are not indispensable for students. Students need to be consulted to have a good learning and adaptation process. Therefore, these demands are the most urgent requirement for students right now. That is also an easy to understand reason why these demands are of most concern to students. High school students still have the demand for consultation on sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health, social relationships with friends, teachers and family, but the desirable level is not high. Although these demands play a significant role in the lives as well as their impact on the academic performance and spiritual life of students, it is also possible that they do not have access to consultation services in this field, since most students only receive advice on their career guidance demand mainly at school.

### *3.1.2. Level of assessment of consultation demands of high school students*

Based on the survey results of students' demands on issues requiring consultation, we continue to explore the level of students' assessment of the urgency of satisfaction of the above consultation demands. The obtained results are shown in detail in Table 2.

**Table 2. Level of assessment of consultation demands of high school students in the study area**

Consultation Demands	Ratio (%)					Mean
	Completely unnecessary	Unnecessary	Normal	Necessary	Very necessary	
Career guidance, career selection and enrollment information	3.1	5.3	18.7	40.7	32.2	3.94
Learning methods	3.1	3.8	23.3	40.0	29.8	3.90
Life skills education	4.2	3.8	23.8	40.0	28.2	3.84
Mental health care	6.2	6.0	23.3	43.8	20.7	3.71
Sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health	3.1	6.0	26.7	45.6	18.7	3.67
Emotional psychology, friendship and love	3.6	6.0	27.4	44.9	18.1	3.66
Difficult problems in relationships with family	4.7	5.6	27.6	48.4	13.8	3.62
Difficult problems in relationships with teachers	5.8	6.0	26.8	45.2	16.2	3.61

From the data results in Table 2, it can be seen that the majority of students of high schools in Cao Lanh City, Dong Thap Province assessed the need to meet consultation demand at a very high level. The demand for career guidance, career selection and enrollment information is up to 72.9% (combining necessary and very necessary levels) of students rating it as necessary to be consulted. (mean 3.94, ranked 1). Next is the demand for consultation on learning methods, which 69.8% of students rated as necessary to meet (mean 3.90, ranked 2), followed by 68.2% of students saying that it is necessary to be educated about life skills (mean 3.84, ranked 3), and 64.5% of students choosing the demand for consultation on mental health care (mean 3.71, ranked 4). In turn, the demand for consultation on sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health accounts for 64.3% (mean 3.67, ranked 5); the demand for consultation on emotional psychology, friendship and love accounts

for 63%. (mean 3.66, ranked 6); the demand for consultation on difficult problems in relationships with family accounts for 62.2% (mean 3.62, rank 7), and finally, the demand for consultation on difficult problems in relationships with teachers accounts for 61.4%. (mean 3.61, ranked 7).

In general, through the survey and assessment of the level of consultation demand of high school students, we can see that they all consider consultation for these demands to be necessary for them. Students need to be consulted and advised specifically and in detail since these demands are always necessary for students. Therefore, satisfaction with the above consultation demand will contribute to helping students orient and develop themselves in learning and life activities.

### **3.2. Actual expression of the consultation demands of high school students in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province**

**Table 3. Expression of consultation demand of high school students in the study area**

Consultation Demands	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Career guidance, career selection and enrollment information</b>	<b>3.86*</b>	<b>0.865</b>
Popular professions that satisfy social needs	3.79	0.998
Student's suitability for career	3.90	0.960
Identification of the strengths of each career	3.90	0.935
Requirements for the career selected by the student	3.79	0.941
Required qualities to adapt to a career	3.86	0.941
Selection of a training facility that suits the student's abilities and aspirations	3.90	0.992

<b>Emotional psychology, friendship and love</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>0.898</b>
Emotional and psychological expressions in love	3.36	0.974
Difference between friendship and true love	3.45	0.957
Effects of early love on learning	3.40	1.016
What is pure, healthy love?	3.44	0.989
Behavioral skills in love in adolescents	3.50	0.995
When should adolescents fall in love and when should they not fall in love?	3.42	1.016
<b>Sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>0.857</b>
Psychophysical changes during puberty	3.17	1.074
Friendship, heterosexual friendship, love and its effects	3.61	0.989
Sexually transmitted diseases and how to prevent them	3.50	1.008
Effective contraceptive methods and protection of adolescent reproductive health	3.64	0.988
How to refuse when your lover intends to have sex	3.52	1.026
Knowledge about safe sex	3.45	0.996
Sexual abuse and how to prevent it	3.34	0.984
Recognition of same-sex sexual orientation	3.46	1.021
Complete knowledge of adolescent reproductive health	3.46	0.962
<b>Difficult problems in relationships with teachers</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>0.835</b>
Tension in relationships with teachers	3.32	0.985
Feeling of injustice when teachers are unfair and biased	3.36	1.012
Pressure from teachers' learning requirements	3.49	0.984
Difficulty in confidence or expression of wishes to teachers	3.41	0.945
Teachers are not enthusiastic about teaching	3.29	1.001
Teachers do not have much time to interact and talk with students	3.27	0.966
Teachers are too strict	3.28	0.976
Being not satisfied with the teacher's behavior	3.19	1.030
Often making teachers unhappy	3.22	0.960
Teachers do not understand students' psychology	3.33	1.014
<b>Difficult problems in relationships with family</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>0.908</b>
Difficulty in confidence or expression of wishes to parents	3.37	0.973
Parents do not have time to be close and talk	3.33	1.023
Pressure on for academic scores from parents	3.36	1.061
Feeling sad about your own value in your family	3.30	1.082
Being worried about your parents' marital status	3.10	1.139
Family members often have discord and conflicts	3.14	1.112
Feeling sad because your parents lack care and attention	3.15	1.056
Parents do not understand children's psychology, so they often impose them without reason	3.36	1.074
Being dissatisfied with parents' behavior	3.19	1.076
Parents are too strict and controlling	3.19	1.094
Parents have too high expectations for children	3.22	1.088
<b>Learning methods</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>0.868</b>
Difficulty in absorption of lessons or application of learned knowledge to homework	3.66	1.011
Not paying attention when studying or listening to teachers	3.45	0.982
Pressure on scores and achievements	3.55	1.020
No identification of clear learning goals	3.59	1.013
Stress during exams	3.58	0.994

Don't know how to arrange study time	3.54	1.025
Pressure on choosing subjects suitable for future careers	3.60	1.023
Too much extra study time	3.31	0.976
Too much content of the subjects	3.53	1.006
The teacher's teaching method is difficult to understand	3.39	1.013
Don't know how to self-study	3.46	1.019
<b>Mental health care</b>	<b>3.80**</b>	<b>0.702</b>
Feeling confused about your feelings	3.78	0.805
Being worried about future career direction	3.94	0.849
Feeling stress and fatigue due to academic pressure	3.84	0.873
Being worried about your health and development	3.87	0.866
Lack of confidence in one's own abilities	3.87	0.905
Being worried about relationships with people of the opposite sex	3.68	0.932
Being unable to determine learning motivation	3.87	0.845
Feeling pessimistic about some negative phenomena in society	3.75	0.904
Being afraid of communicating with people	3.74	0.915
Feeling stressed due to not having time to entertain and relax	3.61	0.909
<b>Life skills education</b>	<b>3.73***</b>	<b>0.883</b>
Self-expression skills	3.62	1.005
Skills in building study plans	3.75	0.960
Self-care skills	3.71	0.985
Skills in coping, mastering and managing negative emotions and stress	3.83	0.978
Effective consumption skills	3.66	0.980
Skills in building a healthy lifestyle	3.76	0.953
Skills in demonstrating steadfastness	3.71	0.981
Career selection skills	3.83	0.997
Personal plan management skills	3.73	1.005
Skills in seeking support	3.61	0.985
Time management skills	3.72	1.017
Skills in motivating learning	3.76	1.010
Skills to orient family values and respect social norms	3.70	0.973
Empathy and sharing skills	3.72	0.957
Dispute and conflict resolution skills	3.75	0.988
Active listening skills	3.72	0.975
Skills in accepting others and cooperating	3.66	0.973
Flexible and proactive communication skills in school and society	3.74	0.983
Skills in participating in social activities and demonstrate community responsibility	3.68	0.966
Skills in dealing with friendship and love	3.66	0.974
Negotiation skills in communication	3.74	0.974
Effective teamwork skills	3.74	0.995
Presentation skills with modern means	3.78	0.974
Skills in collecting and processing information	3.76	0.953
Problem-solving skills	3.78	0.995
Decision-making skills	3.74	0.980
Effective critical thinking skills	3.72	0.981

Note: \* 1<sup>st</sup> highest average point, \*\* 2<sup>nd</sup> highest average point, \*\*\* 3<sup>rd</sup> highest average point.

The results of Table 3, shows that the consultation demand of high school students in Cao Lanh City, Dong Thap Province is very diverse and students' desire to be consulted is at a relatively high level. Among the above consultation demands, students prioritize issues requiring consultation related to career guidance, career selection and enrollment information, with a mean of 3.86 (ranked 1). This demand tops the list mostly because high school students want to access a lot of career information to be able to orient their university majors and future jobs. Next, issues that need consultation related to mental health care, with an mean of 3.80 (ranked 2) are the second priority because the students are in their teenage years and have strong emotional development, but they do not know how to manage and control it. Therefore, students have a demand for consultation on issues related to mental health as an option to receive sharing, empathy, and most of all, to be able to regulate emotions and build their confidence. The demand for life skills education with an mean

of 3.73 is the third priority as a result forming and developing life skills for students is very important in the current digital technology era because they need to have skills in handling and coping with all issues related to their lives and studies. Students' desire to be consulted on this demand also shows that they are aware of the important role of life skills. Therefore, the demand to learn and practice basic life skills is essential for children to enhance their ability to adapt and solve problems.

Through the above survey results, we can see that students' expressing their demands for consultation completely matches the level of assessment on the satisfaction of consultation demand of high school students in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province. This correlation is an important basis for proposing solutions to meet and satisfy students' consultation demand in the future.

### 3.3. Factors affecting the satisfaction of the consultation demand of high school students in Cao Lanh City, Dong Thap Province

**Table 4. Factors affecting the consultation demand of high school students in the study area**

Factors	Responses N
There is hesitation due to unfamiliarity with consultation services	264
There is no information about consultation services	212
There is fear of revealing private secrets	205
There is fear of others knowing about your problem	194
There is no permission from family	150
There is no belief in the effectiveness of consultation services	139
The problem is not serious enough to seek consultation	129
The form and content of the consultation are boring	121
Spend a lot of time on studying	110
I can solve it myself, no need for consultation	108
Too little consultation time affects the effectiveness of consultation	107
Another factor	71

The statistical data in Table 3, it shows that the satisfaction of the consultation demand of high school students is affected by many different objective and subjective factors. The factor that most affects students' consultation demand is their psychology. They are hesitant due to being unfamiliar with consultation services. Noticeably, 264 students surveyed said that it was due to their psychology, they felt shy and embarrassed when approaching or talking about consultation services. This subjective factor of their own has greatly hindered them from satisfying their

consultation demand. The next affecting factor is that they do not have any information about consultation services, with 212 students surveyed saying that they did not know the address for consultation and there was also no place for them to go for consultation. In addition, up to 205 students said that due to fear of having their private secrets revealed and 194 students were afraid that others would know about their problems, their consultation demand were almost completely unsatisfied. Especially the demand for consultation on psychological, emotional and love

or sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health is even more unmet and unsatisfied. Family is also one of the important factors affecting students' consultation needs, as a result, 150 surveyed students commented that their parents prevented them from accessing consultation programs, especially those who wanted emotional consultation or to learn about sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health. The effectiveness of consultation activities is also a factor that affects satisfaction of the consultation demand of students. 139 students participating in the survey said that they did not believe in the effectiveness of consultation services, or 129 students thought that the problem they are having was not serious enough to seek consultation services. The form and content of consultation are also a factor that hinders the satisfaction of the consultation demand of students, particularly 121 students surveyed said that the consultation content was boring, not detailed, and did not go into exactly what they needed to know, so it did not leave an impression on them about the consultation programs or other consultation services. In addition, since they spend a lot of time studying, they also limit their access to consultation services as well as satisfaction of their consultation demand (110 students). One factor that affects 108 students is that they think they can solve problems on their own, without consultation, and we think this is a positive "signal" for them being able to solve problems on their own. Finally, because the consultation time is too short, they cannot express all the questions they want to ask and seek consultation, so this factor also affects their consultation demand (107 students).

#### 4. Conclusions

Research results have shown that the consultation demand of high school students in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province is relatively diverse with many different consultation categories. Students want to satisfy their consultation demand at a high level, but due to the school's limited ability to meet and satisfy, students can only basically satisfy their consultation demand on career guidance, career selection and enrollment information, and the remaining necessary consultation demands such as: life skills education, sexual knowledge and adolescent reproductive health, learning methods, mental health care or social relationship with friends, teachers,

and family are hardly given attention to meet and satisfy. The research findings also showed that the consultation demand of high school students is affected by many subjective and objective factors. Among the factors that most students assess as having the most influence on their consultation needs is personal psychology, followed by belonging to the consultation environment.

In short, the satisfaction of consultation demand in schools in the current period is extremely necessary and urgent. It is the satisfaction of students' consultation demand that will help them grow up and know how to cope with disadvantages in their lives, studies and conflicts. The results of the research will be the basis for high schools in Cao Lanh city, Dong Thap province to develop plans to implement practical, appropriate, and diverse activities or consultation models to satisfy the consultation demand of students.

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