

# Research on the Current Situation, Social Effects, and Support System of Marriage and Childbearing Views among Female College Students in Wenzhou

Mingyang Ni

Wenzhou Polytechnic, Wenzhou 325035, China.

## Abstract

**This paper investigates the marriage and childbearing views of female college students in Wenzhou, analyzing their current situation and existing problems in terms of love, sexual attitudes, mate selection, marriage, and childbearing. The survey results reveal that female college students exhibit diversified and personalized characteristics in their views on marriage and childbearing, with late marriage, non-marriage, and low fertility intentions being prominent. These issues not only reflect the influence of personal economic independence and career planning but also reveal insufficient support from family, school, and society. This paper proposes targeted solutions from the individual, family, school, and societal levels, aiming to help female college students better balance personal development with marriage and childbearing needs, thereby promoting sustainable social development.**

## Keywords

**Female college students; Marriage and childbearing views; Current situation survey; Social effects; Support system.**

## 1. Introduction

With social progress and the improvement of women's status, the marriage and childbearing views of contemporary female college students have undergone significant changes. Traditional marriage and childbearing models are being re-evaluated, and the phenomena of late marriage, non-marriage, and low fertility intentions are becoming increasingly common. As a developed coastal city in eastern China, Wenzhou's female college students' views on marriage and childbearing are representative. This study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the current situation and existing problems in the marriage and childbearing views of female college students in Wenzhou through a survey, and to propose targeted solutions, providing a reference for the formulation of relevant policies.

## 2. Analysis of Survey Results

This survey collected 223 valid questionnaires from female college students in several universities in Wenzhou. The survey covered basic information, love views, sexual attitudes, mate selection, marriage views, childbearing views, influencing factors, and support systems. The results show that female college students exhibit diversified and personalized characteristics in their marriage and childbearing views, with late marriage, non-marriage, and low fertility intentions being prominent.

### 2.1. Basic Information

Among the surveyed female college students, sophomores accounted for the highest proportion (47.98%), followed by juniors (32.29%) and freshmen (19.73%). The age distribution was

mainly concentrated between 18-20 years old (64.57%) and 21-23 years old (34.98%). All respondents were female, aligning with the research focus on "female college students."

## 2.2. Love Views

56.5% of female college students have had romantic experiences, while 43.5% have not. Most female college students hold a "go with the flow, not forcing outcomes" attitude towards love (55.61%), with only 5.38% believing that love can succeed. The primary motivations for love are "seeking spiritual resonance" (85.2%) and "emotional companionship" (80.72%).

## 2.3. Sexual Attitudes

65.47% of female college students view sex as "a natural physiological need," while 21.08% see it as "an expression of love." 46.19% accept premarital sex, while 53.81% do not. 75.78% of respondents acquire sexual knowledge through television and the internet.

## 2.4. Mate Selection

96.41% of female college students consider character the most important factor in mate selection, with 93.27% valuing personality equally. 54.71% of respondents prefer meeting partners through social activities, and 53.36% adopt a "go with the flow, not forcing outcomes" attitude towards mate selection.

## 2.5. Marriage Views

51.57% of respondents hold a neutral attitude towards marriage, while 35.43% believe marriage has limited impact on their lives. 83.86% of female college students believe that marriage should be "absolutely loyal, with no tolerance for betrayal." 47.53% of respondents prefer an equal division of roles in their ideal marriage.

## 2.6. Childbearing Views

53.81% of female college students choose "not to have children," 35.43% wish to have one child, and 10.31% wish to have two or more. 64.13% of respondents believe that the best age for childbearing is between 25-30 years old. 77.58% consider economic conditions as the key factor influencing their childbearing choices.

## 2.7. Influencing Factors on Marriage and Childbearing Views

72.2% of female college students believe that personal career planning and life goals influence their marriage and childbearing views, while 79.37% consider their parents' marriage patterns and interactions as the most influential factor. 66.82% of respondents believe that the job market's impact on women's marriage and childbearing is the most significant.

## 2.8. Support Systems

81.61% of female college students believe that enhancing economic independence is key to increasing marriage and childbearing intentions, while 76.68% consider parental respect for their marriage and childbearing choices as the most significant support factor. 78.03% of respondents selected extended maternity and paternity leave as key measures to enhance marriage and childbearing intentions.

## 3. Existing Problems

Through the survey on the current situation of marriage and childbearing views among female college students in Wenzhou, we identified potential issues in their love views, sexual attitudes, mate selection, marriage views, childbearing views, influencing factors, and support systems. These problems not only reflect the characteristics of female college students' marriage and childbearing views but also reveal deficiencies at the societal, family, school, and individual levels. The following sections elaborate on these issues.

### **3.1. Issues in Love Views**

#### **3.1.1. Pessimistic Expectations of Love Success Rates**

Female college students generally hold pessimistic expectations about the success rate of college relationships, with only 5.38% believing that love can succeed. This pessimism may stem from academic pressure, future uncertainties, and the complexity of romantic relationships, as well as societal negative evaluations of college relationships. Such expectations may lead some female college students to adopt a negative attitude towards love, even abandoning or postponing romantic relationships, thereby affecting their emotional development and mental health.

#### **3.1.2. Complexity of Love Motivations**

The motivations for love among female college students are complex. While "seeking spiritual resonance" and "emotional companionship" are primary motivations, some also choose "self-growth" and "romantic experiences." This complexity reflects that female college students not only seek emotional fulfillment but also hope to achieve personal value and enrich emotional experiences through love. However, this diversity may lead to unstable relationships, as differing motivations may result in mismatched expectations and needs, affecting the longevity of the relationship.

### **3.2. Issues in Sexual Attitudes**

#### **3.2.1. Conflict Between Traditional and Modern Views**

Female college students hold diverse views on sex, with traditional views (e.g., "sex only with love") and modern views (e.g., "sex if both parties consent") coexisting. The acceptance of premarital sex is nearly split (46.19% vs. 53.81%). This conflict may arise from conservative attitudes towards sex education in families, schools, and society, as well as the diversified dissemination of sexual views through media and the internet. This conflict may cause confusion and contradiction in female college students when facing sexual issues, potentially affecting the stability of romantic relationships and personal mental health.

#### **3.2.2. Insufficient Sex Education**

Insufficient sex education is also a significant issue for female college students. Although sources of sexual knowledge are diverse, only 65.02% of female college students consider school education as the primary source of sexual knowledge. School sex education may lack systematic and scientific approaches, leading to incomplete and inaccurate understanding of sexual knowledge among students. Insufficient sex education may expose female college students to risks in sexual health, safety, and ethics, thereby influencing their sexual attitudes and behaviors.

### **3.3. Issues in Mate Selection**

#### **3.3.1. Conflict Between Reality and Ideals**

Female college students face a conflict between reality and ideals in mate selection. While "character" and "values" are the most valued factors, economic conditions and family background also hold significant weight. This conflict may arise from the tension between practical pressures (e.g., the importance of economic stability and family support for marital stability) and ideal pursuits (e.g., emotional compatibility and personal values). This conflict may cause confusion and anxiety in the mate selection process, potentially affecting their marital choices.

#### **3.3.2. Conflict Between Family and Personal Desires**

Female college students also face conflicts between family and personal desires in marriage and childbearing choices. While most female college students consider their parents' opinions, some choose "not to marry." This conflict may stem from the tension between traditional family

values and personal independence. Insufficient family support may lead to greater pressure and challenges in the marriage and childbearing process, potentially affecting family harmony.

### **3.4. Issues in Marriage Views**

#### **3.4.1. Non-Essentiality of Marriage**

Female college students generally place low importance on marriage, with only 5.83% considering marriage "very important," while 51.57% view it as "neutral," and 10.31% are "very unwilling" to marry. This phenomenon may stem from the rise of individualism, increased economic independence among women, and the weakening of traditional societal expectations of marriage. The non-essentiality of marriage may lead to increased late marriage and non-marriage, thereby affecting social structure and population policies.

#### **3.4.2. High Expectations of Marital Loyalty vs. Realistic Challenges**

There is a contradiction between female college students' high expectations of marital loyalty and realistic challenges. 83.86% of female college students believe that marriage should be "absolutely loyal, with no tolerance for betrayal," but marital loyalty remains a common challenge in reality. These high expectations may stem from the pursuit of marital stability and security, but real-life marital relationships may face numerous temptations and pressures. This contradiction may lead to distrust in marital relationships, potentially affecting their marital choices.

### **3.5. Issues in Childbearing Views**

#### **3.5.1. Low Fertility Intentions**

Female college students exhibit low fertility intentions, with 53.81% choosing "not to have children," 35.43% wishing to have one child, and 10.31% wishing to have two or more. This phenomenon may stem from personal career development, economic pressures, insufficient societal support, and concerns about parenting responsibilities. Low fertility intentions may lead to lower fertility rates, exacerbating population aging and having profound impacts on social structure and population policies.

#### **3.5.2. Diversification of Childbearing Views**

Female college students hold diversified views on childbearing. While "the crystallization of love" and "liking children" are primary reasons for childbearing, "parental expectations" and "social responsibility" also play a role. This diversification may stem from the conflict between family and societal expectations and personal desires. This conflict may cause confusion and anxiety in female college students regarding childbearing, potentially affecting their childbearing choices.

### **3.6. Issues in Influencing Factors and Support Systems**

#### **3.6.1. Insufficient Family Support**

Female college students have high expectations for family support, but actual support may be insufficient, such as excessive parental interference in marriage and childbearing choices or insufficient economic support. This insufficiency may stem from conflicts between traditional family values and modern marriage and childbearing views. Insufficient family support may lead to greater pressure and challenges in the marriage and childbearing process, potentially affecting family harmony.

#### **3.6.2. Insufficient School Education**

Schools have not fully utilized their role in marriage and childbearing education, career planning guidance, and psychological support. School education may lack systematic and targeted approaches, failing to meet the actual needs of female college students. This

insufficiency may lead to a lack of scientific understanding and psychological preparation for marriage and childbearing issues, potentially affecting their decisions.

### **3.6.3. Insufficient Societal Support**

Society lacks sufficient support in marriage and childbearing policies, workplace security, and childcare services. Social policies may lag behind societal changes, failing to timely meet the needs of female college students. This insufficiency may lead to greater economic and societal pressures in the marriage and childbearing process, potentially affecting their intentions.

## **4. Social Effects**

### **4.1. Population Structure and Social Sustainability**

Low fertility rates and trends of late marriage and childbearing may exacerbate population aging, reduce the labor force, and increase the social burden of elderly care. The miniaturization of family structures and the transformation of traditional family concepts are prompting society to redefine the concept of "family."

### **4.2. Economic Development and Labor Market**

The rising participation rate of women in the labor force intensifies labor market competition and gender differentiation in occupations. Changes in the consumer market may further expand markets targeting single individuals and DINK (Double Income No Kids) families, while shrinking markets related to child-rearing.

### **4.3. Cultural Views and Social Values**

The transformation of traditional views, diversification of marriage concepts, and redefinition of gender roles are accelerating the integration of traditional and modern views. Society is increasingly focusing on individual freedom and choice.

### **4.4. Family Models and Social Support**

The equalization of family roles, diversification of spousal role divisions, and democratization of family decision-making are transforming family functions. The child-rearing function of families is weakening, while emotional support functions are strengthening, requiring society to take on more child-rearing responsibilities.

### **4.5. Social Policies and Public Services**

Adjustments to fertility policies are needed, such as extending maternity and paternity leave, increasing child-rearing allowances, and providing more childcare services. The welfare system needs further improvement, such as developing community-based and home-based elderly care models.

### **4.6. Social Stability and Intergenerational Conflict**

Intergenerational conflicts may intensify due to differing views on marriage and childbearing, affecting family harmony. Society needs to be more inclusive of different lifestyles and choices, reducing biases and discrimination against late marriage, non-marriage, and low fertility.

## **5. Support Systems**

To address the issues in love views, sexual attitudes, mate selection, marriage views, childbearing views, influencing factors, and support systems among female college students in Wenzhou, the following support system recommendations are proposed to enhance their marriage and childbearing intentions.

## **5.1. Personal Capacity Building**

### **5.1.1. Economic Independence**

To enhance economic independence, universities should provide systematic career planning courses to help female students clarify career goals and improve professional competitiveness. Schools and governments should offer more internship opportunities and employment guidance to facilitate their entry into the workforce. These measures can help female students achieve economic independence and reduce the negative impact of marriage and childbearing on career development. For example, universities can collaborate with enterprises to offer internship programs and vocational training, helping female students gain work experience and improve employability. Governments can also support policies encouraging enterprises to hire female students, providing more career development opportunities.

### **5.1.2. Marriage and Childbearing Knowledge and Psychological Preparation**

To address the lack of knowledge and psychological preparation, universities should offer courses on marriage and childbearing, covering topics such as fertility knowledge, parenting skills, and marital relationships. Schools and communities should provide psychological counseling services to help female students alleviate anxiety and build confidence in marriage and childbearing. For example, universities can invite psychology experts and marriage counselors to conduct lectures and counseling sessions, helping students understand psychological changes during marriage and childbearing and develop coping strategies. Communities can establish counseling centers to provide personalized services.

### **5.1.3. Time Management and Balancing Skills**

To help female students balance career and family life, society should advocate for flexible work models, such as remote work and flexible hours. Universities can offer training and lectures to improve time management skills, enabling students to balance multiple roles. For example, enterprises can implement flexible work systems, allowing female employees to choose remote work or adjust working hours during childbearing periods to better care for their families. Universities can offer time management courses to teach students how to allocate time effectively and improve work efficiency.

## **5.2. Family Support**

### **5.2.1. Respect and Understanding**

Parents should respect their daughters' marriage and childbearing choices, avoiding excessive interference. Family members should provide emotional support, encouraging daughters to pursue personal happiness and reducing anxiety caused by family pressure. For example, parents can hold regular family meetings to communicate equally with their daughters, understanding their career plans and marriage and childbearing intentions. Family members can share their experiences to help daughters better understand marriage and family life.

### **5.2.2. Economic Support**

Parents should provide necessary economic support to alleviate the financial burden of marriage and childbearing. Family members, such as spouses and parents, should share child-rearing responsibilities to reduce the pressure on daughters. For example, parents can establish child-rearing funds to cover expenses or purchase child-rearing supplies. Family members can divide household and child-rearing tasks, allowing daughters more time and energy to focus on career development.

### **5.2.3. Role Models**

Parents should set positive examples through their own marital relationships, conveying healthy marriage views. Families should promote inclusive and equal family values, helping daughters develop healthy marriage and childbearing views. For example, parents can

demonstrate mutual respect and support in their daily interactions, creating a harmonious family atmosphere. Family members can discuss and share experiences, promoting equal gender views and encouraging daughters to pursue independent and autonomous lives.

### **5.3. School Support**

#### **5.3.1. Marriage and Childbearing Education and Curriculum**

Universities should incorporate marriage and childbearing education into compulsory courses, covering emotional education, sex education, marriage planning, and fertility knowledge. Regular lectures, seminars, and club activities on marriage and childbearing topics should be organized, inviting experts, scholars, and experienced parents to share insights, enhancing students' understanding of these issues. For example, universities can establish research centers for marriage and childbearing education, conducting related research and teaching activities. Schools can collaborate with communities to organize public events on marriage and childbearing topics, increasing student participation and interest.

#### **5.3.2. Career and Marriage-Childbearing Balance Guidance**

Universities should provide career planning guidance to help female students balance career development with marriage and childbearing. Time management training and psychological counseling should be offered to help students cope with academic, career, and marriage-childbearing pressures. For example, universities can establish career development centers, offering one-on-one career planning consultations. Schools can provide mental health education courses, teaching students stress management techniques to maintain good mental health.

#### **5.3.3. Campus Culture Development**

Universities should foster an inclusive campus culture, respecting students' marriage and childbearing choices and reducing biases and discrimination. Student clubs related to marriage and childbearing should be encouraged, providing platforms for discussion and enhancing students' understanding of these issues. For example, universities can organize marriage and childbearing culture weeks, using posters, exhibitions, and lectures to disseminate knowledge and policies. Schools can support student clubs in organizing related activities, promoting student interaction and discussion.

### **5.4. Societal Support**

#### **5.4.1. Policy Support**

Governments should improve fertility subsidy policies, providing child-rearing allowances to alleviate financial burdens. Maternity and paternity leave should be extended to ensure adequate rest and recovery time after childbirth. Additionally, the supply of affordable childcare services should be increased to reduce child-rearing costs and enhance fertility intentions. For example, governments can offer financial incentives to encourage enterprises and social institutions to provide childcare services. Policies can mandate that enterprises provide maternity insurance, safeguarding female employees' economic rights during childbearing periods.

#### **5.4.2. Workplace Support**

Society should improve workplace security policies, reducing discrimination against women in marriage and childbearing and protecting female employees' employment rights. Flexible work models should be advocated. For example, governments can legislate to prohibit enterprises from discriminating against women in hiring and promotions based on marriage and childbearing status. Enterprises can implement flexible work systems, supporting female employees' work adjustments during childbearing periods.

### 5.4.3. Social Advocacy and Public Opinion Guidance

Media should promote respect for women's marriage and childbearing choices, reducing biases against late marriage, non-marriage, and low fertility. Healthy marriage and childbearing views should be advocated, enhancing societal understanding and tolerance. For example, media can use special reports and public service announcements to promote women's marriage and childbearing rights and policy support. Social organizations can conduct community activities and lectures to disseminate healthy marriage and childbearing views, fostering societal understanding and tolerance.

## 6. Conclusion

Through the survey and analysis of marriage and childbearing views among female college students in Wenzhou, it is evident that contemporary female college students exhibit significant diversification and personalization in their views. While pursuing personal career development and quality of life, they are re-evaluating traditional marriage and childbearing models. This transformation reflects social progress and the improvement of women's status, while also presenting social effects and challenges that warrant deep consideration.

To address these challenges, a comprehensive support system is needed at the individual, family, school, and societal levels. At the individual level, emphasis should be placed on career planning and balancing marriage and childbearing, enhancing economic independence. Families should strengthen intergenerational communication, providing emotional and economic support. Schools should improve marriage and childbearing education systems, fostering an inclusive campus culture. Society should refine marriage and childbearing policies, optimize workplace environments, reduce workplace discrimination, and advocate healthy marriage and childbearing views. These measures can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for female college students, helping them better balance personal development with marriage and childbearing needs.

Overall, the changes in female college students' marriage and childbearing views are an inevitable result of social progress. Society should adopt a more open and inclusive attitude towards this phenomenon, improving support systems to promote the personal happiness of female college students and the sustainable development of society.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported by Wenzhou Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Annual Project (grant no. 24WSK219YBM), Zhejiang Provincial College Visiting Engineer "University-Enterprise Cooperation Project" (grant no. FG2024078) and Teaching Construction and Teaching Reform Research Project of Wenzhou Polytechnic (grant no. WZYzd202405)

## References

- [1] Mao Zhuoyan, Ji Simin, Wan Linlin. Development Trends in Love, Marriage, and Childbearing Views of Contemporary College Students under Low Fertility Rates—Based on Analysis of 32,282 Survey Data Nationwide[J]. *Youth Exploration*, 2024, (02): 88-101.
- [2] Zheng Yexin, Yan Yuteng, Li Ting. College Students' Marriage and Childbearing Views Show Gradual Changes—Attention Should Be Paid to the Actual Needs of Youth Marriage and Childbearing[J]. *Population and Health*, 2022, (09): 9-11.
- [3] Li Ting, Zheng Yexin, Yan Yuteng. Has Marriage and Childbearing in China Been Deinstitutionalized?—Discussion Based on the 2021 Chinese College Students' Marriage and Childbearing Views Survey[J]. *Social Sciences Digest*, 2022, (08): 103-105.

- [4] Hu Jinsheng, Chen Zhihao. The Potential Impact of Contemporary College Students' Views on Love and Marriage on Marriage and Fertility Rates—Based on a Survey of Students from Some Universities in Hangzhou[J]. *Modern Communication*, 2020, (09): 43-44.
- [5] Liu Zhipeng, Chen Jiachun, Wu Jiaying, et al. Analysis of Post-90s College Students' Fertility Intentions and Influencing Factors under the Comprehensive Two-Child Policy—Based on a Survey of Five Universities in Guangzhou[J]. *Exploration*, 2017, (05): 32-39.
- [6] Li Zhen. Survey and Educational Guidance Research on College Students' Marriage and Childbearing Views[J]. *Yinshan Academic Journal (Natural Science Edition)*, 2017, 31(03): 100-102.
- [7] Zhang Jixia. Survey and Educational Guidance Countermeasures Research on College Students' Views on Love and Marriage[J]. *Journal of Jiangsu University of Technology*, 2015, 21(05): 111-114.
- [8] Martin P D, Specter G, Martin D, & Martin M. Expressed Attitudes of Adolescents Toward Marriage and Family Life[J]. *Adolescence*, 2003(15): 359-368.
- [9] Lacey R S, Reifman A, Scott J P, et al. Sexual-moral Attitudes, Love Styles, and Mate Selection[J]. *Journal of Sex Research*, 2004, 41(2): 121-128.
- [10] Wang Y, Kassam M. Indicators of Social Change in the UAE: College Students' Attitudes Toward Love, Marriage and Family[J]. *Journal of Arabian Studies*, 2016, 6(1): 74-94.