



Parenting behaviors and emotional well-being: Exploring stress, anxiety, and depression in Vietnamese children

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ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 16 June 2025

Revised: 26 January 2026

Accepted: 2 March 2026

Published: 24 March 2026

Keywords

Anxiety
Children's mental health
Depression
Emotional well-being
Parenting behaviors
Stress.

Children's emotional well-being is essential for healthy development and strongly influences their academic, social, and psychological outcomes. In Vietnam, where cultural norms prioritize family unity and academic achievement, parenting practices exert significant influence on children's mental health. Gender disparities in stress, anxiety, and depression further complicate these dynamics. This study explores the associations between parenting behaviors, discipline, punishment, and psychological control and children's emotional well-being, with particular attention to gender differences. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 324 students (142 boys, 182 girls) from Grades 6–9 in Vietnamese schools. Participants completed the Parenting Behavior Scale–Child Version and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability assessments, and independent t-tests. Findings showed that 64.2% of children reported normal stress, 38.0% normal anxiety, and 50.9% normal depression levels, though a considerable proportion experienced mild to severe symptoms. Girls consistently reported higher stress ($M = 1.04$, $SD = 0.54$), anxiety ($M = 0.77$, $SD = 0.48$), and depression ($M = 0.85$, $SD = 0.60$) compared to boys. Parenting behaviors were characterized by moderate discipline, infrequent punitive actions, and occasional psychological control. Parenting practices significantly affect children's emotional health in Vietnam. Gender disparities highlight the need for targeted, culturally sensitive interventions to strengthen resilience and reduce psychological distress in school-aged children.

Contribution/Originality: The paper contributes to advancing knowledge on Vietnamese children's emotional well-being by showing how discipline, punishment, and psychological control produce gender-specific effects. It offers new empirical evidence and yields culturally grounded implications for interventions that mitigate psychological distress and strengthen resilience among school-aged youth.

1. INTRODUCTION

The emotional health of children is crucial for their overall growth and has a significant effect on their cognitive, social, and mental development. Emotional well-being in childhood forms the foundation for long-term mental health and is a strong predictor of academic success, social relationships, and future career achievement. Family dynamics, societal expectations, and individual traits all influence emotional resilience and mental health during childhood. Over

recent years, the number of young people experiencing mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression has increased sharply, becoming a major global concern. These issues are particularly evident in developing countries, where rapid societal changes, strict academic requirements, and cultural norms impose unique stresses on young people (Alemi, Cai, Jin, Hu, & Qasim, 2025; Barker, Hartwell, Egan, & Lock, 2023). To solve these problems, you need to have a deep understanding of the factors that affect emotional health, especially within specific cultural and family contexts. Parenting styles significantly influence children's mental health; therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between parental behavior and children's emotional well-being.

There are a lot of different ways that parents can act, from caring and supportive to strict and punishing (Simons & Sutton, 2021; Zhang et al., 2023). These behaviors are crucial in influencing children's emotional control, self-esteem, and coping strategies. Research continually underscores the advantages of authoritative parenting, defined by a harmonious blend of warmth, responsiveness, and consistent discipline, in promoting favorable psychological outcomes in children (Baumrind, Larzelere, & Owens, 2010; Chao & Tseng, 2002; Zheng, Jiang, Zhang, Liang, & Bian, 2024). In contrast, punitive measures and psychological manipulation, where parents utilize coercive tactics that diminish a child's independence, have been associated with negative consequences, such as increased anxiety, sadness, and diminished social skills (Dadds & Salmon, 2003; Tao & Lau, 2023; Xyrakis et al., 2024). In Vietnamese culture, parenting often reflects traditional values that emphasize obedience, respect for parents, and family harmony. These values can make children feel safe and a sense of belonging, but they can also increase emotional pressure on children, especially when linked to high academic expectations. This duality highlights the importance of understanding how children perceive parenting activities and how these perceptions affect their mental health.

Gender differences in emotional well-being have emerged as a significant research domain, revealing unique trends in how boys and girls perceive and articulate psychological discomfort. Research suggests that girls are more prone than boys to report elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, possibly due to a confluence of biological, social, and cultural influences (Salk, Hyde, & Abramson, 2017). Societal conventions frequently impose excessive emotional and academic expectations on females, compelling them to succeed while conforming to established gender roles (Cook & Cusack, 2011; Rudman & Glick, 2021). On the other hand, boys are often taught not to show their feelings, which could lead to them not reporting their mental health problems. In Vietnam, where academic success is highly valued and seen as a sign of family honor, these gendered dynamics may be especially strong. This means that gender-sensitive strategies are needed to understand and manage emotional health. Finding these differences is important for creating personalized programs that help boys and girls deal with their own emotional problems.

Vietnamese families are different because they put a lot of emphasis on connections between generations and shared values, which have a significant effect on how parents raise their children and how children understand these values. Parents often work together to raise their children, but there may be small differences in how they do things. According to research, mothers tend to use verbal discipline, while fathers may prefer stricter rule enforcement (Gershoff, 2002; Maiti, 2021; Simons, Wu, Lin, Gordon, & Conger, 2000). Parenting styles, influenced by cultural norms and societal expectations, directly affect children's perceptions of their parents' actions and the internalization of their emotional responses (Cheung & Lim, 2022; Zhang, Yu, Fu, & Li, 2022). The consistency, or absence thereof, between paternal and maternal parenting strategies can either establish a secure atmosphere that promotes emotional security or a disjointed one that intensifies stress and uncertainty. Comprehending children's viewpoints on parenting actions is essential for acquiring a thorough understanding of family dynamics and their effects on emotional well-being.

This study's goal is to look into how parenting affects children's emotional health in the context of Vietnamese culture. This study examines how often children experience stress, anxiety, and depression, how boys and girls differ in their emotional health, and how children feel about their parents' discipline and behavior. The study aims to clarify the link between parenting activities and children's mental health outcomes while also identifying culturally relevant ways to improve emotional resilience.

Understanding how different parenting styles affect children's emotional health can help design parent education programs that promote positive discipline and reduce the need for harsh or manipulative methods. Schools should also take the initiative by adding mental health support services, stress management programs, and programs that involve parents and teachers in their students' lives to their curricula. This comprehensive plan not only links home and school settings but also ensures that children always have access to help with managing their emotional health. The study contributes to the field of cross-cultural psychology by clarifying the unique challenges and opportunities present in Vietnamese families and culture. It also provides valuable lessons on how to address similar issues in other cultural contexts. This research examines the relationship between parenting behaviors and children's emotional health, which are critical factors in shaping children's development. Its aim is to enhance our understanding of family dynamics. The project's goal is to facilitate efforts by families and communities to help children reach their full emotional and developmental potential through targeted interventions.

1.1. Originality Statement

This study makes an original contribution by providing one of the first empirical examinations of the relationship between parenting behaviors and child emotional well-being in Vietnam, a cultural context that remains underrepresented in international literature. Unlike prior studies that primarily address Western settings, this research highlights how culturally specific parenting practices intersect with gender differences to shape children's experiences of stress, anxiety, and depression. The study, therefore, extends cross-cultural psychology by offering insights relevant not only to Vietnam but also to comparable collectivist societies.

2. METHODS

2.1. Participant

As shown in Table 1, there were 324 people in this study, and they were carefully chosen to represent a wide range of backgrounds. There were 142 boys (43.8%) and 182 girls (56.2%) in the group, which was a fair representation of both genders. The gender distribution is similar to what you would find in most schools, which makes the results more applicable to a wide range of students. The participants were divided into groups based on their grade level, which ranged from 6th to 9th grade. There were 71 students (21.9%) in Grade 6, 99 students (30.6%) in Grade 7, 106 students (32.7%) in Grade 8, and 48 students (14.8%) in Grade 9. This distribution helped us understand how students' learning and development changed as they moved through middle school. The study included students of different grades and genders, which helped obtain a range of perspectives and developmental stages. The large number of participants enhances the reliability of the research results and facilitates the application of the findings to similar educational settings. The differences in gender and grade level provide insights into the variables being studied.

Table 1. Overview of participant.

Characteristics		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Boy	142	43.8
	Girl	182	56.2
Grade	Grade 6	71	21.9
	Grade 7	99	30.6
	Grade 8	106	32.7
	Grade 9	48	14.8
Total		324	100.0

2.2. Measurements

The research employed many validated instruments to evaluate parenting practices and adolescent emotional health within a Vietnamese cultural framework.

The Parenting Behavior Scale - Child Version was derived from the Vietnamese adaptations of the Parenting Behavior Scale - Short Form and the Psychological Control Scale (Van Heel et al., 2019). This instrument evaluated children's perceptions of parental actions, featuring distinct versions for assessing fathers and mothers. The scale consisted of three subscales: Discipline (4 items) with a Cronbach's Alpha (CA) reliability of 0.89, Punishment (5 items) with a CA of 0.89, and Psychological Control (7 items) with a CA of 0.90. Each item was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating 'nearly never' and 5 indicating 'almost always.'

The study utilized the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21) Adolescent Version, created by Szabo and Lovibond (2022), to assess the emotional states of teenagers. The scale assessed three dimensions: Anxiety (CA = 0.70), Stress (CA = 0.74), and Depression (CA = 0.83). Participants evaluated items using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 3, reflecting the frequency of symptoms encountered in the preceding week.

These scales offered thorough assessments of parenting behavior and adolescent mental health, guaranteeing cultural appropriateness and dependability within the Vietnamese setting.

2.3. Procedures

A stratified random sampling method was used to select the sample, ensuring that students were evenly distributed by gender, grade level, and other relevant factors. Participants were provided with consent forms for their parents and assent forms for themselves. These forms explained the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary, and that their responses would be kept confidential. Parents and students were informed that participation would not affect their grades and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. After obtaining permission, data collection sessions were scheduled during regular school hours to avoid disrupting students' academic activities. School administrators and teachers collaborated to plan the sessions, ensuring a smooth transition. Each data collection session lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Before completing the questionnaires, the study team provided a brief introduction, which included an overview of the study's objectives, instructions on how to complete the forms, and a strong emphasis on the importance of honest and accurate responses. Students were instructed to complete the questionnaires independently to minimize potential biases or distractions. The Parenting Behavior Scale - Child Version and the DASS-21 were administered to students sequentially, as shown. The researchers were present to assist participants with any questions or requests for clarification about the items. However, they were careful not to influence the participants' responses. After completing the questionnaires, students placed their answers in sealed envelopes, which the study team then collected for further analysis. Following the completion of all sessions, the questionnaires were stored securely to protect privacy and prevent unauthorized access. Throughout the project, the research team maintained communication with school administrators and teachers to monitor progress and address any issues that arose during data collection. Additionally, all participants were debriefed after the survey, and they received contact information for any further questions or assistance regarding the study's results. Adhering to these procedures ensured that data collection was consistent, reliable, and ethically sound, thereby enhancing the validity and integrity of the research process.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed via SPSS. Descriptive statistics, encompassing frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were computed to capture participant demographics and essential study variables. Reliability analyses were conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the employed scales. Inferential studies utilized independent t-tests to assess group differences in parenting actions and emotional states according to demographic characteristics, including gender. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$, and effect sizes were reported to assess the practical significance of findings. The analytical method facilitated a thorough understanding of the relationship between parental practices and adolescent mental health within the Vietnamese cultural framework.

3. RESULTS

The study sought to evaluate the levels of stress, anxiety, and depression in 324 youngsters, revealing a spectrum of emotional well-being within the sample. Each psychological condition was classified into five levels: normal, mild, moderate, severe, and extremely severe. These data elucidate the incidence of emotional discomfort among youngsters within the research sample.

Table 2. Levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among children (n=324).

Levels of stress	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Normal	208	64.22
Mild	52	16.0
Moderate	42	13.0
Severe	19	5.9
Extremely severe	3	0.9
Levels of anxiety		
Normal	123	38.0
Mild	40	12.3
Moderate	95	29.3
Severe	28	8.6
Extremely severe	38	11.7
Levels of depression		
Normal	165	50.9
Mild	66	20.4
Moderate	64	19.8
Severe	14	4.3
Extremely severe	15	4.6
Total	324	100.0

As shown in Table 2, the majority of individuals reported normal stress levels, with 64.22% (n = 208) indicating the absence of considerable stress. This suggests that most youngsters in the sample experienced a sense of stability regarding stress levels.

A significant percentage, 16.0% (n = 52), reported experiencing mild stress, indicating that several youngsters encountered low levels of strain. Furthermore, 13.0% (n = 42) of children were categorized as experiencing considerable stress, suggesting that these youngsters likely faced persistent obstacles in their daily lives. A minority, 5.9% (n = 19), reported experiencing severe stress, indicating that a small number of children were under significant strain. Ultimately, 0.9% (n = 3) of participants indicated experiencing extremely severe stress, signifying a minimal cohort of youngsters who may have encountered substantial challenges in stress management.

The distribution of anxiety levels was more varied than stress levels. Only 38.0% (n = 123) of the children reported normal anxiety levels, suggesting that over half of the participants experienced some form of elevated anxiety. Mild anxiety was reported by 12.3% (n = 40) of children, indicating that a small proportion of participants felt slightly anxious. A more substantial 29.3% (n = 95) of children experienced moderate anxiety, which may reflect higher levels of concern or worry in their daily lives. Severe anxiety was reported by 8.6% (n = 28), while a relatively high 11.7% (n = 38) of children reported extremely severe anxiety. This higher percentage of extremely severe anxiety could indicate that a significant number of children were dealing with intense emotional distress related to anxiety.

The findings of depression indicated a spectrum of emotional states. A majority of youngsters, 50.9% (n = 165), indicated normal levels of depression, signifying the absence of substantial depressive symptoms. A significant proportion, 20.4% (n = 66), indicated mild depression, implying that many youngsters encountered feelings of melancholy or low mood. Moderate depression was identified in 19.8% (n = 64) of youngsters, indicating a significant

degree of distress among these individuals. Severe depression was reported by 4.3% ($n = 14$), signifying that a lesser number of youngsters exhibited more pronounced depressive symptoms. Ultimately, 4.6% ($n = 15$) of participants indicated very severe depression, underscoring a minor yet troubling cohort of children potentially vulnerable to more profound emotional or psychological challenges.

These findings highlight the heterogeneity in emotional well-being among the children in the research. Although numerous youngsters indicated typical levels of stress, anxiety, and despair, a considerable proportion of individuals encountered mild to severe psychological issues.

Independent t-tests were conducted to examine gender disparities in psychological symptoms, including stress, anxiety, and depression, as measured by the DASS scores. The findings demonstrated notable gender disparities in all three psychological symptoms, suggesting that boys and girls exhibit different patterns of emotional distress.

Table 3. Gender differences between psychological symptoms and parenting behaviors.

Variable	DASS					
	Stress		Anxiety		Depression	
	M ± SD	p	M ± SD	p	M ± SD	p
Gender		<0.001		<0.05		<0.001
Boy	0.76 ± 0.45		0.63 ± 0.44		0.56 ± 0.45	
Girl	1.04 ± 0.54		0.77 ± 0.48		0.85 ± 0.60	

As shown in Table 3, the results indicated that girls encountered markedly elevated stress levels compared to boys. Boys achieved a mean score of 0.76 (SD = 0.45), but girls attained a mean score of 1.04 (SD = 0.54), $t(322) = -5.00$, $p < 0.001$. This data indicates that, on average, girls reported greater stress than boys, underscoring a possible gender-related disparity in the experience of stress among children. Elevated stress levels in girls may signify several underlying reasons, including social expectations, academic pressure, or disparities in emotional management.

A notable disparity in anxiety levels was observed between boys and girls, with girls indicating elevated levels of anxiety. Boys exhibited a mean score of 0.63 (SD = 0.44), whereas girls had a mean score of 0.77 (SD = 0.48), $t(322) = -5.03$, $p < 0.05$.

This indicates that girls were more prone to experiencing anxiety than boys. The results align with other studies indicating that girls, especially in childhood and adolescence, may exhibit a heightened susceptibility to anxiety owing to sociocultural and developmental influences, including enhanced emotional sensitivity or gender-specific stressors.

A comparable tendency was observed for depression, with girls demonstrating markedly higher levels compared to boys. The average depression score for boys was 0.56 (SD = 0.45), whereas girls exhibited a higher average score of 0.85 (SD = 0.60), $t(322) = -5.73$, $p < 0.001$. The results indicate that the girls in the study had more depressive symptoms than the boys, potentially reflecting disparities in the influence of life events, social interactions, or gender roles on emotional well-being.

The findings indicate notable gender disparities in the manifestation of psychiatric disorders, with girls exhibiting consistently elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression relative to boys.

The children's perspectives on the behaviors of parents were evaluated for both fathers and mothers across three primary dimensions: discipline, punishment, and psychological control. The findings elucidate children's perceptions of parental acts across various disciplinary and interactive contexts, revealing both parallels and distinctions in behaviors ascribed to fathers and mothers.

Table 4. The perspective of children on parenting behaviors.

Items	Father	Mother
	<i>M ± SD</i>	<i>M ± SD</i>
When my child doesn't follow a rule (for example, coming home late without a good reason or not completing a chore), I punish him/her.	1.19 ± 1.03	1.21 ± 1.11
I will punish my child when he/she does something annoying (like whining, defying me, or being argumentative).	1.22 ± 1.08	1.23 ± 1.78
When my child does something wrong, I will punish him/her by taking away things he/she likes (for example, not being allowed to watch TV, not being allowed to go out, having to come home early, having to go to bed earlier than usual...).	1.09 ± 1.13	1.18 ± 1.19
When my child does something he/she is not allowed to do, I punish him.	1.19 ± 1.05	1.25 ± 1.07
Discipline	1.17 ± 0.85	1.22 ± 0.95
I slap my child when he/she does something wrong.	0.45 ± 0.84	0.44 ± 0.88
I hit my child when he/she is naughty and/or disobedient.	0.84 ± 0.93	0.94 ± 1.01
When I have a conflict with my child, I often push him or her hard.	0.25 ± 0.69	0.23 ± 0.66
I insult my child when he/she does something I disapprove of.	0.40 ± 0.84	0.36 ± 0.81
I slap my child when he/she doesn't keep a promise.	0.19 ± 0.59	0.22 ± 0.61
Punishment	0.43 ± 0.59	0.44 ± 0.62
I change the subject whenever my child has something he/she want to say.	0.64 ± 0.98	0.63 ± 0.99
I interrupted my child when he/she spoke.	0.59 ± 0.86	0.56 ± 0.84
I blame my child when other family members have problems.	0.42 ± 0.88	0.47 ± 0.93
I bring up (restate or refer to) my child's past mistakes when he/she criticizes me.	0.68 ± 1.01	0.71 ± 0.99
I am less intimate with my child when he/she disagrees with me.	0.73 ± 1.09	0.55 ± 0.95
I ignore my child when he/she disappoints me.	0.59 ± 1.01	0.51 ± 0.87
When my child upsets me, I won't talk to him/her until he/she makes me happy again.	0.56 ± 0.94	0.58 ± 0.97
Psychological control	0.60 ± 0.68	0.57 ± 0.66
Total	0.68 ± 0.59	0.69 ± 0.62

As shown in Table 4, the findings indicated that both fathers and mothers exhibited comparable amounts of disciplinary behavior. Fathers achieved a mean score of 1.17 (SD = 0.85), whereas mothers attained a slightly higher mean of 1.22 (SD = 0.95). Children indicated that their parents sporadically enforced discipline in response to rule violations or undesirable behaviors. For example, in response to the statement “When my child engages in prohibited behavior, I administer punishment,” children provided average scores of 1.19 (SD = 1.05) for fathers and 1.25 (SD = 1.07) for mothers. The findings indicate that both parents utilized comparable tactics for rule enforcement, while mothers reported a marginally higher frequency.

Reduced average scores were observed for punitive behaviors, indicating that physical and verbal punishment were used less frequently. Fathers achieved a mean score of 0.43 (SD = 0.59), while mothers attained a comparable mean score of 0.44 (SD = 0.62). Specific instances, such as striking the child for breaking promises, received low ratings for both fathers (M = 0.19, SD = 0.59) and mothers (M = 0.22, SD = 0.61), suggesting that such behaviors were rare. Although some physical punishment instances, like striking a child for disobedience, were recorded with slightly higher frequency (fathers: M = 0.84, SD = 0.93; mothers: M = 0.94, SD = 1.01), these figures still reflect an overall infrequent use of severe punitive actions.

The examination of psychological control strategies produced mean scores of 0.60 (SD = 0.68) for fathers and 0.57 (SD = 0.66) for mothers, suggesting sporadic, although relatively rare, application of these practices. Both parents were noted to reference prior errors during conflicts (fathers: M = 0.68, SD = 1.01; mothers: M = 0.71, SD = 0.99) or to disregard the child while feeling discontent (fathers: M = 0.59, SD = 1.01; mothers: M = 0.51, SD = 0.87). The low-frequency scores indicate that these activities were atypical in most households.

The mean scores for perceived parenting behaviors were 0.68 (SD = 0.59) for fathers and 0.69 (SD = 0.62) for mothers, indicating a uniform pattern in the reported behaviors of both parents. The data indicate that although disciplinary actions were reported as modest, punitive, and psychological control tactics were regarded as infrequent. The uniformity in scores between fathers and mothers indicates a harmonious parenting methodology as perceived

by the children. The findings offer significant insights into children's interpretations of parental behavior and underscore the necessity for interventions that foster healthy parent-child connections.

4. DISCUSSION

This study examines the mental health of Vietnamese children and how they perceive their parents' behavior in a comprehensive manner. The results reveal both positive and negative aspects of children's emotional states and family dynamics. Many children were mentally stable, but a significant number experienced serious emotional issues, particularly stress, anxiety, and depression. These findings highlight the complexity of childhood emotional health, which is influenced by various factors such as family relationships, societal expectations, and academic pressures. In Vietnamese culture, norms emphasizing respect for authority, academic achievement, and maintaining family cohesion play a crucial role in how children process and respond to their emotions. This aligns with previous research indicating that cultural norms and family environments significantly impact emotional regulation and mental health (Archuleta, 2015; Raposo & Francisco, 2022; Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024).

The gender differences observed in psychological symptoms present an important dimension for discussion. Girls consistently reported higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than boys, suggesting that societal and environmental pressures may disproportionately affect them. These findings are supported by prior studies showing that girls often face heightened expectations to succeed academically, maintain social harmony, and adhere to gendered behavioral norms (Andrews, Cook, Nielson, Xiao, & Martin, 2022; Makelele, 2024; Nguyen, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2024). Cultural norms may encourage girls to show their feelings while discouraging boys from doing so. This could make boys less likely to report feeling bad. Because society often tells boys to hide their emotions, it may be harder for them to get the help they need when they are experiencing mental health problems. The results of the study show that mental health interventions need to be gender-sensitive and not only recognize these differences but also work to address them. Programs that teach emotional resilience should provide boys and girls with tools to manage stress and anxiety in a healthy way, and they should also create spaces where individuals can express their feelings freely. Additionally, culturally appropriate interventions can help change societal norms that exacerbate these gendered emotional issues. They can also promote balanced approaches that support all children. What children think about their parents' behavior can offer valuable insights into how Vietnamese families function. It was observed that both fathers and mothers employed moderate forms of discipline and rarely used harsh punishments such as physical or verbal punishment. These findings suggest that many parents may be adopting an authoritative parenting style, which combines warmth and support with the setting of clear rules. Such parenting has been associated with positive outcomes for children, including better emotional regulation, higher self-esteem, and improved academic performance (Ang & Sin, 2021; Djambazova-Popordanoska, 2016; Garcia & Serra, 2019). The alignment between fathers' and mothers' disciplinary approaches also suggests a shared parenting philosophy that emphasizes family harmony and consistent behavior management strategies. This reflects cultural values in Vietnam that promote familial cohesion and shared parental responsibilities in child-rearing. Consistency between parents in disciplinary strategies is beneficial as it fosters a stable environment for children, reducing confusion about behavioral expectations and promoting a sense of security and predictability in family life.

Despite these positive trends, the study identified occasional instances of psychological control tactics by both fathers and mothers, including behaviors such as bringing up past mistakes during conflicts or withdrawing communication when disappointed. Although infrequent, these actions can be harmful to a child's emotional development. Research has consistently linked psychological control to increased anxiety, reduced self-esteem, and impaired social competence in children (Kim & Cicchetti, 2004; Panayiotou, Panteli, & Theodorou, 2016; Ying, Shuang, & Jia, 2023). The presence of these behaviors, even at low levels, underscores the importance of educating parents on the long-term psychological consequences of using such strategies. Promoting positive communication practices can help mitigate the use of psychological control and strengthen parent-child relationships. Effective

strategies include active listening, validating children's emotions, and using constructive feedback instead of punitive or controlling tactics. These approaches not only foster healthier emotional development in children but also build trust and mutual respect between parents and children, reinforcing a supportive family environment.

These results have significant impacts on both the family and the school systems. Schools play an important role in keeping kids mentally healthy by including counseling services, stress management programs, and peer support systems in their lessons. Schools can help parents learn how to communicate and discipline their children properly by offering workshops and programs for parents. These kinds of programs can link home and school, making sure that kids always have help with managing their emotions. Future studies should look into how parenting has changed over time and how changes in culture affect how parents and children interact and how children feel emotionally. Longitudinal studies may help us understand how parental methods affect psychological outcomes over time. Also, understanding the roles of extended family members, especially grandparents who often play a key role in raising children in Vietnamese households, may give us a better idea of how families work and how they affect child development. Families and communities can help kids be strong and emotionally healthy by creating situations that support good parenting and help kids deal with their emotional problems. This comprehensive plan will help kids manage the demands of family, school, and society, which will ultimately support their growth. This study has several limitations, even though it provides valuable information. The reliance on children to report their own data may have introduced bias because they might have wanted to please adults or made mistakes in recalling events. This could have influenced the accuracy of the data regarding parental behavior and children's feelings. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality and analyze long-term trends. The cultural differences within the sample may restrict the generalizability of the results to other contexts, and the absence of parental self-reports or consideration of broader environmental factors, such as peer pressure and the school environment, reduces the comprehensiveness of the findings. Boys may underreport their mental health issues due to cultural norms about emotional expression. This highlights the importance of employing other methods, such as qualitative interviews. Future research should address these limitations by adopting longitudinal designs, incorporating multiple informants, and considering a wider range of environmental factors to gain a more complete understanding of child mental health and parenting practices.

5. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates how complicated the association is between parenting styles and children's mental health in the context of Vietnamese culture. A lot of the kids had normal levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, but many experienced serious emotional problems. Girls exhibited more problems in all areas of mental health. Parents acted very similarly, employing moderate discipline methods and few punishments. Still, the occasional use of psychological control strategies highlights the importance of programs that promote good communication and emotional support. The results indicate that family practices and schools need to implement culturally appropriate changes to improve emotional health and build resilience. Longitudinal patterns and a broader range of environmental and family factors should be investigated in future research to enhance understanding and support for children's mental health.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Institutional Review Board Statement: This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of VNU University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi, Vietnam, under protocol number (870/QĐ-XHNV), dated (March 21, 2023). Informed verbal consent was obtained from all participants, and all data were anonymized to protect participant confidentiality.

Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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