

# **FAMILY EDUCATION AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A VIEW OF VIETNAMESE PARENTS**

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## **Abstract**

*Family education plays an important role on the formation and development of the personality of students in primary schools. However, in Vietnam, besides achievements, family education still has some problems that hinder the personality development of students at primary school age. The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of awareness and implementation of educational contents and methods among Vietnamese parents to see if this is hindering the personality development of learners. The study surveyed 136 parents to collect data through a questionnaire consisting of 6 variables and 46 items on the Linkert scale, the reliability of the scale was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha tests. The results show that Vietnamese parents always spend time caring for their children, but there is no balance between the content and methods of personality education. In particular, parents spend too much time helping their children get good scores at school. This suggests that parent education programs in Vietnam need to be expanded in the future as a solution to increase family participation in the personality education process for primary school students in Vietnam.*

**Keywords:** *Vietnamese education; family education; personality development; primary education; primary students.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Family education plays an important role on personality formation and development of students in primary school. The impact of family education is of great concern to parents, educators, government and the public. The family is considered the first school and parents are the personal educators for their children (NIILM University; Maccarenco, 1978; Pesecnicova, 1980; Tho & Thuy, 2014; Fan, 2017; Lien et al, 2019; Yan Li & Michel Vandebroek; 2020). "Home is the school of schools and parent are teachers "par excellence". A home provides every life situation in which a child needs training. It is the first socializing agency. A home also provides opportunities for open expression of personal, emotional and social behavior" (NIILM University, p.55). Maccarenco & Pesecnicova both affirmed the importance of early childhood education

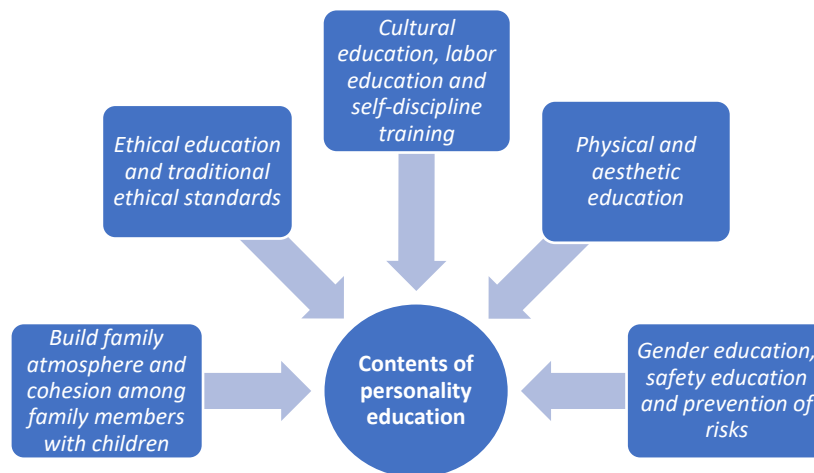
through the role of the family. "If children are not educated by their families in the beginning, reform will take a lot of efforts not only for the family, but also for the society" (Maccareno, 1978). Pesecnicova, an educator, also emphasized that in order for our children to grow up to be healthy, playful, to know how to love life and contribute many things to the society, children must first be educated of labor (learning labor, family labor, social labor). This is because the personality and morality of the children, first of all, are formed in the labor process (Pesecnicova, 1980). According to Yan Li & Michel Vandebroek (2020), family education "are universally valid, but that look at nuances that are embedded in specific cultural, political and geographical historicity" (p.185).

Vietnamese family development strategy also affirms "The family is the cell of the society, an important environment for forming, nurturing and educating personality, preserving and promoting the good traditional culture, combating social evils, creating human resources for the cause of national construction and defense" (PMSRV, 2012). Article 3 of the Law on Education of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam clearly states that "Educational activities must be carried out in accordance with the principles of study in parallel with practice, education combined with production labor, and the theory associated with practice, school education combined with family education and social education" (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005). Recent studies also suggest that the influence of parents and families on children's upbringing is marked by the local cultural environment and Confucian thought, which emphasizes the cohesion between generations, and academic tradition (Le Minh, 1993; Tuyen, 1994; Le Thi, 1997; Liem, 2001; Que, 2018; Tho % Thuy, 2014;). Due to influence of Asian culture, the Confucian tradition associated with the acquisition of ideological education advancement of global educators, educational activities of Vietnamese parents with children focus on 5 contents:

- Build family atmosphere and cohesion among family members with children.
- Ethical education and traditional ethical standards.

Cultural education, labor education and self-discipline training for children. For a country with long-standing civilization, tradition of respect for learning and knowledge, Vietnamese families are aware of the role of cultural education for their children from an early age, such as education of hard-working characteristics, help children constantly strive to learn:

- Physical and aesthetic education.
- Gender education, safety education and prevention of risks for children.



*Figure 1. Five aspects of family education for Vietnamese primary students*

However, in today's Vietnam, over-interest, deviation or "chasing after achievements and external appearances, competing over losing in the emulation and reward ladders" (Trung, 2016, p. 19) of parents becomes a "social phenomenon". Researchers seem to be inclined to suggest that the problem of social dysfunction is rooted in dysfunction in the family (Gayet, 2004, p.10). The studies in Vietnam have only provided the theoretical framework on the influence and role of the family on children's personality development, but not yet measure the level of awareness and implementation of the contents and methods of family education. This makes it necessary for educators and government once again to reconsider the relationship between the emphasis on the role of parents (in theory) and the practice of parental involvement in development personality of Vietnamese children today.

Based on problems described, the research questions of this study are:

- 1) What are the Vietnamese parents' perspectives of family education for primary students?
- 2) How have Vietnamese parents implemented FE contents and methods for their children?

### **METHODS**

This research employed a quantitative case design to investigate the level of awareness and implementation of educational contents and methods among Vietnamese parents. The samples for this research were selected at a typical public primary school in Hanoi, the largest metropolitan area of Vietnam, with the participation of 136 parents of students from Grade 1 to Grade 5 of Dich Vong B Primary School, Cau Giay District, Hanoi City. Table 1 shows some key statistics on their occupations, educational levels and marital status.

Table 1  
*Characteristics and status of students' parents*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Occupations</b>			
1	State officials	68	50.0
2	Self-employed, business man	59	43.4
3	Housewife, retired people	9	6.6
<b>Educational qualifications</b>			
1	Lower secondary education	11	8.1
2	Upper secondary education	36	26.5
3	College/University education	69	50.7
4	Post-graduate education	20	14.7
<b>Marital status</b>			
1	Parents live together	112	82.4
2	Parents don't live together (working far away, living away from each other)	19	14.0
3	Divorce, separate	5	3.7

A self-developed questionnaire was used to survey their perspectives on personality education. The study focuses on the contents and methods of family education that parents have used to develop their children's personality in primary school age.

The questionnaire includes 46 items, divided into 6 groups: 1) Information, family characteristics (4 contents - 10 items); 2). The concept of personality education for primary school students (4 items); 3) The time parents spend taking care of their children (2 contents - 8 items); 4) Educational content (5 items); 5) Educational methods (5 items); 6). Build family rules (2 contents - 14 items). The questions were then surveyed in the meetings with students' parents. The scale was designed in the form of 3-step Linkert scale with 3 answer options, namely: Levels of assessment include Extremely Necessary, Necessary, Unnecessary; levels of performance consist of Normally, Occasionally, Never. The tool was first tested before being used in the research survey.

After reaching the research subjects who are parents having children attending primary school, the research team explained to parents the contents, purposes of the research and the research methods. Each student's parent was given 1 questionnaire. The data processing is based on SPSS 20.0 software. The descriptive statistical operations used include percentage, average point, standard deviation, reliability of the scale ...

To check the reliability and validity of the items, we used Cronbach's alpha tests. The experiment's reliability coefficients are in the range of 0.777 - 0.952.

Table 2  
*Reliability of the scales*

<b>Measurement domains</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha coefficient</b>
Information, family characteristics	10	0.804
The concept of personality education for primary school students	4	0.833
The time parents spend taking care of their children	8	0.798
Educational content	5	0.952
Methods of education	5	0.940
Building family rules	14	0.776

Nunnaly (1978) proposed, 0.7 is the minimum Alpha coefficient of Cronbach acceptable for the survey scale. Values show that the questionnaire used for the research was consistent, reaching a relatively good level. Therefore, the scale used in this research is suitable for practical application.

## **FINDINGS**

### ***The amount of time Vietnamese parents spend with their children***

Family education activities are firstly reflected in the time parents spend with their children. Figures 2 and 3 show the amount of time parents spend with their children on weekdays and weekends.

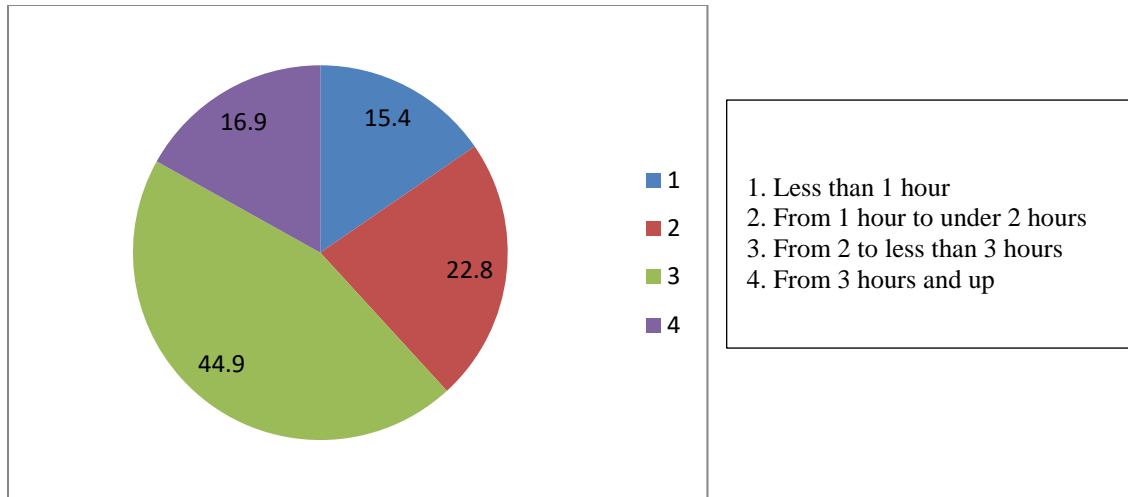


Figure 2. Amount of time parents spend on educating primary school students per day on weekdays

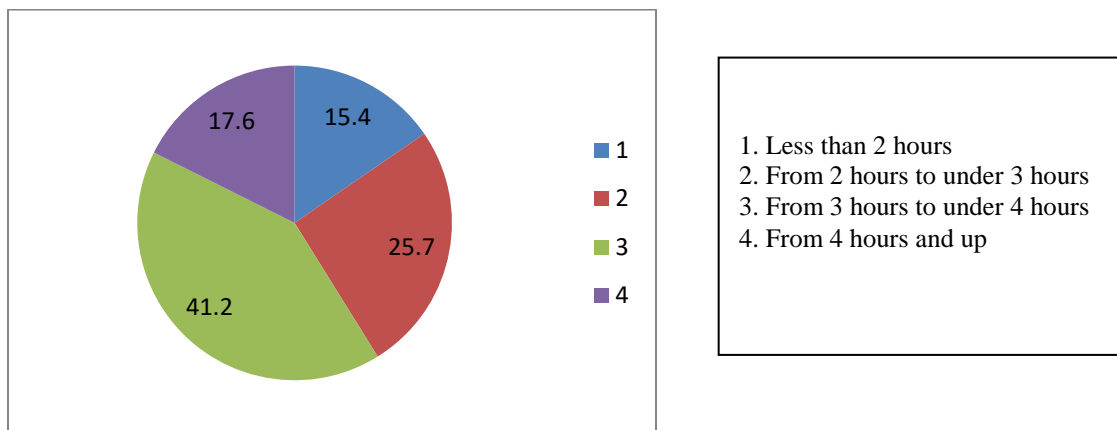
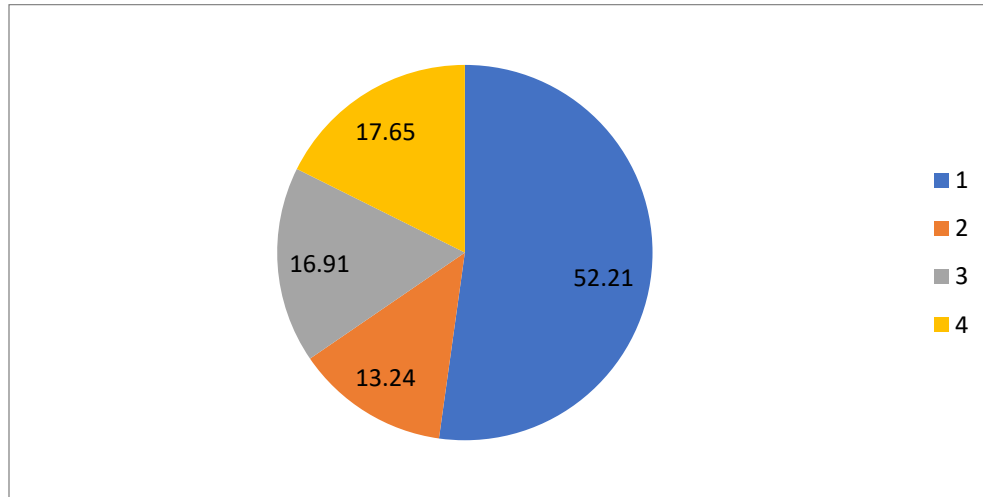


Figure 3. Amount of time parents spend on educating primary school students per day on weekends

The result in Figure 3 shows that parents who spend 2 or more hours educating children accounts for the largest proportion of 61.8% (level 3 + level 4) on weekdays. Because primary school students have to study at school all day, from 7.30 AM – 5 PM, family education is held in the evening, from 6 PM to 10 PM. Besides, due to the nature of their jobs, up to 38.2% of parents answered that they only spent less than 2 hours a day (level 1 + 2).

Figure 3 shows a paradox that is happening in Vietnam. Although children do not have to go to school on weekends, the amount of time Vietnamese parents spend on their children is slightly higher than on weekdays. Survey results show that only 58.8% of the 136 parents surveyed indicated that they spent at least 3 hours per day with their children on weekends (level 3+4). The percentage of parents giving children less than 3 hours a day during weekends (level 1+2) accounted for 41.2% of those who were consulted.

***Vietnamese parents' conception of personality education***



1. Viewpoint 1: Is the systematic impact of older family members and the entire lifestyle of the family on the personal development of primary students who are members of that family.
2. Viewpoint 2: A teaching activity and personality, education of primary students taking place at home.
3. Viewpoint 3: Is all the daily activities of family members related to primary students.
4. Viewpoint 4: An activity in which older members manage their children's behavior and personality.

*Figure 4. Parents' perception of personality education concept*

The result in the Figure 4 shows that the percentage of parents with the highest level of conceptual awareness (concept 1) reached 52.21%. This shows that the majority of parents surveyed have relatively correct conceptual awareness. In addition, some parents have not really understood all the concept of family education with the rate of 13.24% choosing concept 2, 16.91% choosing concept 3 and 17.65% choosing concept 4. This proves that, despite the concern about family education for their children, Vietnamese parents are not aware of the importance of family-school-society relations. This perception is closely related to the results of the survey on parents and family time in Vietnam for children of primary school age described above.

***Parent's awareness of family education content for primary students***

Family education is the systematic impact of older family members and the entire traditional family values on the development of primary students' personality. Personality development of primary school students through a family lifestyle education organization that includes a lot of content. Vietnamese parents' awareness of family education contents is shown in Figure 5.

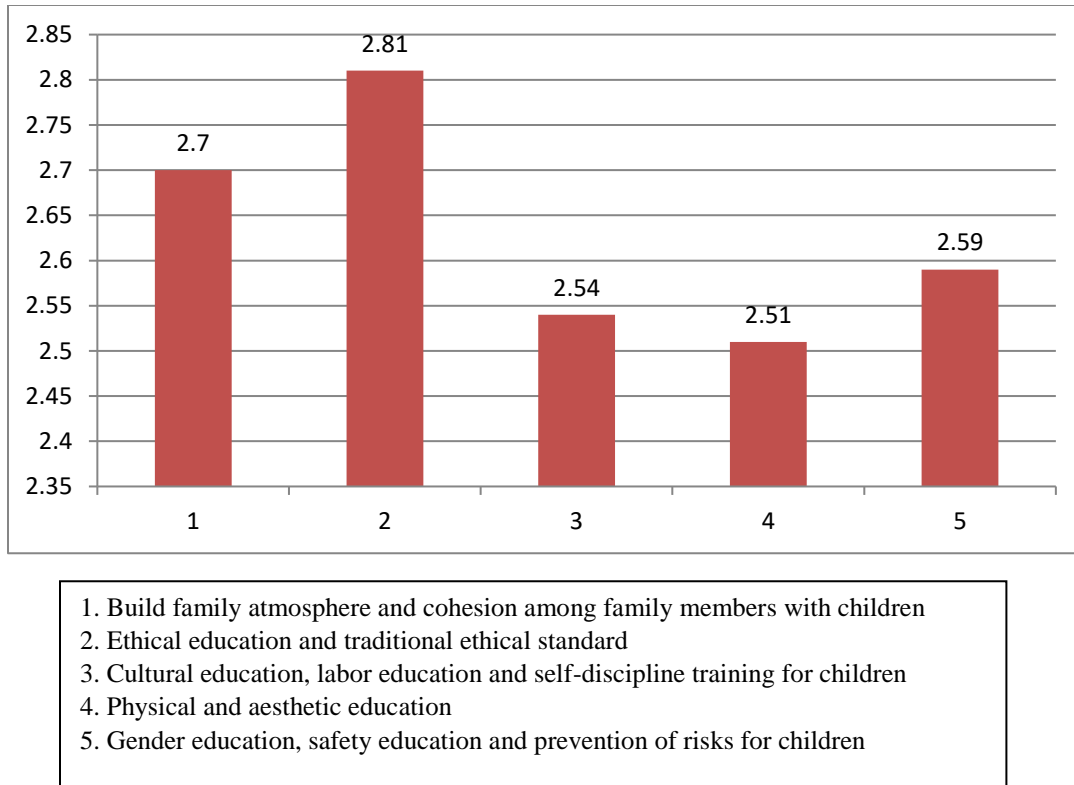


Figure 5. Vietnamese parents' awareness of family education contents

For primary students' parents, "Ethical education and traditional ethical standard" is ranked highest (Mean = 2.81), followed by "Build family atmosphere and cohesion among family members with children" (Mean = 2.70), "Gender education, safety education and prevention of risks for children" (Mean = 2.59), "Cultural education, labor education and self-discipline training for children" (Mean = 2.54), "Physical and aesthetic education" (Mean = 2.51) (see chart 5).

The content "Ethical education and traditional ethical standards" are the highest rank with Mean = 2.81. This is explained by the influence of Asian culture and the perception of parents of children's standards. In Vietnam today, most parents thought that a good personality of children is firstly obedient, obedient to grandparents, parents, and teachers.

In inspirational education, the issue of "building the atmosphere and cohesion between members and children" is also important. This educational content was ranked second with Mean = 2.70, of which 72% of parents rated it as "very important", 25.7% of parents rated it as "important" and only 2.3% of parents chose it at the "unimportant" level.

The content "cultural education, labor education and independence training" ranked third with Mean = 2.59, and 91.9% of parents surveyed answered that cultural and labor education was important and very important, only 8.1% of the parents considered it to be unimportant. However, of the 91.9% of parents who value cultural education, 95.2% of parents admit that their children spend too much time studying at school and taking extra classes. Only 14.4% of parents directly participate in cultural education for children, and 4.1% of families let children learn by themselves. This is explained by the fact that parents' evaluation of student learning outcomes is based mainly on scores. If a 9- or 10-point test is good, an 8 or under 8 score is bad. It is the stresses in the "excessive attention" that are at risk for the psychological crisis and the score pressure for urban

children is higher than for their rural peers, which is the root cause of the "achievement disease" of primary students' parents.

In addition, because parents pay too much attention to cultural education, physical education, aesthetics and sex education, risk education are overlooked and parents are not equipped with skills and measures to well implement these two contents of personality education at home.

**Methods of family education to develop primary students' personality**

The level of evaluation and implementation of personality education methods of parents of primary school students in Vietnam are shown in Figure 7.

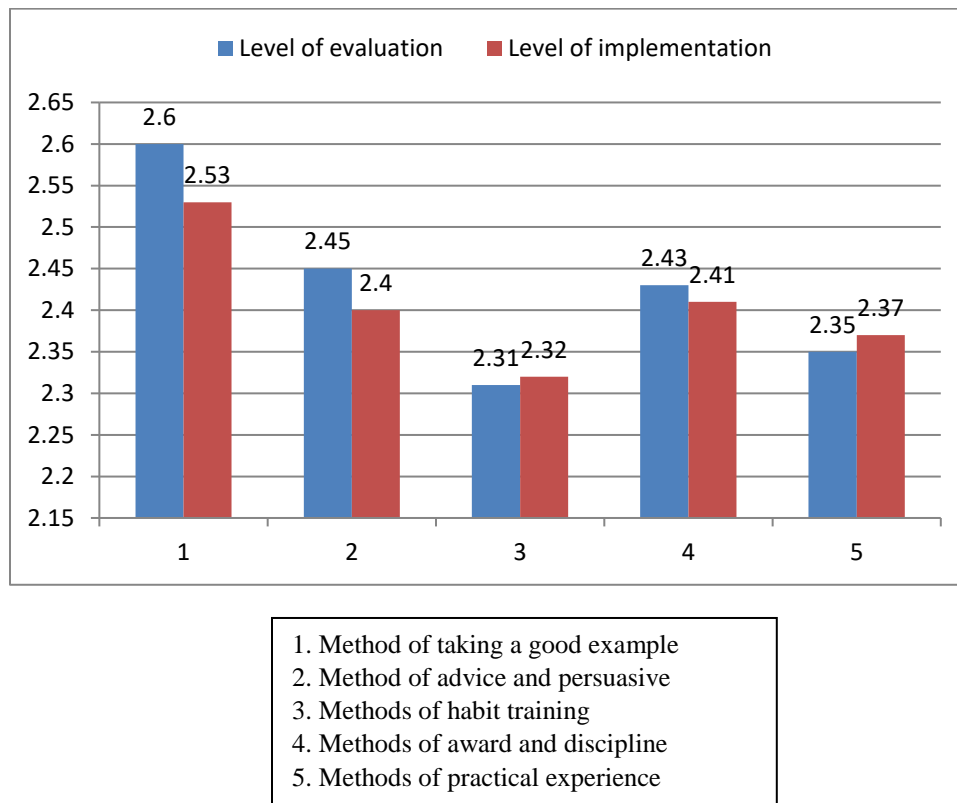


Figure 7. Degree of evaluation and implementation of family education methods for primary school students

Most parents surveyed believed that the “Method of taking a good example” is the work necessary to improve the effectiveness of their children's personality education (Mean = 2.6) and most parents tried to carry out this work regularly in the family (Mean = 2.53). The surveyed parents also said that "Method of advice and persuasive” is essential (Mean = 2.45) and implemented regularly (Mean = 2.4). The “Methods of award and discipline” has the same results as the persuasive and persuasive method with the positive evaluation of parents about the level of evaluation (Mean= 2.43) and the level of implementation (Mean = 2.41 ). Family education emphasizes moral values, so educational methods exemplified methods admonish practice ethical standards or methods of reward-punishment are the common methods of Vietnamese parents.



Table 2  
*Level of evaluation and implementation of family education for primary students*

No	Items	Level of evaluation					Level of implementation				
		Medium score	Standard deviation	%			Medium score	Standard deviation	%		
				Unnecessary	Necessary	Very necessary			Never	Sometimes	Usually
1	Method of taking a good example	2.60	0.670	10.3	19.1	70.6	2.53	0.677	10.3	26.5	63.2
2	Methods of advice and persuasion	2.45	0.739	14.7	25.7	59.6	2.40	0.734	14.7	30.1	55.1
3	Methods to practice habits	2.31	0.775	19.1	30.9	50.0	2.32	0.778	19.1	29.4	51.5
4	Method of reward and discipline	2.43	0.747	15.4	25.7	58.8	2.41	0.745	15.4	27.9	56.6
5	Method of practical experience.	2.35	0.773	18.4	28.7	52.9	2.37	0.778	18.4	26.5	55.1

For primary school students, practicing good habits is a useful measure for the formation and development of children's personality. In the awareness of Vietnamese parents, "Methods to practice habits" for primary school age (item 3) is relatively important with Mean = 2.31, of which 30.9% of parents rated it as necessary, 50% parents rated it very necessary, and most parents actively implemented this method (Mean = 2.32), of which 29.4% of parents rated it occasionally, 51.5% of parents rated on a regular basis.

***Establishing family rules for children***

Table 3 shows the level of awareness and implementation of the establishment of good habits for children by Vietnamese parents today.

Table 3  
*Forms of habit training for Vietnamese primary school students*

No	Items	Level of evaluation					Level of implementation				
		Medium score	Standard deviation	%			Medium score	Standard deviation	%		
				Unnecessary	Necessary	Very necessary			Never	Sometimes	Usually
1	Training habit of things to do and not to do when being at home and in public areas.	2.41	.735	14.7	29.4	55.9	2.40	.733	14.7	30.9	54.4
2	Training the habit of using common and private utensils, equipment in the house.	2.51	.655	8.8	30.9	60.3	2.49	.655	8.8	33.8	57.4

3	Training the habit of expressing opinions and speaking in the family	2.41	.715	13.2	32.4	54.4	2.43	.716	13.2	30.9	55.9
4	Training the habit of actively helping, doing tasks such as cleaning, cooking, folding clothes ...	2.43	.674	10.3	36.0	53.7	2.53	.677	10.3	26.5	63.2
5	Training the habit of posture, style of enjoying meals, and managing personal activities.	2.61	.598	5.9	27.2	66.9	2.62	.609	6.6	25.0	68.4
6	Training the habit of behaving with grandparents, parents, and family members	2.46	.769	16.9	20.6	62.5	2.46	.778	17.6	18.4	64.0
7	Training the habit of the violation handling levels and rewarding forms	2.53	.709	12.5	22.1	65.4	2.49	.710	12.5	25.7	61.8
8	Training the habit of asking for help and encouragement from parents when encountering a problem.	2.37	.760	16.9	28.7	54.4	2.39	.752	16.2	28.7	55.1

The survey results show that there are 8 forms of exercise routine that Vietnamese parents use in shaping their children. In particular, the highest ranking is the form of "Train habits about posture, eating style, personal management style" with Mean = 2.61 and the lowest is the form of "Train habits on topics suggest helping, encouraging from parents when having problem" with Mean = 2.37.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Family education plays an important role on the personality development of children, especially in the primary school period. The correct and active participation of parents and families has a positive correlation with the child's personality development manifestations and vice versa. The results of the above study show that most Vietnamese families today have few children and have favorable material conditions for great attention to the issue of character education for children. The time spent with children of primary school age at different levels partly reflects that Vietnamese parents are increasingly paying attention to their children's personality development. The reason is that the economic situation, income of Vietnamese families, the improvement of people's intellectual level, the development of education, etc., promote a sense of investment, concern and expression of responsibility and duty of Vietnamese parents towards their children. However, the study also reflects an unreasonable time allocation, especially on weekends. Most families are paying too much attention to cultural education for their children at primary school age, leading to ineffectiveness and deviation in the standard of the comprehensive development of the personality of students. Some educational content is almost ignored or overlooked by parents, such as physical and aesthetic education; sex education, education on prevention of risks to children at home and at school. The status of child care deviating from standards, excessive concern and imposition of education on children are common problems of education and Vietnamese families today.

The cause of the above situation is considered by the influence of local cultural environmental factors bearing the imprint of Confucian thought. In her work, Le Thi (1997) argue that Vietnamese society depends on agricultural economy and dominated by Asian culture, attaching importance to high values of communities and villages, kinship and hierarchical relationships, so the goal of family education is to "create people in the community of their home, their family, their village, who have no individual, nor independent personality" (p.58). Perhaps

the influence of traditional cultural values of indigenous cultures with the colors of Confucianism (Confucianism) has influenced the promotion of the content of cultural and moral education. This is similar to the concept of French parents in the 60s of the 20th century "a good child is an obedient child" and is also the trend of Chinese parents in the early decades of the 21st century (China). , 2016, p.193). The very concept of learning and achievement has reflected on the concept of Vietnamese parents spending time on studies, exams, grades, ranking, considering the success factor in learning first, instead of comprehensive and child-centered education. Most Vietnamese parents are inclined to establish a child's personality development cycle according to the tendency to impose, forgetting that each child is a separate actor. It is these pressures that affect the imbalance in their personality development. Due to their inability to control their emotions, many students, after achieving the title of Excellent Student, fell into a state of depression, mental disturbances, etc. They study a lot at school, so they have less time to interact with their parents and family, combined with educational methods based on parental imposition, making the gap between parents and children increasingly larger. The risks of depression, violence, behavioral disorders, and game addiction among Vietnamese children appear continuously on the mass media every day, partly from excessive attention on education.

We found that a necessary parent education program was built and disseminated via direct or online parental education programs (Therdpong et al, 2020). The program designed for Vietnamese parents is based on a child-centered perspective, which encourages children to participate in expressing their voice in setting family rules as well as to provide Vietnamese parents with content and information related to professional methods of educating children. The contents and methods of implementation aim to pay attention to the characteristics of the cultural environment of the Vietnamese community as analyzed above. A sharing project on parenting education that the researchers will continue to research and deploy in the near future revolves around topics appropriate for primary school age:

- Lesson 1. Did parents know: Each child is a member of the family and also a separate agent?
- Lesson 2. Parents help their children understand the value of learning, set goals and make plans to study and practice.
- Lesson 3. Parents help their children educate their children in cooperation and teamwork skills, and integrate education with family and community.
- Lesson 4. Parents help their children educate their children about moral values and national traditions.
- Lesson 5. How do parents educate their children on psychophysiology and sex education in the family?
- Lesson 6. Parents educate their children on coping skills to deal with domestic violence, school bullying, traffic accident and drowning prevention, and sexual abuse.
- Lesson 7. Parents help children orient their future career: Imposing or accompanying?

Thus, healthy personality development of primary school students would not be possible without a close connection between family education and school education. The role of Vietnamese parents in the personality development of their children is undeniable. This has been reflected in the views of the government, educators and through surveys on the level of time investment and implementation of educational content that Vietnamese parents have made. Effective education is an education that must create different "personalities", autonomous and able to adapt to changes in different environments as well as promote change. There will not be a single correct model (Japanese parenting, Jewish parenting, American parenting, etc.) for Vietnamese parents in the current context, but only one path based on an educational philosophy which

appreciates the subjectivity and uniqueness of each child, combines with reference to rich scientific achievements in family education and respects traditional cultural values.

Students, their parents, and educators around the world are feeling the extraordinary ripple effect of Covid-19 as schools are closed and quarantine methods are implemented to cope with the global pandemic. In this context, the companion and promotion of family education is a useful solution for educating primary school students. However, Vietnamese parents are facing a series of challenges: Parents are overwhelmed with the plethora of resources being shared without steps on how to use them. Parents are planning daily activities but are not trying innovative educational practices at home. Parents are struggling trying to balance work and home schooling. Parents and teachers are lacking of resources to discuss pandemics and uncertainties with their learners. Therefore, a parent education program in Vietnam should be designed with the participation of a large number of parents to help Vietnamese parents improve and balance their awareness of the role, contents and methods of educating children in the modern society.

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