

Research on the Pathways for Alleviating Parental Educational Anxiety of Adolescents Through Enhanced Family Education Competence

Lisha Cui*

Philippine Christian University Center for International Education, Manila, 1004, Philippines

**Corresponding author*

Abstract: As children's first teachers, parents exert a profound influence on adolescents' physical and mental well-being. As the social environment changes and educational demands keep expanding, a widening gap has emerged between the responsibilities parents shoulder and their family education competence, giving rise to parental educational anxiety. Focusing on the educational anxiety of parents of adolescents, this study draws on documentary survey and case analysis to expound the effects of parental educational anxiety from multiple perspectives, analyze its causes, and propose pathways for its alleviation, with a view to enhancing family education competence, improving the quality of family education, and cultivating a favorable family education atmosphere.

Keywords: Family Education Competence; Adolescents; Parental Educational Anxiety; School Guidance.

1. Introduction

In recent years, "parental educational anxiety" has attracted considerable attention in the field of education. At its core, such anxiety stems from parents' fear of uncertainty about their children's future and is directly bound up with family education competence. Excessive educational anxiety among parents has grown into a serious social emotion: driven by anxiety, some parents resort to rushed, results-oriented education that disregards children's developmental rhythm, adversely affecting their psychology, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships. Against this backdrop, it is necessary to explore pathways for alleviating the educational anxiety of parents of adolescents and to further enhance family education competence, taking adolescents' own wishes into account so as to create a relaxed and

comfortable educational environment conducive to their healthy growth.

2. Concepts and Effects: The Connotation of Family Education Competence and the Impact of Parental Educational Anxiety

2.1 The Connotation of Family Education Competence

Family education competence refers to the ability of parents or guardians to conduct daily child-rearing practices in appropriate ways; it should be grounded in family education knowledge and center on the child. From a cognitive perspective, it mainly comprises communication and expression skills, the ability to select and apply educational methods, the ability to coordinate relationships, and the ability to self-regulate [1]. Communication and expression skills determine how effectively family education is carried out and are an essential skill for parents, who can build rapport with their children through scientific and effective communication. The ability to select and apply educational methods requires parents to adopt different methods for different educational scenarios so as to promote children's healthy development. The ability to coordinate relationships means that parents should be capable of handling and harmonizing various relationships, since a harmonious parent-child relationship underpins successful family education. Self-regulation mainly refers to parents' capacity for self-awareness, self-evaluation, and self-adjustment, enabling them to view their children's rebellious behavior and academic results objectively, handle them rationally, and adjust themselves accordingly.

2.2 The Impact of Parental Educational Anxiety

Parental educational anxiety generally denotes parents' excessive worry about their children's

academic outcomes, with academic achievement, employment prospects, and life development among its principal triggers. As a widespread collective psychological phenomenon, it has become a shared experience of numerous parents and is growing ever more common. According to the Survey on the Current State of Parent-Child Education in China, a large proportion of Chinese parents currently experience educational

anxiety: the figure reaches 87%, most of them exhibiting mild anxiety marked by noticeable unease; 20% show moderate anxiety with behavioral tendencies that are difficult to restrain; and 7% of parents with severe anxiety have already displayed extreme educational behavior. Different parents exhibit distinct characteristics of educational anxiety, whose common manifestations are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Common Manifestations of Parental Educational Anxiety

Category	Main Manifestations	Adverse Effects
Excessive worry and catastrophizing	1. Over-sensitivity to trivial matters, repeatedly ruminating on serious consequences after a single disappointing grade	Insomnia and loss of appetite in parents
Excessive worry and catastrophizing	2. Repeatedly checking on children and requiring them to report their whereabouts at set times	Psychological pressure on children
Emotional loss of control and family conflict	1. Outbursts of rage over trifles or displaced anger	Undermined family harmony
Emotional loss of control and family conflict	2. Excessive self-negation and self-blame	Depressive moods
Overly controlling intervention	1. Imposing rigid study schedules and interfering with children excessively	Restricted social life for children
Overly controlling intervention	2. Depriving children of opportunities to learn from mistakes and taking over tasks that fall within children's own remit	Overdependence
Impaired physiological and social functioning	1. Anxiety-induced chronic palpitations, headaches, and gastrointestinal disturbances	Impaired parental health
Impaired physiological and social functioning	2. Social avoidance or repeated venting of anxiety	Strained interpersonal relationships
Educational extremism	1. Lack of a stable educational philosophy and pervasive over-education	Intensified academic pressure
Educational extremism	2. Blindly following educational trends while ignoring individual differences	Weakened learning initiative

From a psychological perspective, Yu Lu et al. point out that parental educational anxiety has become a prominent psychosocial stressor affecting adolescent mental health, and that adolescent depression can arise from it [2]. Yang L et al. find a direct association between parental educational anxiety and adolescents' academic burnout, and note that positive, supportive parenting can raise adolescents' academic self-efficacy [3]. International research likewise indicates that different parenting styles exert a marked influence on children's psychological characteristics, and that parenting styles should be optimized to promote children's healthy development [4].

From the perspective of academic performance, parental educational anxiety strengthens parents' control over children's development to a certain degree, leading them to adopt negatively controlling practices that induce academic self-handicapping and constrain children's performance [5]. Parental psychological control exerts a marked influence on adolescents' academic behavior and triggers emotional and

behavioral problems: the more anxious parents are, the more likely they are to resort to extreme parenting practices, which undermine adolescents' learning behavior and give rise to academic self-handicapping (Figure 1). Self-handicapping here is a self-protective strategy whereby individuals avoid or mitigate the adverse repercussions of poor performance; in daily study it manifests as reviewing carelessly before examinations, taking poor class notes, or refraining from collective learning activities.

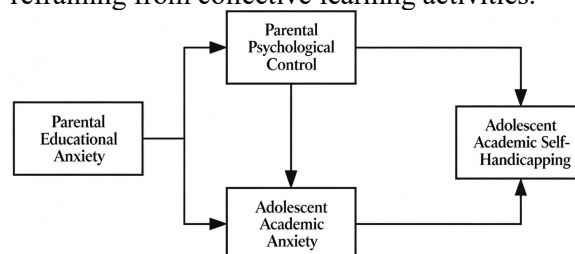


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model of Academic Self-Handicapping Induced by Parental Educational Anxiety

From the perspective of interpersonal relationships, parental educational anxiety also degrades the quality of adolescents'

interpersonal relationships. The family environment constitutes an important microsystem in which family members' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors interact; when parental educational anxiety runs high, the quality of children's social interaction declines. Parental educational anxiety may breed irrational beliefs and cognitive biases in parents, prompting them to intensify psychological control in child-rearing, which in turn arouses anxiety and nervousness in children and disrupts their normal social interaction [6].

3. Causal Analysis: Why the Educational Anxiety of Parents of Adolescents Arises

3.1 Biased Educational Philosophy

An analysis of the causes of parental educational anxiety shows that parents' educational philosophy, family ecology, and educational attainment directly shape their parenting styles. Some parents' educational philosophies are constrained by the traits of their cohort. The most typical case is only-child parents who, having fallen short of the expectations their own parents placed on them, transfer those expectations to the next generation; such inflated expectations breed overly strict parenting and are prone to extreme relational outcomes such as parent-child confrontation. With respect to family ecology, marital discord in some families produces a poor family climate and a lack of timely, effective communication, making parental educational anxiety more likely to emerge. With respect to educational attainment, parents with lower educational levels tend to

adopt less progressive parenting styles, attach greater weight to grades, and thereby burden children with heavier academic and psychological pressure.

3.2 Insufficient Family Education Guidance

Different family education modes lead to different educational outcomes (Figure 2). Some families adopt an intensive parenting mode in which parents involve themselves deeply in their children's study and life; excessive intervention or control places enormous pressure on children and deprives them of autonomous space. Under this mode, parents' anxiety deepens over time, forming a vicious cycle that sets off renewed rounds of intensive parenting [7]. The primary root of such maladaptive parenting lies in inadequate family education guidance and support. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education provides policy support for family education, stipulating that primary and secondary schools and kindergartens should establish parent schools that, in light of the cognitive characteristics and learning needs of minors of different age groups, offer parents public-interest family education guidance services and build sound home-school cooperation, thereby furnishing important guidance and support for family education. Home-school cooperation can transform parents' negative attitudes toward schooling and improve their educational skills [8]. Where such support falls short, the level of family education guidance weakens and parental educational anxiety intensifies.



Figure 2. Family Education Modes and Their Educational Outcomes

3.3 Individual Characteristics of Adolescents

The individual characteristics of adolescents constitute another trigger of parental educational

anxiety. Existing educational data indicate that girls generally hold the advantage in overall school progression, whereas boys' performance tends toward polarization; accordingly, parents

of boys are often more anxious than parents of girls. According to the family resource dilution theory, limited educational resources are diluted as the number of family members grows, which impairs educational outcomes in multi-child families and thereby heightens the educational anxiety of parents in non-only-child households [9]. At the same time, parental educational anxiety fluctuates with children's schooling stages: in the lower grades, academic pressure is modest and parental anxiety is comparatively low, whereas in the middle and upper grades parents pay closer attention to academic results and behavioral conduct, which readily provokes educational anxiety.

4. Competence Enhancement: Pathways for Alleviating the Educational Anxiety of Parents of Adolescents

4.1 Renewing Concepts: Transforming the Family Education Philosophy of Parents of Adolescents

Alleviating the educational anxiety of parents of adolescents requires starting from parents' cognition, renewing their family education philosophy, applying advanced and scientific educational ideas, and creating a comfortable family education environment. Parents should recognize that educating children calls for the joint effort of multiple parties and should clearly divide educational responsibilities among family members (Figure 3), undertaking family education personally wherever possible and curbing overindulgence in grandparent-led child-rearing. They should treat their children with full respect and understanding, adopt sound and appropriate parenting styles suited to children's physical and mental development, moderate their expectations, and support children's autonomous and healthy growth. At the same time, parents should learn to "let go"—granting children space for independent learning and encouraging them to solve problems on their own and to venture trial and error—so as to truly reach their children's inner world and offer guidance and support for their growth.



Figure 3. Parents Fulfilling Their Family Education Responsibilities

Parents can also relieve educational anxiety by restructuring the family ecology. A democratic and free family environment helps children build confidence in learning and growth, develop strong self-care and learning abilities, and improve their interpersonal skills and social adaptability. Harmonious family relationships help children form a sound sense of right and wrong and appropriate attitudes in handling affairs, lowering the likelihood of maladaptive psychological development. By contrast, parental discord deprives children of a sense of security and can breed social fear or rebelliousness.

4.2 Home-School-Community Collaboration: Building Parent Study Groups and Resource Platforms

Enhancing family education competence is a key pathway for alleviating the educational anxiety of parents of adolescents. Home-school-community collaboration should therefore be emphasized to form a concerted educational force; with schools' assistance, parents' family education competence can be effectively enhanced and children's all-round, healthy development promoted [10]. Documents such as the Opinions on Improving the Mechanism for Collaborative Education Among Schools, Families, and Society clarify the responsibilities of all parties in home-school-community collaboration and advance the building of "education consortia" for collaborative education (Figure 4). Primary and secondary schools and kindergartens should establish parent schools and regularly organize family education guidance activities, helping parents keep abreast of the latest theoretical knowledge in family education and strengthen their own competence. Schools can, through family education lectures and similar activities, impart educational methods to parents and keep them informed of their children's growth and progress at school, thereby enabling parents to draw on the various family education resources schools provide to improve their educational level and lay the groundwork for students' all-round development. Schools should also make full use of the Internet to strengthen effective communication with parents and build online learning platforms, sharing educational resources through these platforms and hosting discussions on family education and parenting styles, so that parents stay informed in real time of their children's

academic performance and interpersonal interactions; dedicated question-and-answer zones can be set up to facilitate parents' inquiries and exchanges on family education issues [11].

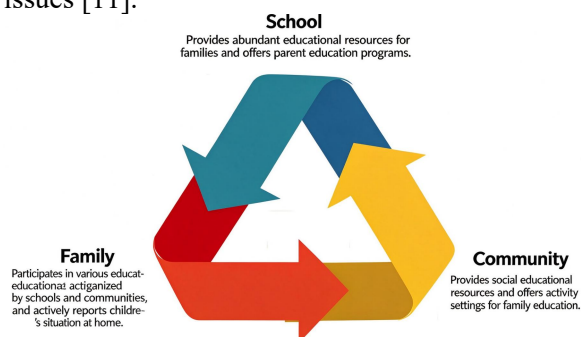


Figure 4. The Home-School-Community Collaborative Education Consortium

Community resources should be fully mobilized to enhance parents' family education competence. Communities can provide timely and effective assistance to parents within their areas, offering guidance and services through diverse cultural and educational activities and thereby strengthening parents' family education. In home-school-community collaborative education, communities should draw on their strengths as educational venues, providing children with rich practical opportunities and diversified educational resources and building educational resource repositories that serve as a tangible support for parents' family education activities and enrich children's social learning experiences. Communities can raise parents' educational literacy through diversified activity design—for instance, organizing family education lectures or community parent-child reading events that expose parents to cutting-edge pedagogical methods and ideas, supplying resource support for building harmonious parent-child relationships. Communities can also organize family practice activities in cooperation with local museums, science and technology centers, children's palaces, and similar institutions, staging themed educational activities in which parents and children may enroll together, cultivating children's practical abilities and cooperative spirit in the course of social practice education. In addition, communities can reach into individual households, assisting families with serious family education problems by analyzing their educational needs, providing material and emotional support, and working with parents to create a high-quality, healthy educational environment for children.

4.3 Attending to Triggers: Providing Targeted Family Education Guidance

The educational anxiety of parents of adolescents can also be eased by addressing its triggers and providing targeted family education guidance. For parents of boys and of children in the middle and upper grades, where educational anxiety is more pronounced, an evaluation mechanism for anxiety risk factors should be established, together with corresponding intervention programs, to help parents relieve educational anxiety in a timely manner. Schools should analyze the motivations behind parents' educational anxiety in an all-round way, encourage parents to take part in effective family education guidance activities, and provide psychological assistance, helping parents recognize the seriousness of educational anxiety so that psychological intervention and correction can ease their distress. Schools can also begin with students, guiding them to view their parents' educational anxiety correctly and to recognize the care and love that lie behind it. Communities can establish family education service mechanisms that keep a close watch on the factors in parental educational anxiety and family education likely to trigger maladaptive psychological problems, and on that basis provide parents with attentive psychological counseling. By building family education service networks and helping parents form sound family education concepts through multiple channels, communities can deliver precise family education guidance and services, lending strong support to family education.

5. Conclusion

In summary, enhancing family education competence helps create a favorable family education environment and supports the all-round, healthy development of children. Schools and communities should provide families with targeted assistance and services, renew parents' educational philosophy, teach sound parenting methods, and share cutting-edge educational resources, so that parents view students' academic results appropriately and furnish more precise, efficient family education support for students' growth. Tailored educational guidance should be provided in light of the differences among individual children, helping them form correct values.

References

- [1] SUI Ruidan. Research on the paths to improving parents' education competence from the perspective of the Family Education Promotion Law [J]. Henan Education (Teacher Education), 2023(7): 46-47 (in Chinese).
- [2] Lu Y, Zhao H, Zhu X, et al. How parental educational anxiety fuels adolescent depression: the mediating chain of moral disengagement and negative coping, and the buffering role of psychological resilience [J]. BMC Psychology, 2025, 13(1): 1370-1370.
- [3] Yang L, Shrestha S, Zhan S, et al. Parents' education anxiety and adolescents' academic burnout: The role of parenting style and academic self-efficacy [J]. Personality and Individual Differences, 2025, 238: 113082-113082.
- [4] Haghshenas R, Moghadam F M, Ghazavi Z. The relationship between perceived parenting styles and anxiety in adolescents [J]. Scientific Reports, 2024, 14(1): 25623-25623.
- [5] TIAN Hongjie, WANG Jingyi, DENG Linyuan. The "control paradox" of parental educational anxiety and adolescents' academic self-handicapping [J]. Chinese Youth Social Science, 2024, 43(2): 44-56 (in Chinese).
- [6] LIN Xingyan, CHEN Ying, LAI Xianglong, et al. The impact of parental educational anxiety on adolescents' interpersonal relationships: the mediating role of parental psychological control [J]. Family Education in China, 2023(1): 62-68 (in Chinese).
- [7] WANG Shan, XIAO Yiqiang, PAN Yining, et al. Model construction and systematic practice of generative artificial intelligence in family education [J]. e-Education Research, 2025, 46(3): 64-71 (in Chinese).
- [8] TAO Jianrong, ZHAO Jianbin, WANG Yue. Research on the influence of home-school cooperation on parental educational anxiety [J]. Journal of Pingxiang University, 2020, 37(1): 81-84+97 (in Chinese).
- [9] LI Yuhua, ZHAO Xueyan. Analysis of the current state and influencing factors of educational anxiety among parents of primary school students [J]. People's Education, 2024(22): 51-54 (in Chinese).
- [10] LU Yipei. Pathways for enhancing the family education competence of parents of children under home-school-community collaboration [J]. Delta, 2026(6): 251-253 (in Chinese).
- [11] LI Qiuyue. Research on strategies for improving family education in the Internet context [J]. Office Automation, 2025, 30(12): 76-78 (in Chinese).