



The Influence of Covid-19 Pandemic on Stressful Relationship between Parents and Children (A Survey Conducted Among High School Students in Danang City)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published online: 06 November 2021	The stressful relationship between children and parents is the pain with which both go through when they find themselves unable to cope as a parent or a child. In order to find out the impact COVID-19 pandemic and suggest some solutions to reduce stress between parents and children, we conducted a survey on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on stressful relationships between parents and children at high school age in Da Nang city. In a survey of randomly-selected high school students, the findings reveal a high rate of tension between them and their parents, particularly up to 38.5% (212/550). In reality, there are many factors affecting the stressful relationship between children and their parents at this age, in which psychological fear about health; social distancing policy; closed schools; students staying at home 24 hours a day and learning online; the disruption in children's daily routine; excessive use of electronic devices, are major causes of stress in the relationship between children and their parents. From this practice, our research team have proposed such solutions as creating outdoor activities and consulting the handbook; designing extra-curricular activities and more importantly, organizing training courses on life values for parents to increase happiness and reduce stress in parent-child relationship.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus of 2019 also known as COVID-19, a respiratory disease caused by Coronavirus, which was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020. The health emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine restrictions have reversed the daily lives of the majority of families. Therefore, many families have experienced psychological stress such as discord in the family and parents and children find it difficult to share a common story in the family. This situation has greatly affected the relationship between children and parents in the context of the prolonged COVID-19 epidemic. From this actual state, this paper presents the findings of the research into the reality of the awareness of stressful relationships between children and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic, the causes of stress and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on stressful relationships of parents and children at the age of high school students in Da Nang city. Then, it is proposed to develop appropriate solutions to improve and enhance the effective cohesion of this relationship in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Da Nang city.

2. STUDY OVERVIEW

2.1. The relationship between children and parents

So far there have been many definitions of the relationship between children and parents in the world. Legally, a child-parent relationship is understood as a relationship between an individual and his or her birth parents or between an individual and a person who has legally adopted him or her. Of course, there is more to the parent-child relationship than just DNA, interactions and bindings, (Brittany et al, (2020)¹; Alain et al, (2020)²; Alexandra et al, (2021)³; Russell et al, (2020)⁴). Child-parent relationships during adolescence are restructured even when stable features of the relationship established in persist childhood (McGue et al, (2005)⁵; Christian Kubbe et al, (2020)⁶). Child-parent relationship consists of a combination of different behaviors, feelings, and expectations of a particular parent and a particular child. The quality of the child-parent relationship is often influenced by the parents' age, experience, and confidence; the stability of the parents' marriage; and the characteristics that distinguish the child from that of the father and mother (Pinquart, (2017)⁷; Brittany et al, (2020)⁸; Cindy Liu et al, (2020)⁹).

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In Vietnam, “Relationship between children and parents” is an interactive relationship with each other, however, in the period when children are immature, parents play the crucial and important role in this relationship (Dang Bich Thuy, (2012)¹⁰; Do Lan Huong, (2020)¹¹).

Parent-child relationship is "all behaviors, the effect expressed through attitudes, behaviors, gestures, and reactions of parents towards their children in different aspects of life. These behaviors affect children in different ways depending on the nuances of their feelings and emotional experiences with their parents." (Luu Song Ha, (2008)¹²; Le Ngoc van, (2011)¹³).

"Relationship between children and parents" is mutual understanding, listening, persuading with reason, love; they care about each other's thoughts, aspirations, difficulties instead of the rule "orderand-obey" (Lê Thi, (1998)¹⁴; Nguyễn Thị Ánh Tuyết, (2009)¹⁵). It can be said that Le Thi has given a concept of parent-child relationship to orient a good relationship that every family should aim for.

2.2. Stressful relationship between parents and children

According to psychologists, a strained child-parent relationship is the suffer that both parents and children experience when they feel they cannot cope as parents or children. The demands made on them are too high. They do not have enough resources to meet them (Deater et al (1998)¹⁶; Holly et al (2019)¹⁷) and Alain Rodrigue et al (2020)¹⁸ also affirms that the stress in mothers with the process of social distancing due to COVID-19 and suggest that mental health support should be given to people during pandemics.

The strained child-parent relationship is the difference between the resources needed for parenting/childhood and the perception to cope with each other (Cristina et al, (2020)¹⁹;

Abidin (1995)²⁰). The parents’ child-rearing characteristics and styles can also lead to stress in this relationship (Misri et al, (2010)²¹). A strained child-parent relationship is defined as the result of an imbalance that children perceive between their parents' demands and their own ability to deal with their parents properly (M. Gatta et al, (2016)²²;Cristina et al, (2020)²³). Stress with parents is a normal part of life experience. It arises when parents’ need for childrearing exceeds their expectations and children’s actual resources (Deater et al, (2013)²⁴).

We define the parent-child relationship during the COVID-19 pandemic as follows: Parent-child relationship in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is a combination of behaviors that demonstrate the type of parent-child relationship expressed through parents' attitudes, behaviors and gestures towards their children in different situations of family life in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When examining this relationship, it is necessary to base on the children’s behavior toward their parents in specific contexts. Moreover, in order to define the type of stressful relationship between children and parents in the context of the pandemic, it must be based on many different behavioral situations in family life, it must also be tied in the context of the COVID pandemic-19 to evaluate. From there, we can have a deep understanding of the nature of the problem and set up specific ways, build up an intimate relationship between children and parents so that they can gain love and mutual understanding in this special context.

2.3. Participants and Methodology

Participants were 550 high school students from 7 high schools of 6 districts and 1 province of Danang city, genders (302 males and 248 females); academic performance (below average: 45; average: 130; good: 175; very good: 200); Conduct (below average: 30; average: 60; good: 1752; very good: 288).

Table1: Description of research participants

Content	Quantity	Rate (%)	Content	Quantity	Percentage (%)
1. Gender			4. Academic performance		
Male	145	68.4	Below average	41	19.3
Female	67	31.6	Average	115	54.2
2. Order in the family			Good	32	15.1
First child	134	63.2	Very good	24	11.4
Second child	78	36.8	5. Conduct		
3. Conflict more with			Below average	27	12.7
Father	95	44.8	Average	53	25
Mother	117	55.2	Good	78	36.8
			Very good	54	25.5

- Survey methods

+ Multiple choice method (test PSS Perceived stress scale-Sheldon Cohen, 1988): with 10 questions on the

subject's stress scale in the past 2 weeks, with 5 levels on the Likert scale from low to high (0=not true; 1=slightly true; 2=true; 3=fairly true; to 4= very true) appeared in the

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relationship between parents and children at the age of high school in Da Nang city in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the reliability analysis of 10 answers given by parents of students achieved alpha coefficient > 0.857. This confirms that the obtained data are meaningful and highly reliable. Specifically, the stress levels are: 0-13 points: no stress (normal); 14-27 points: moderate stress (level 1); 28-40: high stress level (level 2).

Content	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Stress Levels		
No stress	338	61.5
Moderate stress	146	26.5
High stress level (level 2)	66	12

+ Questionnaire method: we built 28 survey questions for children, including cognitive status, cause situation, solutions and 5 questions about personal information (gender, conduct, academic performance, the order of children in the family, conflict with whom more).

+ Mathematical statistical method: we used SPSS 22.0 software to analyze mean score data; ratio %; comparisons between groups.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Reality of stressful relationships between children and parents in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic on personal aspects.

The survey results show that, in terms of gender, of all 212 students who have a stressful relationship with their parents, there are 145 males, accounting for 68.4% and 67 females, accounting for 31.4%. This shows that male students tend to have more stress with their parents than female ones. For the first-child group, the stress level made up 63.2% whereas the second-child group was 36.8%. Thus, it can be seen that if you are the first child, the level of tension between you and your parents is more than that of the second child.

Turning to academic performance, the weak-students group with stress levels accounted for 19.3% of the total 212 stressed students and occupied 91% over the total 45 questionnaires for weak students. The average-student group with stress accounted for 54.2% of the 212 stressed students and 88.5% of the 130 questionnaires for average students.

While in the other two groups, good and very good, made up 15.1% and 11.4% respectively. However, compared to the number of questionnaires on each subject, the rate of stress was 18.3% (175 good students) and 12% (200 good students) respectively. Through the above data analysis, it is found that the percentage of students with weak and moderate academic performance tend to have a higher stress level than those who have good and very good academic performance.

Similarly, with regard to behavior, the group of students with weak conduct with stress accounted for 12.7% of the total 212 stressed students and made up 90% over the 30 questionnaires for students with low conduct. The group of average-conduct students with stress accounted for 25% of the total and made up 88.3% over 60 questionnaires for students with average conduct. Next, the group of students with good conduct has a high level of stress, accounting for 36.8% of the total 212 stressed students and 45.3% over 172 questionnaires for students with good conduct. While the other group (very good) accounted for a high rate of 22.5% of the total 212 stressed students, but only 18.8% among 288 students having very good conduct. Therefore, the percentage of students with weak and average conduct tend to have a higher stress level than the other two groups, who are good and very good.

Last, in terms of conflicts, it is clear that mothers have more conflicts with their children (55.2%) than fathers (only 44.8%).

Thus, through the PSS test and the questionnaire about the students' personal information, we found that the percentage of male students with stress in their relationship with their parents was higher than that of female students; the percentage of students with weak and average academic performance having stress was greater than those with good and very good academic performance; the percentage of students with weak and average conduct having stress was greater than those with good and very good conduct. For the group of first-child students, the stress level with their parents was higher than that of the secondchild group, and the rate of students who were stressed with their mother was also higher than that having stress with their father.

3.2. Reality of stressful relationships between children and parents in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

Table 2: The results of stress due to COVID-19

	Participant's attitudes toward stress	Percentage (%)					Mean	Deviation	Ordinal
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Rather agree	Strongly agree			
1	I feel anxious, confused by something that is not going as expected	28.9	34.4	18.7	10.7	7.3	1.33	1.205	7

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2	I feel hard to manage important issues	26.2	37.3	16.7	18.7	1.1	1.31	1.087	8
3	I feel nervous and stressed	20.4	42.9	18.0	16.5	2.2	1.37	1.051	6
4	I feel confident of my problems solving skills.	12.4	13.1	38.2	23.8	12.5	2.11	1.164	3
5	I feel things are going as expected.	4.2	21.5	38.0	20.5	16.2	2.23	1.087	1
6	I feel that I can't deal with all the problems I have.	25.3	38.2	22.0	13.3	1.3	1.27	1.023	10
7	I can curb my anger and nervousness.	7.8	17.1	40.0	21.5	13.6	2.16	1.105	2
8	I think I can be a master in all situations	11.1	14.4	40.2	25.6	8.7	2.07	1.091	4
9	I get angry and lose my temper when things get out of my control.	23.1	40.5	22.0	12.5	1.8	1.29	1.016	9
10	I feel too many difficulties to overcome.	34.4	27.3	9.6	13.1	15.6	1.48	1.463	5
	Sum						1.66		

The results of the stress scale measured by PSS test showed that 212 students really had a stressful relationship with their parents, accounting for 38.5%; in which 66 students

were very stressed, accounting for 12%. Specifically, male students had a higher stress level than female students (male average = 2.36, female average = 2.01).

Table 3: Children’s awareness of possible problems to the family during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Possible problems happening to the family during the COVID-19 pandemic	Write 1 for “Yes” and 2 for “No”			
		Yes	Scale (%)	No	Scale (%)
1	The COVID-19 pandemic has increased tension between your parents and you	249	45.3	301	54.7
2	The time of social distancing has strengthened your bond with parents	109	18.9	441	81.1
3	The COVID-19 pandemic has had influence on your family members’ health.	439	79.8	111	20.2
4	The COVID-19 pandemic has negative effects on your family’s income	392	71.3	163	28.7
5	The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced your study.	543	98.7	7	1.3

The survey results of 550 high school students in Da Nang city using SPSS software showed that up to 249 students were aware that the COVID-19 pandemic had increased tension between them and their parents, accounting for 45.3%.

This shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the tense relationship between children and parents.

3.3. Causes of stress in the relationship between children and parents in the context of the COVID19 pandemic.

According to the research findings, 4 groups of causes of stress in the relationship between children and parents are family, study, self, and health. The results show that the cause

of stress in the relationship with parents is the most chosen by high school students because students use electronic devices too much and are too lazy to do exercises with average mean = 1.72. The second factor that was also chosen by the students was that it was the prolonged epidemic that the parents' work faced many difficulties, so the family income was reduced, which made parents often angry with their children, average = 1.70. The next factor chosen by the students is that the parents have had psychological problems with the average score = 1.66. The factor "Parents impose their thoughts on their children" was also selected by students with TD: 1.63.

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The factor "Small family living space" is also the next reason chosen by students with average size = 1.62. The factor

ranked 6th selected by students is due to the generation gap with DT = 1.51.

Table 4: Causes leading to the tension in the relationship between parents and children

Groups of causes	Content	Percentage (%)					Mean	Deviation	Ordinal
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Rather agree	Strongly agree			
Family	Work and income of my family members have decreased	7.6	54.0	6.4	24.9	7.1	1.70	1.136	2
	My parents have difficulty in psychology	21.5	39.8	2.0	24.5	12.2	1.66	1.370	3
	My parents impose their thought on children	13.3	49.5	.4	34.5	2.4	1.63	1.155	4
	My family living space is small	12.7	50.0	.4	36.7	.2	1.62	1.113	5
	There is generation gap in my family	1.8	59.6	26.7	9.1	2.7	1.51	.795	6
Study	My school is closed and my schedule is disrupted	29.6	32.0	3.1	32.0	3.3	1.47	1.297	7
Self	I have overused electronic devices and do not do exercises	7.1	49.3	9.8	31.8	2.0	1.72	1.049	1
	There are many psychology changes at my age	5.5	52.9	32.2	9.3	.2	1.46	.745	8
Health	I worry about the health of myself and my family.	14.0	48.9	34.5	.7	1.8	1.27	.777	9

In terms of gender, the group of factors related to family causes the most stress for children, with average mean = 1.62. Specifically, male students have more family stress, male average mean = 1.71; while the female average mean is 1.53.

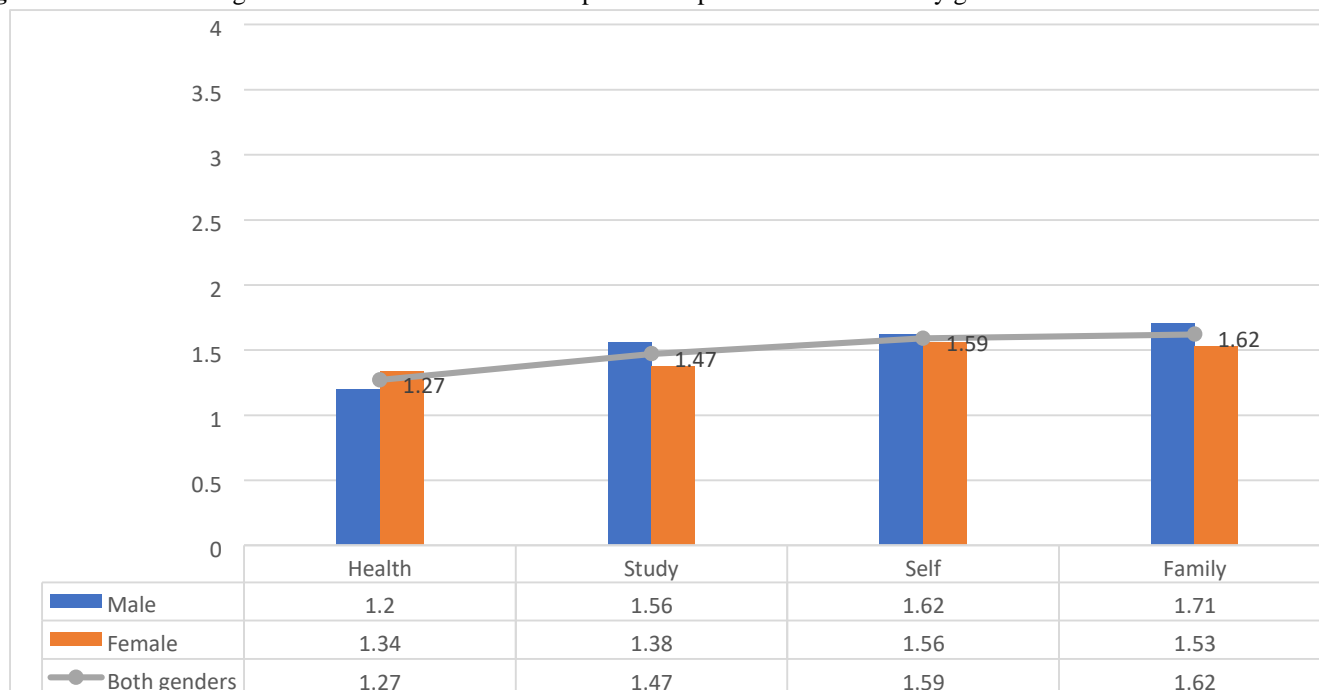
The second group of factors is the students themselves with average mean = 1.59. In this group, male students are more stressed than female ones, male average mean = 1.62; while female average mean is 1.56.

The third group is studying, with average mean = 1.47. Male students are stressed in their relationship with their parents due to more study (Male average mean = 1.56; Female average mean = 1.38).

The final group is health with average mean = 1.27. In this group, the stress level of female students is higher than that of male students (female average mean = 1.34; male average mean = 1.2).

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Figure 1. Causes leading to the tension in the relationship between parents and children by gender



3.4. Solutions to stressful relationship between children and parents in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of the research into 4 groups of solutions to the stressful relationship between children and parents including society, school, family, and self, show that the solution to reduce stress in the relationship with their parents is the most chosen by high school students by controlling the

time using electronic devices each day with average mean = 2.91. The second solution also chosen by students is the need to maintain quality online teaching and learning, average mean = 2.86. The next solution chosen by students is to share housework with each other with average mean = 2.67. The factor "School clubs need to organize online activities" was also selected by students with average mean = 2.50.

Table 5: Solutions to reduce stress in the relationship between children and parents

Groups of solution	Content	Percentage (%)					Average mean	Deviation	Ordinal
		Strongly disagree	disagree	Agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree			
Society	The state needs to have income support to economically affected families.	15.5	3.8	32.9	34.9	8.9	2.10	1.231	10
	State agencies, companies, factories... should let parents stay at home to take care of their children.	19.8	2.7	29.6	38.5	9.3	2.15	1.248	9
	The Ministry of Health needs to provide people with the information about the pandemic and health services.	2.5	27.6	44.7	24.2	.9	1.93	.808	14

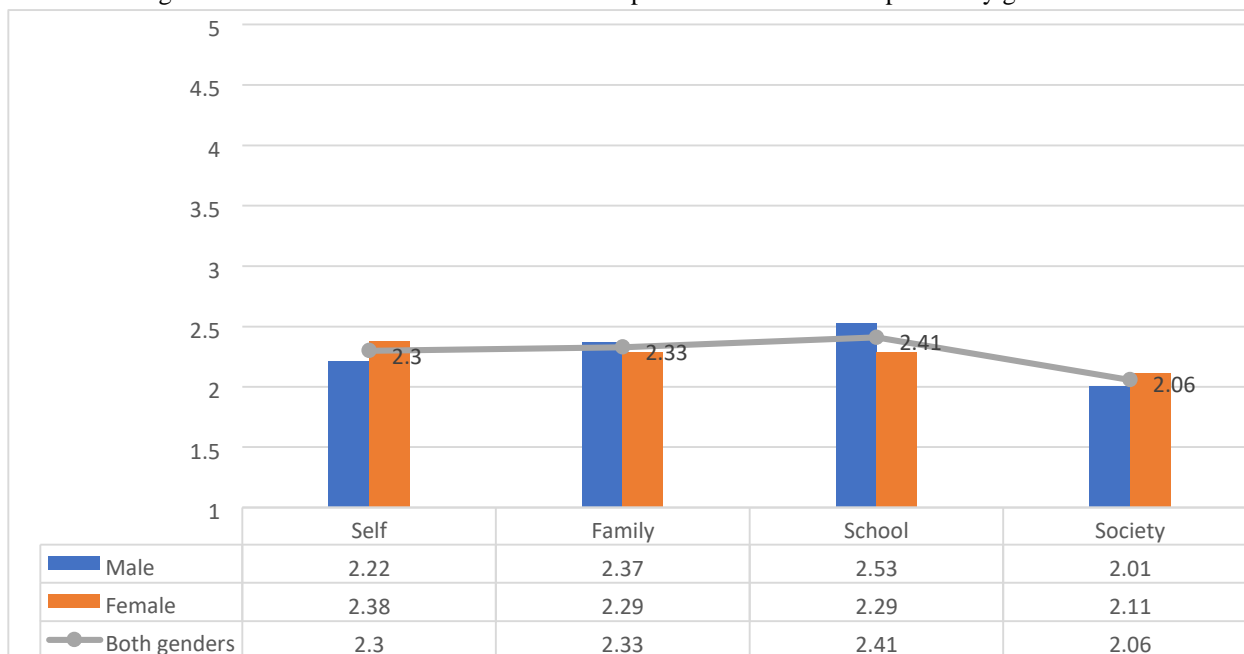
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School	Needs to maintain the quality of teaching and studying online.	19.5	3.8	32.9	34.9	8.9	2.86	1.173	2
	Has its clubs organize online activities.	6.5	3.3	47.1	19.7	23.6	2.50	1.088	4
	Educates students about gratitude toward their parents in many different forms.	18.7	2.5	30.5	39.6	8.5	2.17	1.220	7
	Has teacher keep in touch with students' parents.	19.3	4.7	31.1	37.8	7.1	2.09	1.215	11
Family	Maintain the family routine and rules.	20.7	1.3	30.9	20.9	26.2	2.31	1.417	5
	Share the household chores among family members	3.6	6.2	32.5	35.1	22.5	2.67	1.008	3
	Show loves to each other every day	4.5	16.4	45.1	23.1	10.9	2.19	.988	6
	Share happy or sad feelings happening during the day.	22.5	2.9	40.0	4.9	29.6	2.16	1.604	8
Self (children)	Manage the time using electronic devices every day.	9.8	3.3	16.2	26.3	43.5	2.91	1.267	1
	Stay calm and control your actions and words when stress arises.	24.5	2.2	36.2	28.5	8.5	1.94	1.277	13
	Visit a psychiatrist when necessary	12.5	9.5	40.5	34.2	3.3	2.06	1.033	12

From a gender perspective, we found that the group of school solutions was chosen the most by students (average mean = 2.41), specifically in this group, male students chose more than female students (male average mean = 2.53, Female average mean = 2.29), the second group of solutions selected by students was family (average mean = 2.33), in which male students chose more than female students (male

average mean = 2.37, female average mean = 2.29). The next group of solutions is themselves (average mean = 2.3), female students choose more than male students (female average mean = 2.38; male average mean = 2.22). The last group of solutions is social (average mean = 2.06), in this group female students choose more than male students (female average mean = 2.11; male average mean = 2.01).

Figure 2. Prioritizing solutions to reduce stress in the relationship between children and parents by gender



4. CONCLUSION

Tension in the relationship between children and parents is one of the mental health issues that are receiving top attention in every country in the world in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research results show that children surveyed had moderate to high stress with their parents, in which the proportion of boys having stress with their parents was greater than that of girls; the group of first-child students were more strained than the second-child group in the relationships with their parents; the percentage of students with poor conduct and academic performance, on average, had more stress with their parents than those with good, very good conduct and academic performance. From the above research results, the research team proposes certain solutions for each specific object to increase happiness and reduce stress in the relationship between children and parents at high school age in DaNang city in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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