

A Case Study on the Influence of Parental Psychological Control on Anxiety in College Students

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Abstract

In recent years, incidents such as jumping off buildings caused by mental health issues among college students have been reported, which is heartbreaking. College students are the talent reserve for various national undertakings and the future pillars of the country. If college students experience widespread psychological problems such as anxiety, it will have a negative impact on the country. Through analyzing existing data, we found that a considerable number of college students believe that an important factor causing psychological problems is family issues, with parental psychological control being the main issue. This study uses case analysis as the starting point to explore the major culprit of college students' psychological problems - anxiety, as well as the underlying family issues. The objective of the study is to investigate the family causes behind anxiety among college students, in order to better address their mental health issues. The research results indicate that strong psychological control by parents, especially in families, can easily lead to parent-child conflicts and deepen the spread of anxiety among college students.

Keywords: family education, educational psychology, parental control, college students, anxious

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In the post epidemic era, the average mental health level of college students has decreased. The adverse phenomena such as economic recession and employment reduction caused by the COVID-19 are affecting college students who are still in the ivory tower, resulting in a large number of College Students' emotional problems such as anxiety and depression.

At the same time, we note that many of the pressures that cause college students to feel anxious not only come from the society, but also from the high expectations of their families and their parents' psychological control. The family problems encountered in the process of growth also continue to affect the subsequent life and mental health of College Students. Nowadays, the parent-child conflict in urban families is gradually highlighted. If the parent-child conflict cannot be effectively solved, it will not only affect the children's socialization process and interpersonal communication, but also bring a heavy burden to the family and cause adverse effects and unstable factors to the society. For students who are still studying in universities, it is difficult for them to have the financial resources and energy to seek professional psychological counseling and treatment, or they are unwilling to seek psychological treatment because of social problems such as dignity and public opinion. The parents' psychological control also led to their inability to seek help from the family to relieve anxiety, which eventually led to a vicious circle of negative emotions. Most college students are more inclined to self-regulation when encountering psychological problems, such as diverting attention and venting emotions or so on. This kind of self-regulation lacks scientific guidance and appropriate solutions, which makes it difficult to fundamentally and effectively solve college students' psychological problems.

According to a study in 2022, 18.5% of Chinese college students are at risk of depression, and 4.2% are at high risk of depression (Xiong, Xu, Gu, & Zhang, 2022). It can be said that this is not a very small number. College

students are the talent reserve of various national undertakings and the future pillars of the country. If college students have common psychological problems such as anxiety, it will have a negative impact on the country.

1.2 Research Purpose

In order to improve the mental health of college students, we must first identify the root cause of their anxiety, in order to fundamentally solve this problem.

Parental control plays a very important role in the development of children and adolescents, and is an important link in the individual socialization process of children and adolescents. Parental control, as a common parenting behavior, can be divided into "behavioral control" and "psychological control". This invasive parenting approach suppresses the development of children and adolescents' sense of self-worth and leads to many mental health problems. Research has shown that parental psychological control can hinder the satisfaction of individuals' basic psychological needs (Wu et al., 2018). And parental psychological control can affect individual behavior management (Wei et al., 2021) and mental health (Liu et al., 2022) by influencing their basic psychological needs. Teenagers are in a critical period of developing self-identity. When they enter adolescence, they begin to experience various confusions and challenges. They no longer blindly obey their parents and teachers, and have stronger demands for autonomy. However, parental psychological control does not encourage children's independent development, limiting their emotions and behaviors, which has a more serious negative impact on children in adolescence.

As adults, the mental health problems of college students can also be influenced by family factors. During childhood and adolescence, the influence of parental control behavior on children is bound to persist into every stage of their growth, including university. Therefore, we will use case analysis to explain the impact of parental psychological control behavior on college students' psychological anxiety, in order to find corresponding solutions to alleviate the anxiety and psychological problems caused by parental psychological control in college students.

2. Overview

2.1 Parental Control

The definition of "parental control" was first proposed by Baldwin in 1948. Baldwin pointed out in his article "Socialization and Parent-child Relations" that control is the constraint of parental behavior on children and belongs to a negative parenting style. Parents will use a stable way to control and manage their children, as a concrete manifestation of parental control, which is undoubtedly in line with China's emphasis on collectivism and the hierarchical order derived from Confucianism. Research has shown that Chinese parents use invasive parenting methods more frequently than Western parents (NG, Pomerantz & Deng., 2014; Wuyts, Chen, Vanstenkiste, & Soenens, 2015).

In 1965, Schaefer proposed the concept of parental psychological control, deepening the scope of parental control from the surface of behavior to the psychological level. He pointed out that parental psychological control is the process in which parents induce guilt in their children by expressing disappointment and ignoring their feelings, thereby influencing their children's thoughts and controlling their thoughts. Psychological control typically includes inducing guilt, withdrawing love, and exerting authority. This will undoubtedly have a negative impact on the psychological development of children. The academic community generally believes that parental psychological control is a negative, love oriented, and quite dangerous parenting method (Wang et al., 2012). Research has found that parental psychological control can have a significant impact on a child's sense of meaning in life, and there is a significant negative correlation between parental psychological control and sense of meaning in life. There are also studies indicating that interpersonal relationships among college students can be controlled through parental psychology (Li, 2021). Essentially, psychological control is closer to the purpose of "control" than behavioral control, which can also lead to various adverse reactions in children, seriously hindering the establishment of stable self-awareness and the natural growth path of children's understanding of life and development of corresponding abilities. In the context of traditional Chinese culture, many parents also find it difficult to realize that they have engaged in or are engaged in psychological control behaviors. In most cases, parental psychological control can be seen as a source of stress affecting the emotional life of adolescents, leading to the spread of anxiety. Especially when parents adopt high levels of psychological control, high levels of behavioral control may increase teenagers' sense of despair, as behavioral control can be interpreted as negative connotations such as monitoring.

2.2 Parent Child Conflict

Parent child relationship is a kind of interpersonal relationship. Parent child conflict is the inconsistency between

parents and children. This inconsistency is reflected in the inconsistency of goals between parents and children, and both parents and children are aware of this inconsistency and show it in various forms. It can be verbal or nonverbal (Huang, 2021). Existing studies have shown that parents' parenting style will greatly affect the incidence of parent-child conflict, and authoritarian parenting style with high control behavior is more likely to cause parent-child conflict. Especially when parents have control over their children, it is more likely to lead to conflict situations and parent-child conflict. The more authoritarian the parenting style, the higher the parental control and the more frequent the parent-child conflict. When parents adopt the methods of coercion, coercion and neglect to deal with the inconsistency between parents and children, children also tend to adopt a similar paradigm to deal with it, which intensifies the frequency and intensity of parent-child conflict (Joshi & Anupma, 2009).

According to the ecosystem theory put forward by American psychologist Bronfenbrenner, human development is actually affected by multiple micro systems. Family is one of the micro systems, and family has a very important impact on the growth of individuals, but also emphasizes the state between parents and children. The conflict between parents and children deeply affects the growth of teenagers (Shi, 2020). Parent child conflict will affect individuals' confidence building, which will produce negative and pessimistic understanding and expectations of themselves, others and the external environment, leading to children's anxiety and depression. (GateMA et al., 2013)

2.3 Moral Disengagement

The concept of moral disengagement was first proposed by Bandura based on social cognition theory in 1996. He regards moral disengagement as a special cognitive orientation of a person, including the redefinition of his own behavior, in order to reduce the degree of damage, minimize the responsibility for the consequences of the behavior, and reduce the recognition of the sufferings of the victims.(Bandura et al., 1996) In real life, moral disengagement is mainly manifested in the cognitive reconstruction of individuals' own immoral behavior, denying the occurrence of facts, distorting the real situation, reducing the harm of their own immoral behavior to reduce the responsibility of the behavior subject, so as to reduce their sense of responsibility and guilt, and reduce their sympathy for the victims (Yang et al., 2010). In unhealthy family relationships, the most common way of moral disengagement that has the most adverse impact on the development of children's anxiety is the transfer of responsibility.

2.4 Attachment Theory

"Attachment theory" is a theory (or group of theories) about the psychological concept of "attachment". "Attachment" is a psychological tendency to seek intimacy with someone and feel safe when they are present.

According to the attachment theory, children form parent-child attachment in the long-term interaction with their parents (MA & Huebner, 2008), and parent-child attachment also has a huge impact on adolescents' psychological adaptation (Brumariu & Kerns, 2010). Parent child conflict, as a functional component of parent-child attachment (Caffery & Erdman, 2000), on the one hand, will be affected by parental rearing, on the other hand, it will also affect the psychological development of adolescents, that is, parent-child conflict may play a mediating role between over rearing and adolescent depression. In the context of Chinese society, on the one hand, children have parent-child attachment to their parents due to their parents' upbringing in the long-term growth process, on the other hand, parents' excessive control may lead to teenagers' boredom, parent-child conflict, and even depression.

Empirical research also provides relevant evidence. On the one hand, researchers believe that parents' interference in adolescents' autonomy can cause parent-child conflict (Hadiwijaya et al., 2017), and low autonomy is one of the characteristics of over parenting. On the other hand, parent-child conflict is positively correlated with adolescents' depression (Low, 2021). Parent child conflict creates a bad family environment and exacerbates adolescents' depression. In the context of Chinese traditional culture, parents often interfere with teenagers' behavior in an informed or unconscious state, which leads to parent-child conflict. Such a bad family environment may lead to more and more serious psychological problems and depression during the development of teenagers, and finally affect the mental health of adults.

2.5 Anxiety

The initial discussion on anxiety comes from Freud of psychoanalysis school, who emphasizes that anxiety is caused by internal unacceptable conflict. Behaviorism believes that anxiety can be learned through the stimulus response model. When an individual experiences anxiety under the stimulus of an event situation, and then encounters the same or similar stimulus again, the individual will also experience anxiety. On the contrary,

anxiety, as an unhappy emotional experience, can also be used as a conditional stimulus itself, causing behavior changes. The self inconsistency theory believes that people's anxiety mainly stems from the inconsistency between who we are in fact and our expected self-image. The number of inconsistencies and the weight of inconsistencies in individual consciousness determine the degree of anxiety. In sorting out the research on the anxiety of college students as subjects, it was found that the total score of SAS anxiety scale of a college student was significantly higher than the domestic norm, suggesting that there was a certain anxiety phenomenon among college students (Shi, 2022).

3. Problem Posing and Research Methods

3.1 Question Raising

In the post epidemic era, the average mental health level of college students has decreased, and a large number of college students have emotional problems such as anxiety and depression. According to a study in 2022, 18.5% of Chinese college students are at risk of depression, and 4.2% are at high risk of depression. This higher value attracted our attention and decided to carry out research on College Students' anxiety.

In the process of conducting interviews and questionnaires with students around us, we found that many of the pressures leading to college students' anxiety not only come from the society, but also from the high expectations of their families and their parents' psychological control. The family problems encountered in the process of growth also continue to affect college students' subsequent life and mental health. In order to reduce and solve the influence of parental control on College Students' anxiety, we decided to carry out research on this and explore solutions through case analysis.

3.2 Research Methods

The research on the influence of family factors on individual anxiety has made a lot of achievements, but in terms of methods, most research methods use quantitative analysis. Although such research methods can also obtain a large number of data and results, they are inevitably superficial and lack of in-depth interviews and qualitative research; In the explanation of the research results, there is also a lack of theoretical guidance and penetration, leading to the research results remain in the simple description of the phenomenon, and there is little in-depth analysis. The research content also mostly analyzes the universality of the impact, ignoring the individual differences.

Therefore, this paper attempts to use the combination of theoretical analysis and interpretation analysis, and the research method of literature collection and case analysis. Theoretical analysis mainly rationally summarizes the content related to the problem and attempts to form a theory. Case interviews are used to explain and understand the behavior and meaning construction of the research object through interaction with the research object.

3.2.1 Literature Analysis Method

The literature mainly comes from a large number of research papers and works on parental control, as well as some media and magazine materials. In order to avoid the problem of reliability and validity of literature research to the greatest extent, the literature should be sorted and screened to ensure the authority of literature sources as far as possible, and only the data from authoritative journals, well-known scholars and large professional media should be selected.

3.2.2 In Depth Interview Method

Using in-depth interviews and semi-structured open questions and answers to collect relevant information. Unlike the general simple interview, the main purpose of in-depth interview is to analyze the real inside story, true meaning, impact, future development and solutions of the interview. It is not only to explore the real thoughts of the respondents, but also to obtain the most authentic information in a way that is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people (Wan, 2004). During the interview, in addition to knowing the cultural background of the interviewees, the interviewees should also conduct the interview in person, so that the interviewees feel valued and understood, and are willing to reveal themselves more deeply (Cheng, 2000). The analysis of case data mainly uses the type analysis method to roughly classify the interviewees and sort out and analyze their views, so as to discover the psychological and behavioral changes of college students in the process of being controlled by their parents, and further explore the influence of College Students' anxiety under the control of their parents. Before the interview, there are some processes worth referring to by researchers to help the interview of this study be completed more smoothly (Wan, 2004):

- (1) Adjust the attitude of self interview in advance.
- (2) Preparation before the interview: refer to relevant literature and have an in-depth understanding of the

interview content.

(3) Pre interview work: the preliminary interview outline was used to implement the pre interview to revise and improve.

(4) Interview: interview the interviewees by telephone, fax, Internet, and face-to-face interview.

(5) Master the interview atmosphere: create a good atmosphere and trust relationship, and promote the true self-expression of respondents.

(6) Objective and high-quality report: intersperse the stories, key links and quotations of the interviewees, so as to make the readers feel as experienced as possible.

It can be seen from the above that when conducting in-depth interviews, researchers should not only adjust their mentality in advance to avoid being affected by the emotions of the respondents, but also continue to read literature and related materials to enrich their self interview skills. At the same time, when the preliminary outline is completed, a pilot pilot pilot study will also be conducted to interview the respondents. During the formal interview, the unnecessary interference factors should be reduced as far as possible, and the dormitory of the school should be used as the interview place as far as possible. In addition to establishing a good trust relationship with the interviewees, they will also strive to create a good interview atmosphere, and make good use of interview skills such as "active listening", "retelling", "guiding" and "asking questions", so that the interviewees can speak freely and adapt to the actual situation of each interview. When writing the final report, in addition to completely following the principles of objectivity and authenticity, we also hope to take the interest of readers as the starting point and let readers have a sense of experience and empathy for each story by means of story examples, quotations and key links.

3.3 Research Object

This study intends to adopt the method of "purposive sampling" to select the interviewees suitable for the purpose of this study. Purposive sampling is a sampling method used when the research has a special purpose, which is suitable for exploratory research or field research (Wang et al., 2002). There are several situations in which purposive sampling is selected. One is that the researcher wants to find out a special case type and conduct in-depth research. The purpose is to have a deeper understanding of the research object.

The purpose of this study is to explore the psychological and behavioral process of College Students' parental control on their anxiety in the process of growth. It does not emphasize that the research results can be applied to all college students, but to explore the impact of parental control on anxiety in the process of growth of each research object. Therefore, purposive sampling is selected as the main sampling method of this study. During the research interview, the method of "snowball sampling" was changed to ask the respondents to help find more objects that meet the purpose of the research.

(1) Selection criteria of interviewees

1. college students aged between 18 and 25.
2. those who have experienced parental control and have deep emotional experience of anxiety.
3. those who are interested in this study and are willing to actively cooperate and share personal relevant experience.
4. agree to record the interview, and be willing to cooperate with the researcher to follow up the author if necessary.

(2) Recruitment and screening process

This study adopts purposive sampling to recruit research participants, as follows:

1. post recruitment announcements on the school bulletin board and forum website.
2. issue research invitation letters through campus walls, etc.
3. use personal network to ask friends, classmates, schoolsisters, schoolsisters and other students around to help.

Wechat and QQ were used to explain the research motivation and cooperation matters to them, and their willingness to be interviewed was solicited. Finally, six research participants were selected. Their basic information is as follows.

There are 6 participants in this study. In order to protect the respondents, their basic information is processed by pseudonym. Their profiles are as follows:

Table 1. Response list

No.	Alias	Age	Major	Grade
A1	S	21	History	Junior
A2	Y	21	Art	Sophomore
A3	CH	23	Finance	Senior
A4	J	22	Chinese language and Literature	Junior
A5	M	24	Business Administration	Senior
A6	H	20	Music	Freshman
A7	C	21	Music	Sophomore
A8	L	22	Law	Sophomore
A9	X	26	Finance	Second year of graduate school
A10	W	23	Accounting	Senior

4. Research Results

4.1 Relationship Between Parental Psychological Control and Parent-Child Conflict

Parent child relationship is essentially a kind of interpersonal relationship, so parent child conflict is also a kind of interpersonal conflict. For children in the rebellious period of youth, the more controlled parents are, the easier it is to arouse the rebellious psychology of children, and the more likely it is to cause parent-child conflict. This kind of control and resistance will often lead to long-term consequences, so that college students who end the rebellious period still can not communicate well with their parents.

A1: *"I think the best way to get along with my mother after graduation is to never see her again."*

A3: *"I hope they don't interfere too much with my decisions now. I'm already an adult. I don't want to take care of their affairs anymore, and I don't know how to do it. Anyway, everyone has their own choices. I see roommates and their parents calling, but I don't envy their good family relationships anymore. I don't want to deal with my parents' phone calls, we haven't talked a few words and still have to argue... They don't know how to understand me I don't know how to persuade them about their choice, and every time they come to the end, it's always an old question that comes back and forth. It's not interesting."*

At the same time, as the result of parents' family education, children often inherit all aspects of parents' characteristics, including the strong desire for control acquired under the strong psychological control of parents. When parents and children have a strong desire to control each other's behavior and psychology at the same time, it is bound to cause their psychological needs to be unsatisfied due to the failure of control, and then evolve into violent parent-child conflict.

A1: *"(My mother) has to worry about my clothes. She always thinks that the clothes I buy are too cheap, and wearing them out will bring her shame. But I don't like the clothes she bought for me either. We have aesthetic barriers, maybe. But if I don't want these clothes, she will scold me again. From scolding me for cooking two minutes late yesterday to not passing my CET-4 exam. In short, if I don't wear these clothes, I would be completely wrong... She's been studying saxophone and playing it very disturbingly. She said she's going to sing and perform on the street outside, but I don't really want her to go. I hate her for losing my face, but she insists on going..."*

A7: *"I think I will definitely not have children in the future. I hate my mother, but if I had a child, I think I would definitely become a mother as bad as her. Now my way of getting along with my brother has begun to be influenced by my mother. I used to be hurt by her sharp and scary language, but now I use the same sharp tone to scold and treat my brother. Sometimes I feel a bit guilty, sometimes I feel powerless because I can't change it."*

4.2 The Relationship Between Parents' Psychological Control and the Spread of College Students' Anxiety

Parental psychological control can easily lead to parent-child conflicts, and parent-child conflicts play an important mediating role between parent-child conflicts and emotional distress (Chung et al., 2009), which can also deepen the spread of anxiety among college students. Especially in terms of parents' excessive control over college students' life expenses and future employment, college students often experience deeper anxiety about money, the future, and the present due to parents' excessive control and inconsistent beliefs. The generation gap in communication, the desire of parents to control their children and the psychological effect of their children

wanting to break away from control, lead to abnormal communication between parents and children, causing anxiety to continue to spread and form a vicious cycle. Research has shown that individuals with high parental psychological control exhibit higher levels of depression, and basic psychological needs play a mediating role between parental psychological control and depression (Li, 2020).

A1: "I feel that spending two months at home during the summer vacation can kill all my self-confidence. She always likes to talk about other people's children, saying that the sons of her colleagues don't need living expenses and usually earn money by doing part-time jobs on their own. But she doesn't let me do the part-time jobs that I'm suitable for, and thinks I'm not working at home. If I work as a tutor, the short-term jobs for two months during the summer vacation are not competitive in the local area. So I've been working on these things for a long time Anxiety. She PUA me every day. I often feel whether I have no future as she said. "

A2: *"a lot of times, it's clearly my business. She's as anxious as her business. It makes me very uncomfortable."*

A5: *"I have been growing up in the rules given by my mother since childhood, and my major is also my mother's choice. To be honest, my future plan is actually my mother's plan for my future, and I'm just a puppet acting according to her heart. Sometimes I will consider what I want, but I can't jump out of the circle she drew for me."*

A9: *"I wanted to go out and play with my family on National Day, but my plan was constantly rejected. My mother denied the time I chose and the hotel I arranged. She thinks I'm wasting money and thinks that four people living in a standard room would be enough. She has been constantly nitpicking, and I don't understand why she is still not satisfied that I have tried my best to do what I can. Now that I'm not planning anymore, she's scolding me again, saying that's all I have... I don't want to go out at all now."*

A10: *"My dad has been belittling my major. He thinks I shouldn't have chosen my current major without listening to him, and then he keeps questioning me, 'What do you think you want after graduation and how much salary can you get?'. This makes me very anxious about the future and also makes me unsure of what I can do in the present."*

At the same time, under the dual influence of China's cultural atmosphere and generation gap, it is difficult for parents to find that their behavior is the psychological control of their children and has caused harm to their children's mental health. The living environment and competitive pressure faced by parents and children are not at the same level, and the social atmosphere they are exposed to is also different, so it is difficult to empathize with each other's pressure.

A4: *"my father never cares what I want. He just thinks I need what he gives. He also doesn't care how much I will pay to do what he asks. He can only see the results, but can't see how tired I am... He just thinks I haven't done enough, so I can only do more, but still can't meet his satisfaction."*

A6: *"my mother always thinks that if she can write a paper in three days, I can play a piano piece in a day. But in fact, she doesn't understand my professional difficulty at all. She just sets a goal for me and asks me to finish it. It's difficult for me to explain my difficulties to her, and she doesn't want to listen to me."*

Marriage issues are also heavily affected areas controlled by parents. There is a huge difference in the concept of marriage between young people and the older generation, and in the ancient tradition of East Asian cultural circles, marriage is arranged by parents. Of course, this is not in line with the current trend of free love. Even in traditional East Asian culture, marriage is a way for parents to control their children, especially their daughters. They give their daughter to a man they think is suitable in the name of love, which is essentially a form of physical and psychological control over their daughter. Children try to escape their control, but they are physically and mentally exhausted by repeated advice and preaching, falling into a cycle of self reflection and anxiety.

A8: *"I reject marriage and childbirth, but my mother always accuses me of being a necessary part, saying that if I don't get married, what am I doing alive. I am really distressed to hear such words. It makes me feel like a commodity, and I reject marriage even more from the bottom of my heart. But I think if one day my mother forces me to go on blind dates and get married, I may still do what she says. I always cannot resist her, and I hate myself for being like this."*

A9: *"My mother is arranging blind dates for me, often notifying me directly of who I will meet tomorrow night. I feel like a prostitute, and as long as I inform the pimp, we can eat and drink together. Some even want to do more outrageous things. I tried to explain to my mother that she should at least inform me of the other person's situation and appearance in advance, but she got angry and said I was resisting her, and then we*

had a cold war for two weeks. What's even more ridiculous is that the people she arranged for me were not as educated as me, and were in their thirties. When I protested to my mother, she would say, 'Do you think you are something?' I don't understand why she suppressed my self-esteem and belittled my value in this way. But sadly, my emotions will really change with her words, becoming inferiority and anxiety, doubting whether I really can only deserve this kind of "garbage" man."

In addition, in the traditional Chinese social environment, filial piety has been paid special attention. Under the traditional thought, parents rarely think about how their children think. They believe that children should listen to their parents' ideas, because it is a good choice for them. The inherent implicitness of the Chinese people makes the communication between parents and children tend to be through behavior rather than verbal expression. Even the appearance of the behavior has not been communicated. Parents just blindly do what they think is good for their children and blindly instill their views into their children. This has led to many phenomena of "in the name of love", and the pain of not being understood and the pressure of "in the name of love" in the family have aggravated the anxiety of college students at the same time.

A3: *"my family has always felt that since I am under pressure, I should work harder instead of feeling tired. When I am sad, I will never get correct feedback from my family, and will only be denied by my parents."*

A2: *"my parents often ask me about my work. They think it's for my good. But I feel annoyed because these are my things."*

A6: *"she doesn't understand why I feel tired and scared. She always says, haven't you learned your favorite major? If you like it, you won't be tired. Why are you so weak? Your pressure resistance is so weak? In fact, these words she said are good for me, which gives me more pressure."*

A8: *"Every time I communicate with my mother, I feel quite tired. I know sometimes she's trying to harm me, but I do get kidnapped by her moral kidnapping words. I feel guilty and follow the direction she wants me to do, but this doesn't go with my original intention. I feel very sad and tired."*

5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between anxiety and family background in college students. We conducted an empirical study on the relationship between parental psychological control and anxiety among college students, and found that as Bowen and his team have studied, as an emotional unit, a family member may feel anxious about what he or she believes is another family member's problem or potential problem (Kerr, 1988). Many college students' anxiety comes from the strong psychological control of their parents. Previous studies have mostly focused on the theoretical correlation between parental control and parent-child conflict. However, our study filled the empirical gap through case analysis and supplemented the further results of parent-child conflicts caused by parental control, namely the anxiety psychology of college students. University is an important stage of classroom learning before entering society, during which most students have reached adulthood physically and are still in a critical stage of psychological development. College students are an important talent reserve for the country, but currently society pays little attention to their psychological state, and there is a lack of relevant research on their psychological status and family reasons. Therefore, we conducted a case study of in-depth interview method on this blind spot and drew our research conclusions through examples.

Of course, there are still shortcomings in our research. Due to the limited availability of examples willing to undergo in-depth interviews, our sample can only represent certain typical cases to a certain extent and cannot fully cover all social phenomena. In future research, if the sample size can be expanded and more diversified research methods can be used, more accurate and universal conclusions should be drawn, providing more powerful empirical evidence for research conclusions.

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Authors contributions

Jiang Chenye and Song Yihan are jointly responsible for research, design, and revision. Song Yihan is responsible for data collection. Jiang Chenye organized the data and drafted a manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript. In this study, both authors made equal contributions to the study.

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