

Child abuse common in Vietnam

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Credit: Leiden University

Child abuse is a common problem in Vietnam. All forms of child abuse – emotional and physical – have a negative emotional effect on the child. In some cases, the child's physical health and memory are also affected. These are the conclusions of Ph.D. candidate Nhu Kieu Tran. Her Ph.D. ceremony is on 12 December.

Little research has been conducted into child abuse in Vietnam. Tran, herself from Vietnam, got almost 1900 Vietnamese school children aged between 12 and 17 to fill in a questionnaire. The results showed that child abuse is more prevalent in Vietnam than in the Netherlands. This was particularly true for [emotional abuse](#) (31.8 percent versus 8.5 percent), neglect (25 percent versus 4 percent) and [physical abuse](#) (19

percent versus 7 percent). Only reported [sexual abuse](#) was lower in Vietnam than in the Netherlands (2.6 percent versus 5.8 percent). But this could also be due to the cultural taboo around reporting it, Tran suggests.

Tran discovered patterns that could form the basis of a more targeted approach to preventing child abuse. From the questionnaires, she concluded that boys in Vietnam are at slightly higher risk of sexual or physical abuse during childhood. Furthermore, almost all forms of abuse are more prevalent in single-parent families. Tackling child abuse should therefore also focus explicitly on single parents.

Tran also researched the effects of [child abuse](#). She concluded that all forms of abuse have a negative emotional effect on the child. Children who have suffered from physical and/or sexual abuse also reported lower [physical health](#). She also found a link between sexual and/or emotional abuse and decreased memory performance.

Tran highlights another striking finding: emotional abuse was reported relatively often by the children of parents with high socioeconomic status. She also found that children who had experienced this form of abuse often had better results at school. She thinks that this could be related to 'tiger parenting,' a strict form of parenting that is popular in Vietnam that involves using emotional discipline to attain outstanding academic achievements.

Provided by Leiden University

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