

You are kindly invited to the public defense to obtain the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

of **drs. Shokoufeh Vatandoost**

Which will take place on June 16, 2025 at 11am CET
at [Promotiezaal](#) (building D - room D.2.01)
[VUB Main Campus Brussels](#) - Pleinlaan 2 – 1050 Brussel
Or if you wish to attend online, [click here to join the meeting](#)

PARENTING, EMOTION REGULATION AND MENTAL WELLBEING OF ADOLESCENTS: A CULTURE-SENSITIVE PERSPECTIVE

JURY

CHAIR:

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Vrije Universiteit Brussel

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Prof. Dr. Martijn Van Heel (Co-Supervisor)
Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Coming by car? Please [register your licence plate](#) in advance to have access to the campus.

You are also invited to the reception afterwards.

Please confirm your attendance before 12/06/2025 via shokoufeh.vatandoost@vub.be.

SUMMARY

Adolescence is a period of heightened emotional intensity and rapid development, making effective emotion regulation (ER) essential for maintaining mental health. This doctoral dissertation explores how different ER styles, parenting practices influence adolescents' psychological wellbeing, with a focus on both Western and non-Western contexts. The research consists of four empirical studies using cross-sectional and longitudinal designs, involving adolescents from Belgium and Iran, including a subgroup of vulnerable youth in community institutions. Data were collected through validated questionnaires assessing ER, perceived parenting styles, and mental health symptoms such as internalizing and externalizing problems, as well as non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). The findings indicate that emotion dysregulation is a strong predictor of mental health issues across both cultures; Iranian adolescents reported more frequent use of emotion suppression, though its negative impact was greater among Belgian adolescents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NSSI rates increased among Iranian youth but remained stable in Belgium, highlighting cultural differences in coping strategies. Additionally, autonomy-supportive parenting was associated with healthier emotional regulation and better mental health outcomes, while psychologically controlling parenting had detrimental effects. The dissertation underscores the importance of fostering adaptive ER and supportive parenting while emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive approaches in mental health prevention and intervention efforts, offering critical insights for educators, psychologists, and parents.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Shokoufeh Vatandoost holds a Master's degree in Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology from Iran and began her PhD at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in 2018 as a self-funded researcher. Her doctoral work focuses on adolescent emotion regulation and mental health, with a particular interest in cultural differences. She has served as a research assistant for the International Consortium on Self-Injury in Educational Settings (ICES) for two years. She has been publishing findings in peer-reviewed journals and presented her work at both national and international conferences. Her Master's diploma has been officially recognized in Belgium, where she is registered as a clinical psychologist. Shokoufeh currently works independently at the Brussels University Consultation Center (BRUCC) and in a private practice, providing therapy for adolescents, adults, and refugees.