Paternal Parenting Behaviour and Psychological Health of Adolescents

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Abstract – Psychological health as one of the most crucial indicators of successful adolescents has received considerable attention in the literature. High prevalence rates of various psychological problems amongst adolescents emphasize the significance of identifying paternal parenting behaviour that may reduce the risk of these problems. However, little attention has been given to how fathers influence their adolescents' psychological health, especially in an Asian context. To address this issue, this paper presents a thorough discussion of past literature related to paternal parenting behaviour and psychological health of adolescents. The discussion begins with a review related to psychological health, paternal parenting behaviour, and followed by the relationships between paternal parenting behaviour and psychological health. Based on the review of the literature, several research gaps will be addressed at the end of this paper.

Keywords: adolescents, paternal parenting behaviour, psychological health

Introduction

Adolescence is commonly described as a crucial developmental period and characterized by rapid riotous transitions that are triggered by biological, psychological and social changes (Brassai, Piko, & Steger, 2011). During this stage, adolescents begin to shift their self-concept (Byrne, Davenport, & Mazanov, 2007) by establishing their social position and exposed to a wide range of social situations (Sarkova et al., 2013). Adolescents take increasing responsibility to manage their own self and seek for autonomy. They start to show their interest in having autonomy by establishing new relationship with others (i.e., peers) and arrange their personal commitments without parents' supervision (Schraml, Perski, Grossi, & Simonsson-Sarnecki, 2011). Despite the desire of being free that can be experienced in a positive manner, the transformations occur throughout the process of emerging adulthood can be difficult for some adolescents. The stressful and challenging transitions could put some adolescents at a very unstable general health system and consequently experience poor psychological health (Brassai et al., 2011).

Numerous factors have been reported to improve adolescent psychological health. One of the factors that play a pertinent role is positive parenting practices (Smokowski et al., 2014a). Although adolescence is well known by a mushrooming desire for autonomy which results in increasing time spent with friends, parenting practices nonetheless have a noteworthy effect on adolescents' functioning such as psychological health (Abubakar, Van de Vijver, Suryani, Handayani, & Pandia, 2015; Jafari, Baharudin, & Archer, 2013; Kerr, Stattin, & Özdemir, 2012). For instance, a study conducted by Smokowski et al. (2014a) unveiled that positive parenting such as parent education support, parent-child future orientation, and parent support improved psychological health in adolescents. Additionally, responsive parenting was reported to promote positive psychological health amongst adolescents (Alayi, 2013). However, inconsistency and negativity in parenting were also found to be detrimental to adolescents' psychological health (Dwairy et al., 2009; Smokowski et al., 2014a). In the past, research

on family interactions and adolescents' psychological development has focused on adolescents' relationship with their mothers. When compared to mothers, fathers remain understudied (Bogels & Phares, 2008; Demidenko, Manion, & Lee, 2014; Eliezer, Yahav, & Or Hen, 2012). Therefore, this calls for efforts to increase research on fathers and adolescents' psychological development.

Adolescent Psychological Health

A psychological healthy individual is capable to think clearly, developing socially and balance between both emotionally and intellectually (Zulkefly & Baharudin, 2010). World Health Organization (2014) describes psychological health as the capacity to attain and maintain a healthy psychological functioning. In other words, psychological health can be assumed as a resource that is necessary in determining adolescent's subjective well-being, skills of adapting with surroundings, ability to communicate with others and to which extent able to have successful social relations (Patel, Flisher, Nikapota, & Malhotra, 2008). Based on the definitions retrieved from prior studies, the present study suggests that psychological health as one's own judgments on his/ her ability to adjust with physiological, emotion and psychological changes in an appropriate manner and able to maintain the stability between emotional and psychological in order to achieve an optimal psychological state.

An optimal psychological state is considered as a possible factor that encourages adolescents to be a fully functioning person by creating an environment that is deemed fit to their condition. Adolescents who have potential to find equilibrium in every challenging condition are easier to develop potentials within themselves and grow as psychologically healthy persons (Asamsama et al., 2014; Yahaya, Momtaz, Arisah, Sulaiman, & Arisah, 2012). Research has thoroughly documented a wide range of benefits associated with positive psychological health, specifically related to successful developmental outcomes. For instance, psychological health carries significant benefits on adolescents' academic performance (Hamaideh & Hamdan-Mansour, 2014; Keyes et al., 2012; Zulkefly & Baharudin, 2010). Every day, adolescents are subjected to several important tasks such as attending classes, completing homework, and experiencing high demands and expectations (i.e., from teacher and parents) that possibly leads to stress. The pressure experienced by them could possibly be stabilized by having positive psychological health (Zulkefly & Baharudin, 2010). The finding has inspired considerable optimism about the role of positive psychological health as a medium of adaptation in coping with pressures and motivates adolescents to perform well in academic. Other than that, it is also evident that psychological health could predict positive self-concept such as resiliency (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010; Ruiz-Casares, Guzder, Rousseau, & Kirmayer, 2013; Rutten et al., 2013). Resiliency reflects the consequence of successful adaptation to severe adversity. A resilient person tend to have the ability to bounce back into the normal state even when they have experienced severe adversity. They are able to overcome problems in a socially accepted manner and having a rapid recovery from poor psychological health (Rutten et al., 2013).

Poor psychological health in adolescents normally associated with antisocial behaviour, physical and psychological disorders such as anxiety (Nantel-Vivier, Pihl, Cote, & Tremblay, 2014), depression (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; Lim, Chong, Khoo, & Kaur, 2014), behavioural problems (McPherson et al., 2014), antisocial behaviour (Monahan, Oesterle, Rhew, & Hawkins, 2014), substance abuse (Aebi, Giger, Plattner, Metzke, & Steinhausen, 2014; Razali & Kliewer, 2015). Findings from the earlier study conducted by Kort-Butler (2009) revealed that adolescent with poor psychological health are unable to solve existing problem, fail to manage stress in a socially accepted way which may lead to illegal modes of adaptation (i.e., delinquent behaviour). In supporting the previous notion, past recent studies have documented that psychological disturbance is often a precursor to antisocial behaviour (Monahan et al., 2014) and substance abuse (Lim et al., 2014; Razali & Kliewer, 2015). For instance, depressed adolescents will be lacking in energy to engage prosocially and display low concern to others thus, may be more likely to display antisocial behaviour as a way of navigating their social environments (Nantel-Vivier et al., 2014). For that reason, researchers instigated examining what factors are particularly important to prevent poor psychological health and consequently improve adolescents' psychological health (Alayi, 2013; Kerr, Stattin, & Özdemir, 2012; Smokowski et al., 2014a; Smokowski, Evans, Cotter, & Guo, 2014b; Smokowski et al., 2014c).

Conceptualization of Paternal Parenting Behaviour

In modern societies, an individual socialization process usually takes place in at least three major contexts (i.e., families, peer groups, and environment) (Maccoby, 2000). Therefore, fathers are not the only socialization agents that contribute to adolescents' development, however, they are considered as the fundamental sources of influence (Lamb & Lewis, 2010). Fathers offer a unique contribution to the development of adolescents. Although fathers have typically been judged by their breadwinning and considerably less attention has been paid to their contributions (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004), yet fathers are both, directly and indirectly, related to adolescents' positive and negative development (Flouri, 2010). Drawing back a decades-long trend, researchers investigated the possibility that paternal parenting behaviour might play a significant role in adolescents' development (Veneziano, 2003). Paternal parenting behaviour is a socialization process whereby father practices child rearing strategies and behaviours in shaping their children's development such as disciplining and providing warmth (Belsky, 1984).

Paternal warmth refers to fathers' behaviours that express support, acceptance, encouragement, and affection toward offspring (Baumrind 1966; Steinberg, 2001). As described by Maccoby and Martin (1983), paternal warmth is formed through an affective quality of father-child relationship in terms of how fathers nurture and accept their children. In recent work, paternal warmth is described as physical and verbal affection behaviour displayed by fathers (Kazarian, Moghnie, & Martin, 2010). The affection behaviour subsequently encourages the feeling of being accepted and loved in one's self. Additionally, paternal warmth is a positive behaviour underlying paternal acceptance (Putnick et al., 2012) that could enhance the effectiveness of parenting practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). In particular, the level of warmth expressed by fathers on adolescents can be considered as a building block of their parenting (Di Maggio & Zappulla, 2013).

Previous studies revealed a positive relationship between paternal warmth and successful developmental outcomes (Jafari et al., 2013; Lowe & Dotterer, 2013; Quach et al., 2013). For example, warmth father-adolescent relationships were found to be positively associated with adolescents' academic outcomes and predict less involvement in externalizing problems (Lowe & Dotterer, 2013). Other than that, the influence of fathers' warmth and responsiveness on father-adolescent relationship contributes to the feeling of closeness, and in turn protects adolescents from having depressive and anxiety symptoms (Jafari et al., 2013; Quach et al., 2013).

Monitoring is a continuum of demandingness dimension that appears as a "common denominator" (Baumrind, 1972). Early work by Dishion and McMahon (1998, p.61) defined monitoring in parenting as "a set of correlated parenting behaviours involving attention to and tracking of the child's whereabouts, activities, and adaptations". It is also important to acknowledge that paternal monitoring involves several strategies including the establishment of adolescents' autonomy boundaries, expectations of adolescents' behaviours, and consequences of violating the autonomy boundaries and expectations. Paternal monitoring is a transactional process that reflects fathers' efforts to express their interest and attention towards adolescents such as fathers' solicitation of adolescents' information and supervision of their activities (Lippold, Greenberg, Graham, & Feinberg, 2013). Additionally, Lowe and Dotterer (2013) emphasized that fathers commonly monitor adolescents because they want to get knowledge of adolescents' school, social activities and whereabouts. Fathers attempt to have more knowledge about adolescents is perceived as good monitoring behaviours which includes supervision and involvement instead of lack of confidence and interference (Di Maggio & Zappulla, 2013). Racz and McMahon (2011) identified good monitoring in parenting as actively structuring adolescents' environments and actively tracking their whereabouts.

Paternal monitoring must be measured carefully in order to have a comprehensive understanding on how this parenting behaviour is conceptualized. The paternal monitoring structure may undergo changes as a child progresses from childhood to adolescence (Racz & McMahon, 2011). During childhood, fathers monitoring process focuses within home and school contexts. Different from childhood monitoring process, fathers need to adjust their monitoring behaviour into a broader concept (i.e., monitor adolescents after-school activities) during adolescence. Despite the broad use of the

paternal monitoring term in previous studies, the definition of this term remains inconsistent (i.e., knowledge of adolescents' whereabouts, communicate with adolescents through mobile phone, establish rules and track adolescents' activities, and direct supervision).

Over several decades, numerous aspects of positive parenting such as warmth, monitoring, support and supervision have been identified as protective factors in adolescents' positive developmental outcomes (Chen & Liu, 2011; Jafari et al., 2013; Quach et al., 2013). Recently, researchers begin to emphasize that negative parenting behaviour is related to poor development in adolescents (Jafari et al., 2013; Wang & Kenny, 2014). One of the risk factors that have a dramatic effect on adolescents' behavioural and emotional development is paternal harsh discipline (Jansen et al., 2012; Lewis, Collishaw, Thapar, & Harold, 2014; Wang & Kenny, 2014). Paternal harsh discipline is a less extreme form of discipline in parenting that involved verbal harsh discipline, psychological force or physical punishment (Bert, Guner, & Lanzi, 2009; Wang & Kenny, 2014). Fathers are more likely to use harsh discipline with the intention of correcting or controlling the behaviour of adolescents which directly contribute to emotion and cognitive violation.

More recently, paternal harsh discipline was found to associate with negative outcomes in adolescents such as conduct problems behaviour (Lysenko, Barker, & Jaffee, 2013; Wang & Kenny, 2014) and symptoms of psychological disturbances (Smith & Moore, 2012). Harsh discipline in fathering, for example using verbal intimidation (yelling or shouting to adolescents), cursing adolescents, improper punishment and rejection may increase the risk for conduct problems behaviour in adolescents (Lysenko et al., 2013). The association between harsh discipline and negative outcomes is bidirectional over time, involving both fathers and adolescents. Adolescents who are vulnerable to harsh discipline will absorb negative cognition supplied by fathers to them. The negative cognition may contribute to negative self-schema in adolescents and foster inferior and worthless feeling in them (Miller-Perrin, Perrin, & Kocur, 2009).

Albeit beneficial influences of cultural and religious contributions in the general public have been gradually established in the West (Chan & Yuet-Keung, 2010), the cultural and religious contributions on family well-being (i.e., father-adolescent interaction) remain under-studied especially in non-Western countries such as Malaysia. Previous studies have widely implemented Western models in explaining how parental strategies influence child outcomes. Numerous established measures were used in measuring parenting behaviour, such as Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (Shelton et al., 1996), Children's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988), Parental Supervision Scale (Cochran et al.,1994), Parental Bonding Instruments (Parker et al., 1979), Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (Gerard, 1994), Parent-Child Relationship Survey (Fine et al., 1983), Parental Monitoring Scale (Paulson et al., 1998), and Parent's Report (Dibble & Cohen, 1974). An important gap that remains is that these measures are not culturally grounded. Additionally, certain dimensions of parenting may not be salient in non-Western countries (Baharudin, 2017). Thus, researchers might fail to identify the relationships between parent and child in non-Western cultures (Stewart et al., 1999). Up until now, there is a minimal-to-no measure that is specially developed to measure parenting behaviour within Asian population especially Malaysian. In view of this, Baharudin, Zulkefly, & Arshat (2014) developed a new measurement that reflected cultural influences on childrearing strategies, namely Malaysian Parenting Behaviour Inventory (MPBI). The measurement combined four different components (i.e. warmth, monitoring, harsh discipline, and indigenous) of parenting behaviour. The measure was developed based on Malaysian population and effectively taps on its cultural contexts. The adoption of a more culturally sensitive measure will help to demonstrate a better picture of paternal parenting behaviour in Malaysia.

Paternal parenting behaviour and psychological health

For many years, a body of research has highlighted the role of fathers in adolescents' psychological health. Although the number of research on fathers is smaller than the research related to mother (Baharudin, Zulkefly, Yee, Yeng, & Jun, 2014; Chiah & Baharudin, 2013; Eliezer, Yahav, & Or Hen, 2012; Jafari et al., 2013; Juhari, Yaacob, & Talib., 2012), recent research has suggested that fathers have considerably unique and additive contribution on adolescents psychological health development

(Demidenko et al., 2014; Jafari et al., 2013; Murray, Dwyer, Rubin, Knighton-Wisor, & Booth-LaForce, 2014). Indeed, past research has supported the association between specific paternal parenting behaviour and psychological health outcomes in adolescents. Positive paternal parenting behaviour such as warmth, monitoring and indigenous parenting generally has been found to relate with positive outcomes (Smokowski et al., 2014a), whereas, negative paternal parenting behaviour such as harsh discipline has been found to associate with various psychological health problems and risks (Murray et al., 2014).

Paternal parenting behaviour that reflects paternal warmth has been evident to consistently associate with positive psychological health in adolescents (Han & Grogan-Kaylor, 2012). For example, Hossain (2013) provided empirical evidence that greater paternal warmth encouraged adolescents to acquire appropriate behaviours such as developed pro-social behaviour and positive psychological adjustment. Fathers who provided more warmth were more likely to be involved with adolescents and have more knowledge about their activities (Lowe & Dotterer, 2013). The involvement and support showed by fathers in their daily activities will stimulate them to have positive perceptions towards their fathers. This will in turn reduce the risk of psychological health distress such as depressive symptoms (Garthe, Sullivan, & Kliewer, 2015; Jun, Baharudin, & Jo-Pei., 2013; Stanik, Riina, & McHale, 2013).

Less warmth in fathers which refers to paternal rejection, less involvement and withdrawal of paternal love might also be an excellent predictor of psychological health problems in adolescents (Kim, 2013). One of the theories pertaining to paternal warmth and rejection is parental acceptance-rejection theory (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2009). Parental acceptance-rejection theory assumed that an individual has a tendency to develop an array of emotional, behavioural and cognitive dispositions (i.e., emotional instability, problem with management of anger, anxiety, insecurity and distorted social cognitive orientations) when the need for positive response such as warmth and care is unmet (Khaleque & Rohner, 2011; Rohner, 2004; Rohner et al., 2009). A meta-analysis conducted by Khaleque and Rohner (2011) in a sample of 66 studies involving 19511 respondents from 22 different countries on five regions uncovered that paternal warmth had a stronger and greater impact on adolescent psychological health when compared to maternal warmth.

Besides paternal warmth, paternal monitoring is closely related to adolescents' psychological health. Previous research (Garthe et al., 2015) has revealed that paternal monitoring is positively associated with psychological health. Garthe et al's study indicated that adolescents with fathers who are knowledgeable of their lives and activities tend to be more effective in fostering psychological health in them. Furthermore, Jafari et al. (2013) in examining the direct relationship between paternal monitoring and psychological health in economically and ethnically diverse sample of Malaysian adolescents found that paternal monitoring predicted healthy psychological development. Similarly, a longitudinal study of Canadian adolescents revealed that paternal monitoring decreases adolescents' susceptibility to psychological health problems through fathers' concerns by showing interest and concern about their whereabouts and activities (Hamza & Willoughby, 2011). These findings imply that paternal monitoring serves as a protective factor for adolescents' psychological health.

Other than paternal monitoring, there have been some recent studies exploring the association between paternal harsh discipline and adolescents' psychological health. For example, Jafari et al.'s (2013) study amongst adolescents' indicated that paternal harsh discipline increased vulnerability to poor psychological health such as anxiety. Fathers who express hostile or harsh parenting behaviour tend to display more conflicts in the relationship with their offspring and disrupt the ability to maintain a positive relationship with them (Newland, Ciciolla, & Crnic, 2014). Furthermore, the conflicts may have even greater negative consequences on their psychological health as Lamb and Lewis (2010) found that conflict appeared more detrimental to the father-child relationship than to the mother-child relationship. A longitudinal study conducted amongst adolescents ages 13 and 14 in Pennsylvania predicted that paternal harsh discipline specifically, verbal intimidation, vulgarity and humiliation did not lessen adolescents' problem behaviour, but rather increased psychological health risks over time (Wang & Kenny, 2014). However, Gonzales et al. (2011) found that paternal harsh discipline did not predict adolescents' psychological health.

Traditional and cultural values in paternal parenting behaviour such as indigenous parenting frequently influence the way fathers discipline their adolescents (Smokowski et al., 2014a). Baharudin (2017) highlights that familism and spirituality are two prominent features of Malaysian culture in parenting. In terms of familism, it highlights the importance of family in an individual's life. Spirituality, on the other hand, will contextually influence how parents raise their child. Essentially, indigenous parenting that is characterized by the familism and spirituality may be conducive to promote an optimal psychological health (Baharudin, 2017). Although indigenous parenting is still at its infancy stage in Malaysia, it deserves attention because of its relations to adolescents' developmental outcomes. Past studies provided empirical evidence for its protective nature on the psychological health of adolescents in Malaysia. For example, studies conducted among adolescents from daily government schools revealed that indigenous parenting practised by the fathers positively associated with adolescents' psychological well-being (Yahya, Zulkefly, Baharudin & Ismail, 2014) and life satisfaction (Yahya, Baharudin & Zulkefly, 2016) through self-esteem. Continuing efforts to understand the association between indigenous parenting and psychological health is crucial since studies in Malaysia have been limited in scope.

In spite of the fact that researchers found direct associations between paternal parenting behaviour and adolescents' psychological health, they have ignored the multidimensional nature of paternal parenting behaviour (Di Maggio & Zappulla, 2013). Tapping dimensions of the paternal parenting behaviour may remind researchers that a collection of childrearing practices is ideal for optimal parenting (Jafari et al., 2013). The conceptualization of fathering as a combination of numerous dimensions or components may serve as a strong framework for understanding how fathers influence adolescents' psychological health. Accordingly, paternal parenting behaviour should be defined in a more multidimensional way in order to study its effect on adolescents' psychological health. Previously, Jafari et al. (2013) have examined the relationship using four different dimensions of parenting behaviour (i.e., warmth, hostility, consistent discipline, and monitoring). Of all these dimensions, only paternal consistent discipline and monitoring were found to predict Malaysian adolescents' psychological health.

Conclusion
Despite the extant discussions on the relationships amongst these variables, three gaps were identified from the existing literature. Firstly, regardless of the fact that parenting behaviour has been influential in predicting adolescents' psychological health, most of the research has been done on mothers compared to fathers' population (Baharudin et al., 2014; Chiah & Baharudin, 2013; Putnick et al., 2012). Review of the literature recommends that more research on paternal parenting behaviour should be conducted amongst Asian fathers especially Malaysia. Secondly, with regards to parenting behaviour, past research has given more attention on its unidimensional nature (Krauss et al., 2012; Krauss et al., 2013). Given that fewer studies focused on the multidimensional nature of parenting, it is deemed necessary to measure parenting behaviour using multidimensional scale. The utilization of the multidimensional approach in measuring parenting behaviour will provide ample understanding on the influence of father parenting behaviour on adolescents' development. Thirdly, although various measures have been employed to measure parenting behaviour, most were based on Western White middle-class population. There is a glaring absence of measures that could effectively tap on the parenting behaviour of non-Western culture including in Malaysia.

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