

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL NURTURANCE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRE-ADOLESCENTS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents is noticeable and an obvious type of violation that occurs around the globe. Such behaviour needs to be responded to since it influences society. Despite the considerable number of investigations into aggressive behaviour, there are still many pre-adolescents whom take part in aggressive behaviour during school time. Prior studies into the aggressive behaviour of pre-adolescents in Malaysia have focused on the effect of parenting styles. However, there is a deficiency of data regarding the role of parental nurturance on aggressive behaviour. This current study is designed to examine the relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour, by potential moderating roles of age and gender among pre-adolescents. Regression analysis indicated that there was a negative relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour. ANOVA and t-test analyses indicated that there were differences between aggressive behaviour and gender and age among pre-adolescents. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that there was no moderating role of gender in the relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour, however, age moderated this relationship. Findings of the present study have highlighted the importance of parental nurturance in decreasing aggressive behaviour amongst primary school age children in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In conclusion, it is proposed that in developing policies of schools, more attention should be paid to the influence of parents on the potential aggressive behaviour of their children during pre-adolescence. Also, the findings can be useful for teachers, counselors, and policy makers to minimizing aggressive behaviour during pre-adolescence.

Keywords: Parental Nurturance, Aggressive Behaviour, Gender, Age, Pre-adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents has become a serious worldwide issue (Burns & Kaufman, 2012) and it is considered to be unfavourable behaviour directed to others possibly with the aim of harming them (T'ng, 2011). However, this is a risk factor to a range of negative results including the school failing to detect psychological problems and delinquency, which is a complicated and significant difficulty for society, community, victims, and the aggressor him/herself (Salaz, 2012; Clark, Menna, & Manel, 2013; Lee, 2014). Thus, it is important to specify how aggressive behaviour decreased in pre-adolescence due to a number of changes in the neurological, emotional, interpersonal, and social roles occur, which confront pre-adolescents in the developmental move through childhood to adulthood (Kong, Abdullah, & Roslan, 2013; Mazzotti, Test, & Wood, 2013).

According to Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary, (2009) the age of 10 years old is the start of pre-adolescence and ends before the teenage years. Within the last few decades, studies focused on realising aggressive behaviour among adolescents and reported that up to 15% of pre-adolescents in the world show aggressive behaviour (Xie et al., 2011; Bowen & Wretman, 2014) and 7% -11% of them are in primary schools and tend to maintain this attitude into adolescence (Reijntjes et al., 2010; Tremblay, 2010). Conversely, few studies have investigated that the origin of aggressive behaviour in adulthood stems from early life, particularly in primary schools (Chin, 2013; Kong et al., 2013) while aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescence is known as a predictor of criminal and delinquent behaviour through their subsequent lifetime (Anderson et al., 2010).

Aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents has underlying causes in Malaysia that threaten to cause performance difficulties and generate numerous troubles in the area of social connections (Kong et al., 2013). The primary school years are an essential period of personal development. In fact, this time is a critical initiation into building good social abilities and healthy psychological interactions within pre-adolescents (Yahaya et al., 2012). When pre-adolescents in primary school exhibit aggressive behaviour, it means they will experience major troubles during their lifetime (Yahaya et al., 2012; Chin, 2013). In Malaysia, aggressive behaviours in schools have recently exposed many issues that affect the school environment including security and the educational success of all the pre-adolescents (Chin, 2013), which can result in behavioural difficulties (Ho et al., 2010). Data on pre-adolescent's aggressive behaviour in primary schools is formally collected by the schools (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2013) and over the years from (2010) to (2012) the number of aggressive behaviours in Kuala Lumpur, has raised (Department of Social Welfare of Malaysia, 2013; Royal Police Department of Malaysia, 2013).

This issue has increased community concerns since Malaysian pre-adolescents are the resource for the future of the country to become entirely developed by the target year of (2020). While some researchers have already carried out studies of aggressive behaviour in Malaysia in secondary schools (Teoh, 2010; Yahaya et al., 2012; Jia Choon et al., 2013), few studies have examined aggressive behaviour in primary schools (Chin, 2013; Kong et al., 2013).

In general, studies support the necessity to recognise aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents in order to be able to offer a mitigation and preventative approach which could affect the aggressive behaviour during pre-adolescence and later in life (Clark et al., 2013; Mazur, 2013). An important effective intervention approach is to gain better knowledge of the variables and aspects linked to aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents who are at-risk of aggressive behaviour and who have difficulty in their relationships with others by coping academically, socially, and behaviourally (Chapman, 2012).

Malaysia has a moderately young population, of which 60% of the population is under 30 years of age (Department of Statistics of Malaysia, 2013). Currently in Malaysia, most of the pre-adolescents are socially and emotionally healthy. Irrespective of these facts, a number of pre-adolescents display aggressive behaviour in their setting (Yahaya, et al., 2012; Chin, 2013; Kong et al., 2013). Former research has explained that pre-adolescence is an important stage affecting the lifetime of children since they encounter social and personal difficulties and learn how to handle situations (Brown, 2012). Nevertheless, pre-adolescents must be nurtured with consideration and attention (Ribeaud and Eisner, 2010). Recently, aggressive behaviour has posed a serious worry for the government, community, school staff, and parents (Yahaya et al., 2012; Chin, 2013; Kong et al., 2013).

Studies have illustrated that factors, which determine aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescence emanate from socialisation in the family and in this case, parenting behaviours play a critical role as a correlation of the aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents (Arim et al., 2011). Although parents are worried when the psychological changes start in their children, typically it is a short-term period and pre-adolescents are likely to be more mature as they get older (Mazzotti et al., 2013). While these kinds of changes are usually non-permanent, parents could develop their children's behaviours by displaying positive and warm parenting behaviours such as parental nurturance (Abodunrin and Dosunmu, 2012; Arim et al., 2011). Rearing a pre-adolescent is actually tough and complicated for parents since a pre-adolescent starts to behave in a more mature manner to transition into adolescence (Mazzotti et al., 2013). Development in a pre-adolescent is vital in his/her lifetime and parents would like to ensure that their young children are growing appropriately (Arim et al., 2011).

Nurturance is a remarkably salient part of parenting, which consists of psychological attention and behavioural management by parents of their children's interpersonal and emotional growth during pre-adolescence (Arim et al., 2011). Different aspects of parenting such as warmth and responsiveness are linked to the psychological development of a pre-adolescent but this is not similar to parental nurturance (Arim et al., 2011). Little is known of the relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents due to the lack of studies that have examined this relationship during childhood and adolescence (Anderson et al., 2010). It has been discovered that in some children there is a negative linkage between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour (Arim et al., 2011; Aldo, 2014). The anticipation is that this relationship may expand to pre-adolescence. However, it needs to be examined.

Pre-adolescence is an essential time to examine the relationships between parental nurturance with aggressive behaviour since the possibility of high level in parental nurturance with a lower level of aggressive behaviour is much more at age 10-12 compared to mid or late adolescence (Arim et al., 2011). To some extent, the connection among children and their parents during pre-adolescence is a core part of realising the behavioural and emotional improvement in pre-adolescents (Hassan et al., 2015). The family system is an important context in comprehending the roots of aggressive behaviour in terms of pre-adolescence (Hameed-ur-Rehman et al., 2012; Hassan et al., 2015). The experiences of a pre-adolescent in the home setting have an influence on his/her thoughts and feelings which could affect his/her connection with the environment (Teoh, 2010). Theoretically, aggressive behaviour derived from Attachment Theory by Bowlby (1969) that identifies an expression of safety and stability, which enables pre-adolescents to interact in the external world and understand that they can continually be welcomed once they return to their parents regarding security and safety (Bowlby, 1969).

Most importantly, due to the fact that pre-adolescents are members of the community, an extensive knowledge of their aggressive behaviour is fundamental in society such that appropriate parenting is the main key (Chapman, 2012). Realising how parents affect aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescence is vital since they are the most significant people in their children's life during the pre-adolescence period (Timpano et al., 2010; Chapman, 2012). Researchers agree that aggressive behaviour is learned by observing and imitating the behaviours of the parents (Brown, 2012; Ho and Cheung, 2010). Parents have strong influence on the lives of their children through assist them to develop their interpersonal behaviours to become a healthy mature adult (Fong, 2010) during pre-adolescence, much more so than at the other stages of life. Aggressive behaviour can be highly affected by parents and could move over the years towards periods of violence (Jia Choon et al., 2013).

On a related note, several studies carried out on aggressive behaviour of pre-adolescents in the Malaysian context identified that parenting is the top of the contributing variables to this difficulty (Asmah et al., 2011; Yahaya et al., 2012) and the major predictor of aggressive behaviour is poor parenting behaviour (Ribeaud and Eisner, 2010). Thus, nurturing should be done ideally by the parents who should be able to manage and control this critical stage of growth (Mazur, 2013; Muchiri Karega, 2012). In all of these studies, there has been elevated focus on the styles concerned with the way parenting affects the improvement of aggressive behaviour during pre-adolescence (Mazur, 2013). Nevertheless, few researchers have reviewed the parenting role in terms of minimising aggressive behaviour by parental nurturance (Hameed-ur-Rehman et al., 2012; Norman, 2012) and gaps still exist in the literature.

Accordingly, the first objective of this study is to examine the relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour among Malaysian pre-adolescents. Since pre-adolescence is a significant quantity of time in life preparing a child for the active social life of adulthood (Mazur, 2013), parents and their connection with their children have an effect on the aggressive behaviour of pre-adolescent (Ribeaud and Eisner, 2010). It is plausible that parents can employ various ways to interact socially with their children such as controlling or supporting methods. A significant form of supporting style is parental nurturance (De

Haan et al., 2012), which is illustrated as a protective aspect against aggressive behaviour (Chapman, 2012). Parental nurturance involves many parenting behaviours such as warmth, being supportive, responsiveness, friendship, and admission (Muchiri Karega, 2012) and these kind of behaviours would be standard requirements for pre-adolescents (Hameed-ur-Rehman et al., 2012; Muchiri Karega, 2012).

It is clear that the emotions associated with protection and safety in pre-adolescents when put at risk can cause the children to behave aggressively (Arim et al., 2011). From this viewpoint, it is also possible that insufficient parental nurturance during pre-adolescence will predict a growth in aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents since they probably experience a risky environment and behaviour and may be irritated to the point that raises their probability to interact using aggressive behaviour (Arim et al., 2011). A high level of parental nurturance is considered a consequence of understanding that while a pre-adolescent finds his/her parents are nurturing, he/she thinks and experiences optimistic thoughts about the relationship with his/her parents and thus thinks positively regarding himself/herself (Chapman, 2012). Growing up in a nurturing family framework encourages pre-adolescents to be positive with other people in their environment (Chapman, 2012). In line with the above, improvements in the area of child development and family studies have resulted in restored curiosity concerning the relationship between the aggressive behaviour of pre-adolescents and parental nurturance that involves the necessity to examine the trend towards aggressive behaviour during pre-adolescence (Arim et al., 2011). Considering that the family is the initial window to society for each pre-adolescent, then parental nurturance can significantly influence a pre-adolescent in terms of comprehending, perspective, and behaviours (De Haan et al., 2012; Muchiri Karega, 2012).

During the past decade, investigations of aggressive behaviour have been made available in research dedicated to pre-adolescents in primary schools (Gentile et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2012). Hence, improvements in reducing aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents may have an unfavourable impact on the life style of pre-adolescent as well as their normal capabilities (Gentile et al., 2011). Consequences include educational disability, adverse understanding perceptions, absence and rejection of school, fellow denial, antisocial behaviours, and finally, teenage delinquency (De Haan et al., 2012). In addition, prior studies have found that during primary school, poor parental nurturance could be a predictor of the aggressive behaviour of pre-adolescents (Mazur, 2013; Clark et al., 2012). In line with earlier research, several studies have looked at aggressive behaviour problems in Malaysian pre-adolescents (Asmah et al., 2011; Chin, 2013; Kong et al., 2013). Based on this, the aim of this study is to clarify the relationship between the perception of parental nurturance of pre-adolescents with aggressive behaviour among primary school children in Kuala Lumpur, who represent the nation main asset and will shape the future of Malaysia.

Previous research has recognised diverse socio-demographic factors related to aggressive behaviour and among these factors, age and gender differences seem to be the most significant factors (Zhou, 2012). Thus, another objective of the present study is to examine the differences in aggressive behaviour between age and gender among pre-adolescents. Also, as regards aggressive behaviour as a serious issue in pre-adolescents, it is relevant to investigate the factors, which reduce aggressive behaviour such as parental nurturance at various ages and for different genders in the Malaysian population. It will be valuable to examine the age onset that is increasingly important, particularly for parents to be aware of the signs of aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents. So, the third objective is to examine the moderating role of age and gender in the relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour among Malaysian pre-adolescents.

Moreover, the results of the present research will offer a framework to comprehend the relationship between gender discrepancies with aggressive behaviour. This will allow further evaluation for those at-risk boys and girls who display aggressive behaviour during pre-adolescence. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to determine whether age and gender play a moderating role on the relationship between parental nurturance with aggressive behaviour. Findings on the moderating role may contribute towards the development of aggressive behaviour prevention and intervention programs, which are sensitive to age and gender difference. In addition, the present study has acquired greater inspiration due to the number of earlier studies in this field being limited in Malaysia as an Asian context. Therefore, this study intends to supply important information for future researchers to determine and expand the knowledge of the way in which aggressive behaviour may occur and be managed by producing accumulative full viewpoint.

In general, it is believed that boys often have a greater tendency to participate in intensive comparative situations once they find that challenges are excessive rather than girls (Morales-Vives et al., 2010). Therefore, in terms of aggressive behaviour, it is expected that boys will be much more the aggressor than girls (Murray-Close et al., 2010). As such, individuals consider variant social tasks and their behaviours are generally controlled by the norms of the community to which they are attached (Zhou, 2012). As an example, boys often occupy masculine tasks including source attainment behaviours or even control behaviours within their surroundings. This is opposed to girls who usually offer feminine roles such as common and submissive behaviours (Morales-Vives et al., 2010). The gender role for boys usually includes norms in the community, which reinforces aggressive behaviour due to the stereotype that allows boys to act as an aggressor and to be tough in their environment. In contrast, for girls, the customary gender role does not reinforce aggressive behaviour since girls are expected to keep away from hurting others (Zhou, 2012). Although numerous investigations in the area of developmental psychology have determined that girls are less aggressive than boys, the majority of such studies employed adolescence and the child population (Murray-Close et al., 2010). The number of studies designed to examine gender discrepancy among pre-adolescents are limited. Therefore, this study will look at gender differences in aggressive behaviour during pre-adolescence and attempt to supply an extra understanding of aggressive behaviour in the Malaysian context.

From the theoretical viewpoint, Bowlby (1969) mentioned that the role of poor parental nurturance in elucidating aggressive behaviour. Pre-adolescents need to have warm and close relationships with their parents to learn and imitate good behaviours. If they could not learn good behaviours, they might engage in aggressive behaviours in their relationship with others (Arim et al.,

2011). Review of literatures revealed that there is no study has been carried out on the relationships between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour among pre-adolescents in Malaysia. Then, in order to understand parental nurturance as a predictor of aggressive behaviour and decreasing factor of aggressive behaviour, this study has utilised parental nurturance as an independent variable to explain aggressive behaviour among pre-adolescents in Malaysian context.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Participant Selection

Kuala Lumpur as a most urbanization state in the country was chosen as a scope of the present study. Kuala Lumpur was recorded as a higher population of pre-adolescent participation in aggressive behaviour and criminal activity than any other city in the country (Department of Statistic, Malaysia, 2013). Due to a large number of population, the multistage cluster sampling method has been employed to obtain proportional representation in size (PPS). National schools are believed to offer a greater population sample since the majority of Malaysian pre-adolescents are enrolled in national schools in spite of numerous private schools being available. Based on the Cochran formula (1963), the theoretical population of this study is comprised of 390 pre-adolescents studying in national urban primary schools (Sekolah Kebangsaan) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, involving 10 to 12 year old (10-11-12 years old) of both genders (girls and boys) who classified as pre-adolescents whom experienced quick pubertal changes such as bodily, cognitive, moral, emotional, and social development.

Before the data collection, approval was obtained for the research from the Ethical Clearance Committee of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), the Malaysian Ministry of Education and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In addition, permission for collecting data from each chosen primary school was obtained from the Principal of each school. Then, the consent form from teachers of each class and parents was collected prior the data collection. During data collection, the researcher first distributed a packet note consisting of 1) an information sheet, 2) informed consent, and 3) questionnaire. The respondents were briefed regarding the study and gave their consent to participate in the study. The respondents then completed the self-administered questionnaire under group administration. The duration for data collection was approximately one hour. Upon completion, respondents were given tokens in appreciation for their participation in the study.

Measurements of Study

Two instruments were used to measure the variables in this study. The first one is Parental Nurturance Scale (PNS) by Lempers, Clark-Lempers, and Simons, (1989), a self-report questionnaire, consists of 7-items to measure the pre-adolescent's perception of their parent's nurturing behaviour towards themselves, and it was translated from the original English version into Bahasa Melayu (Malaysian national language). Second, a self-report scale of Children Aggression Inventory (CAI) to measure the aggressive behaviour of pre-adolescents. It consists of 38-items developed in Bahasa Melayu by Maria Chong Abdullah, Samsilah Roslan, and Kong Luo Lan, (2011) for the Malaysian context.

RESULTS

The data collected in this study was analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). A total of 390 (N=390) students participated in this study consisted of female (56.4%, N=220), and male (43.6%, N=170) who aged from 10 to 12 years old (30.8 % at age 10, 30.8 % at age 11, and 38.5 % at age 12). Ahead of data analysis, a normality test was conducted. To assess the internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability was used. Based on the result, both instruments demonstrated a suitable and high reliability value (PNS= .81, CAI= .91) where in each case the Cronbach's alpha level was higher than 0.70.

Parental Nurturance and Aggressive Behaviour

Findings showed a significant negative linear relationship between parental nurturance ($r=-.48, p \leq 0.01$) with pre-adolescent's aggressive behaviour. From this, it follows that increasing parental nurturance causes pre-adolescents to be more likely to exhibit less aggressive behaviour.

Gender and Age difference with Aggressive Behaviour

An independent sample t-test was carried out to compare the gender difference of the respondents in terms of aggressive behaviour. According to the result, there was a statistically significant difference ($t= 2.9, p \leq .05$) in aggressive behaviour between boys ($M= 1.65, SD= .28$) and girls ($M= 1.58, SD= .30$). Also, One-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted to test the differences in aggressive behaviour between different ages of 10, 11 and 12 years old and results indicated that there was a difference between the three age groups ($F(2, 387) = 6.24, p < .000$). From the Multiple Comparison Table, it is concluded that there was a difference between ages 10, 11 and 12. The results support the conclusion that the aggressive behaviour scores between the three age groups were significantly different.

Gender as a Moderator on the Relationship between Parental Nurturance and Aggressive Behaviour

A 3-step moderated hierarchical regression analysis was used to measure moderating role of gender. The result of the study showed that parental nurturance \times gender did not have a significant contribution towards the aggressive behaviour of pre-adolescents (Table 1). The nature of the moderation effect was not as predicted. The relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour was consistent for both genders of the pre-adolescents.

Table 1: Gender as a Moderator on the Relationship between Parental Nurturance and Aggressive Behaviour

| Variables | Step 1 | | | Step 2 | | | Step 3 | | |
|--|------------------------|------|----------|------------------------|------|----------|------------------------|------|--------------|
| | B | SE B | Beta | B | SE B | Beta | B | SE B | Beta |
| Parental Nurturance | -.198 | .018 | -.483*** | -.196 | .018 | -.478*** | -.191 | .019 | -.479** * |
| Pre-adolescent's Gender | | | | -.018 | .027 | -.030 | -.019 | .027 | -.031 |
| Parental Nurturance × pre adolescent's Gender | | | | | | | .009 | .038 | -.011 |
| R^2 | | .233 | | | .231 | | | .234 | |
| ΔR^2 | | ---- | | | .001 | | | .000 | |
| Adjusted R^2 | | .231 | | | .230 | | | .228 | |
| F | $F(1,389)=117.99^{**}$ | | | $F(2,389)=59.138^{**}$ | | | $F(3,389)=39.351^{**}$ | | |

Note: B= unstandardized regression coefficient, Beta= standardised regression coefficient, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Age as a Moderator between Parental Nurturance and Aggressive Behaviour

Three steps Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis is presented in (Table 2). The finding of the first step, indicated that 23% of the variance in aggressive behaviour can be explained by parental nurturance ($F = 117.99$ (1, 389), $p < .01$). At the second step, the pre-adolescent's age was entered and finding shows that there was a minimal adjusted R^2 change of 0.02, ($F = 66.37$ (2, 389), $p < .01$). It can be seen that pre-adolescent's age contributed to a significant variance in aggressive behaviour. When the product term (Parental nurturance × pre-adolescent's age) was entered at step 3, the finding indicated that the whole model explained (26%) of the variance. Furthermore, there was a minimal increase in the adjusted R^2 change of approximately (0.01). This means that the interaction term explained an additional (1%) of the variance in aggressive behaviour when the main effect of parental nurturance and of pre-adolescent's age was statistically controlled. There was still a significant increase in the prediction of aggressive behaviour contributed by the interaction effects of parental nurturance and pre-adolescent's age ($F = 47.23$ (3, 389), $p < 0.01$). In conclusion, the findings provide empirical support for the moderating effect of pre-adolescent's age in the relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour.

Table 2: Age as a Moderator on the Relationship between Parental Nurturance and Aggressive Behaviour

| Variable | Step 1 | | | Step 2 | | | Step 3 | | |
|---|------------------------|------|----------|-----------------------|------|----------|-----------------------|------|----------|
| | B | SE B | Beta | B | SE B | Beta | B | SE B | Beta |
| Parental Nurturance | -.198 | .018 | -.483*** | -.195 | .018 | -.475*** | -.191 | .018 | -.468*** |
| pre-adolescent's age | | | | .054 | .016 | .149*** | .053 | .016 | .147*** |
| Parental Nurturance × pre-adolescent's age | | | | | | | -.057 | .022 | -.115** |
| R^2 | | .23 | | | .25 | | | .248 | |
| ΔR^2 | | ---- | | | .02 | | | .002 | |
| Adjusted R^2 | | .23 | | | .25 | | | .245 | |
| F | $F(1,389)=117.99^{**}$ | | | $F(2,389)=66.37^{**}$ | | | $F(3,389)=47.23^{**}$ | | |

Note: B= unstandardized regression coefficient, Beta= standardised regression coefficient, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To assess whether the regression slopes for each of these individual age groups were statistically significant, it is necessary to conduct additional analyses. That is, run the regression to predict aggressive behaviour from parental nurturance separately within each age group. Within age group 10, parental nurturance significantly predicted aggressive behaviour, with ($\beta = -0.140$, $t(118) = -4.283$, $p < .001$). Within the 11 years old age group, parental nurturance was statistically significant as a predictor of aggressive behaviour, with ($\beta = -0.169$, $t(118) = -5.369$, $p < .001$). Within the 12 years old age group, parental nurturance was also a statistically significant predictor of aggressive behaviour with ($\beta = -0.252$, $t(148) = -8.746$, $p < .001$). A causal inference

cannot be made from non-experimental data, but the results seem to suggest that parental nurturance matters more as pre-adolescents get older.

DISCUSSION

A main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour by moderating role of age and gender in pre-adolescents in primary schools. Almost all of the prior research to date has taken place in Western communities. Therefore, this research is one of the few studies of pre-adolescent's aggressive behaviour in Malaysia, as an Asian society.

The findings indicated that parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour in primary school have a considerably negative relationship. The more pre-adolescents experience nurturance and care from parents, the less likely they are to exhibit aggressive behaviour. According to Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1969), parents who are more attached to their pre-adolescents usually tend to be much more conscious of the daily activities of their children and their friends. This, results in a decreasing possibility for pre-adolescents to partake in aggressive behaviour. Moreover, parents can likewise get involved every time they observe their children showing unfavourable behaviours and help them to reduce any aggressive behaviour (Broekhuizen, 2010; Gentile et al., 2011). Due to this, parental nurturance is a protecting factor in order to reduce the probability of aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents. Since parents are nurturing, they strengthen the emotions of their pre-adolescents to avoid feeling unsafe, worried, and from experiencing frustration, all of which are known risk factors for aggressive behaviour (Arim et al., 2011).

In the present study, the results revealed that there were differences between age and aggressive behaviour and pre-adolescents of any age understand that aggressive behaviour can be an effective strategy to obtain their desires or even manage their circumstances and this increases with age. Based on the results, the 12 years old pre-adolescents showed more aggressive behaviour than the other two age groups (10 and 11 year olds). One possible explanation is, pre-adolescence is usually a complicated stage and puberty takes place during this period (Mazzotti et al., 2013) and pre-adolescents encounter considerable developmental changes in their physical and emotional systems (Tremblay, 2010). Social-emotional development concerns the ease of which a pre-adolescent can form mature relationships with other people through their late childhood and they have a powerful tendency to want to be connect to others (Xie et al., 2011). These facts suggest that pre-adolescents are challenged by many psychological changes as they try to manage and control themselves. Thus, they may be frustrated and act as an aggressor in their environment (Salaz, 2012).

Age 12 is the stepping age into puberty and teenage periods. Puberty provides many transformations over time with rapid growth changes such as emotional, bodily, and cognitive modifications. Therefore, pre-adolescents of this specific age are susceptible to acting aggressively in their environment. The biological transformations enhance the susceptibility to risky and dangerous behaviours in pre-adolescents aged 10 to 12 years old. Based on Piaget (1952), the age of 12 in pre-adolescents is crucial for the growth of cognitive abilities, inspiration, personality, and interpersonal interactions. Within this age group, pre-adolescents understand and discover valuations of their communities and produce skills and knowledge in social and interpersonal interactions and are highly inspired by their parents.

Gender may solely be a good indicator pertaining to what and how aggressive behaviour manifests itself. It is generally true that boys tend to be more at risk of displaying aggressive behaviour in the course of primary school. Pre-adolescents contemplate different social roles as males and females and consequently, their behaviours are reined in by the expectations of society (Zhou, 2012). Stated more simply, boys mostly live in their masculinity role and usually make decisions on how behave in their environment according to that masculinity role (Morales-Vives and Vigil-Colet, 2010). Following that, boys are usually expected to be aggressive in general (Murray et al., 2014). As opposed to boys, the feminine role does not allow girls to be tough and to behave as an aggressor in the community due to the community norms that include common and submissive behaviours for girls (Morales-Vives and Vigil-Colet, 2010).

According to the Malaysian culture, being feminine is an important gender-role trait of girls and is negatively related to aggressive behaviour, especially since girls are typically viewed as patient and conforming in the family in comparison to boys. In addition, masculinity is more positively related with aggressive behaviour. Even so, being a girl was not related strongly with aggressive behaviour because of the gender-role stereotype.

The moderating role of gender in the relationship between parental nurturance and aggressive behaviour is same for girls and boys in this study. As mentioned parental nurturance is important for influencing the pre-adolescent's aggressive behaviour. This means that as children get close to their teenage years and puberty, the idea of parental nurturance has a much more positive impact on decreasing aggressive behaviour in comparison to the younger ages. Since year 12 is the last year of primary school for pre-adolescents, this indicates a new changing time in pre-adolescents such as emotional, physical, and cognitive improvements.

In Malaysia, the outcomes of this study will be helpful to therapists and professionals who work with families and pre-adolescents. The results inform parents, school staff, and educational counsellors what behavioural difficulties pre-adolescents can face and supports the concept of how better to raise pre-adolescents by being more sensitive to the needs of aggressive pre-adolescents. This specific study provides a path for the advancement of warm family relations and provides for nurturing healthy as well as strong family members as intended by the ambitious goals of (2020). Since aggressive behaviour is a complex and serious behavioural issue, supplementary attention is required to further investigate the development of aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescents. This study was conducted in the urban area of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Therefore, to generalise the results of

the study to other populations, it is recommended to conduct separate studies in both rural and urban areas in several different parts of Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that early connection between parents and their children is seriously important. Parents who do not realise their own duties and importance of parenting potentially lead their children to have interpersonal difficulties in later life, because the start of behavioural training comes from the family and it forms the character of pre-adolescents. Hence, the development of aggressive behaviour begins via inadequate parental attention and support. Consequently, the relationship between parents and pre-adolescents is the key point in personality improvement and emotional performance. Moreover, modifying the behaviours of a pre-adolescent usually is reliable during pre-adolescence period, and parents possess the best effect on the socialisation of their pre-adolescents at that time in their life. Thus, pre-adolescents who experience nurturing behaviour from their parents such as warmth have a tendency to be less aggressive in their interpersonal relationships with others, while pre-adolescents with severe parents tend to behave as an aggressor in their environment.

More so, the results are beneficial for two systems in Malaysia. The first is the micro-system, which consists of therapists and professionals who work with families and children, and inform parents what behavioural difficulties their children face as well as supporting parents to better raise their children during pre-adolescence. The second system is the macro-system that includes the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Education, and the National Family Policy (NFP). With the study results obtained, the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Education of Malaysia have a reference when making policies and generating useful programmes in order to build a healthier younger generation. Concerning NFP, it is designed to produce productive, healthy as well as stronger family members – this guarantees interpersonal and societal security and steadiness.

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