

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY FUNCTIONING, PARENTING BEHAVIOUR, SELF-EFFICACY, AND GENDER ON RISKY BEHAVIOURS AMONGST ADOLESCENTS IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The high rate of adolescents' involvement in risky behaviors in the past decades has created a vast amount of attention on the impact to their future. The impact of risky behaviour is alarming as evidenced by the media reports on baby dumping, unwanted pregnancies, drug addiction and juvenile delinquency. The current study was conducted to investigate the relationship between family functioning, parenting behaviours, self-efficacy, and gender on risky behaviours amongst adolescents in Kuala Lumpur. This quantitative study utilised a descriptive and correlational research design. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. A total of 411 adolescents aged 15 to 18 years were recruited as respondents. The study found that 12.6% of adolescents reported engagement in substance use, 47.2% in risky sexual behaviour, and 52.1% in delinquency. The independent t-test analysis showed that the proportion of male adolescents who engaged in substance use was higher compared to female. Findings of this study also showed that self-efficacy only moderated the relationship between parental monitoring and substance use, while gender only moderated the relationship between parental monitoring and risky sexual behaviour. The present study concludes that family functioning (family cohesion, communication), parenting behaviour (parental monitoring and parental involvement), self-efficacy and gender influence risky behaviours (substance use, risky sexual behaviour and delinquency) amongst adolescents in Kuala Lumpur. The findings have implication for parents as well as individuals and professional working with adolescents. Parental monitoring was significantly correlated with substance use and risky sexual behaviour use parents were suggested to provide appropriate monitoring to increase awareness that their involvement is crucial in reducing adolescents' risky behaviours. The finding also calls for intervention to provide adolescents with necessary skills to help them avoid being involved in risky behaviour.*

Key words: Family functioning, Parenting Behaviours, Risky Behaviours, Adolescents.

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### Introduction

According to the World Bank Report 2013, risky behaviours are increasing globally, particularly in the developed countries. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2012) estimated that more than 150 million people globally are involved in substance use at least once. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (2012) reported that adolescent girls accounted for 14 per cents of the estimated 20 million unsafe abortions performed each year, resulted in some 68,000 deaths.

In Malaysia, like many other countries, risky behaviours amongst adolescents are presently existing issue that poses serious concerns. This is evidenced by media reports on unwanted pregnancies and baby dumping that resulted in death ("911 babies dump", 2018), drug addiction involving children as young as 12 years old (Priya, 2018; Yuen, 2013), and juvenile delinquency (Chan, 2014) involving adolescents. A study on high-risk behaviours among adolescents in Malaysia reported that almost 5% of the adolescent samples engaged in numerous risky behaviours, while 9% in tobacco use, 3% in gambling and alcohol, and 2% in illicit drug use (Farid et al., 2015). Other studies among undergraduates reported exposure to alcohol (21.3%) and unsafe sexual practices (6.9%) (Liew et al., 2011).

The findings of Fifth Malaysian Population and Family Survey (NPFDB, 2016) revealed that out of the 5,304 adolescent respondents aged 13 to 24 years, 5% consumed alcohol at least once a month, 12% smoked cigarettes at least once a day, and 4.8% of adolescents engaged in sexual intercourse. In cases of adolescents who engaged in sexual intercourse, only one third (35.1%) practiced safe sex (used contraceptive). The statistics on drug abuse by adolescents aged 13 to 19 years constitutes 24% (6,406 report cases) of the total reported drug abuse cases in 2010. Though the percentage dropped to 23.5% in 2019, the number of reported cases increased to 7,852 (NADA, 2018). The reported cases of heavy crime in 2009 and 2010 that involvement adolescents stood at 3,654 and 5,165 cases respectively.

These statistics demonstrates the seriousness of social issues affecting adolescents in Malaysia. The 2016 Malaysia population estimate showed that adolescents aged 10 to 19 years make up almost 18% of the total population (DOSM, 2016). Adolescents' involvement in risky behaviour, no matter how big or small the number is, is a disadvantage to Malaysia. If the trend persists, it may have detrimental effects on the future generations of Malaysia. Adolescents' activities need to be monitored to prevent them from becoming involved in social problems.

### **Risky Behaviours amongst Adolescents**

Adolescence is a unique period during which adolescents experience essential changes in their life physically, psychologically and emotionally (Santrock, 2008). The transition is a sensitive and crucial development time that can have detrimental effects on adolescents (Belsky et al., 2010). Inability to deal with their feelings and emotions, lack of capacities, skills and life experiences may incline them towards risky behaviours because they are unable to weight the risk and benefits of the consequences of these behaviours (Lin, 2016).

Factors related to risky behaviours amongst adolescents have been studied in Western context as well as Asian countries. Malaysian culture differs from Western culture especially where family and parenting behaviours are concern (Varela et al., 2004; Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009; Dwairy & Menshar, 2006; Xu et al., 2005; Jambunathan & Counselman, 2002). Parents are expected to play significant role in proper upbringing of their children, while children are expected to pay full respect to their parents (Yaacob, 2009). However, today's Malaysian families are changing. The changing structure, roles, and responsibilities of Malaysian families change the family dynamic and disrupting the family functioning. The size of family is getting smaller, and both parents are working. Children, especially adolescents, left to their own while parents are at work (Ismail et al., 2014). While the situation gives adolescents more freedom due to the absent of parents during daytime, left on their own provide the opportunities for adolescents to engage in risky behaviours.

Risky behaviours impacted not just the adolescents who are involved in it, but others around them as well, such as their families and the communities. Family functioning element such as family cohesion and communication have significant effects on adolescents' development (Pearson, Muller & Frisco, 2006). It provides support for adolescents and protects against risky behaviours (Fosco et al., 2012). Families that are cohesive promote the importance of external morality in adolescents' decision-making ability, thus making them less susceptible to participating in risky behaviour (Haghdoost et al., 2014; White & Mawatie, 2004). It also predicted lower levels of alcohol and substance use (Gilligan & Kypri, 2012; Anderson, Sabatelli & Kosutic, 2007), delinquency (Fosco et al., 2012; Van Hoof et al., 2008), bullying and victimisation (Van Hoof et al., 2008), as well as later sexual initiation in adolescents (De Graaf et al., 2011).

Parenting behaviours, such as parental monitoring and parental involvement are other factors that have been linked with risky behaviour among adolescents (Fosco et al., 2012; Coley, Votruba-Drzal & Schindler, 2009; Lensciauskiene & Zaborski, 2008). Parental monitoring has important preventive roles relevant to adolescents' engagement in problem behaviours and was linked to the decline in problem behaviour over time (Fosco et al., 2012). Adolescents who spend more time with and have regular activities with the families, and had fathers who had knowledge about their children's friends and activities reported lower levels of risky sexual behaviour (Coley, Votruba-Drzal & Schindler, 2009). Previous studies in Western countries showed that intervention programmes aimed to reduce risky behaviours focused on the role of parents (Koning et al., 2009) and acknowledge parents as effective agents to affect adolescent's behaviour.

Recent studies on adolescents have started focusing on potential factors that are linked to lower rates of risky behaviour and more positive outcomes (Currie et al., 2008). Self-efficacy has been used to predict behavioural changes in association with involvement in indulgent behaviour like smoking (Yan et al., 2013; Veselska et al., 2011), drinking (Connor et al., 2011), and drug addiction (Hyde et al., 2008). Self-efficacy has also been studied in association with unprotected sexual practices and increased risk for pregnancies (Wang et al., 2003). Previous studies also found association between self-efficacy and delinquency, whereby adolescents beset by inefficacy are more vulnerable to behaviour that supportive of delinquency (Carroll et al., 2013). Gender has also been associated with the differences in adolescents' behaviour towards risky behaviours. However, the differences are not constant over various types of risky behaviours as males and females have tendency to gravitate towards certain behaviours (Gammelgard et al., 2011; Carroll et al., 2008).

While studies on risky behaviours amongst adolescents are abundance, the issues related to adolescents and its influencing factors varied and diverse. This bid the questions, to what extend family functioning and parenting behaviours are related to risky behaviours amongst adolescents; does risky behaviours vary between males and females, and to what extend do self-efficacy and gender influence the relationship between family functioning and parenting behaviours on risky behaviours amongst adolescents. Thus, in addition to proposing the potential effect of family functioning and parenting behaviours, this study also proposed to examine the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationships between family functioning and parenting behaviours on risky

behaviours amongst adolescents. It is necessary to further examine the specific conditions under which these moderating effects exist. By identifying the strength of the moderators, this study may provide guidance for planning appropriate interventions that suit Malaysian culture, which is academically oriented.

### **The Role of Family Functioning and Parenting Behaviours on Risky Behaviours amongst Adolescents**

There are multiple influences that can contribute to or against risky behaviours in adolescents. Many studies have discussed the role and importance of family functioning and parenting behaviours on the wellbeing of adolescents and their developmental outcomes. Family functioning has been regarded as an influential factor in the wellbeing of adolescents (Lang, 2018; Shek, Xie, & Lin, 2015; Paradis et al., 2011). As family is central in the life of adolescents, family functioning promotes positive behaviour and reduced engagement in risky behaviours (Ungar, 2004). A high level of family functioning provides important resources for the development and successful adaptation of adolescents. Families with higher level of functioning provides safer environment for adolescents to develop. These environments are positively associated with fewer risky behaviours (Fosco et al., 2012; Dwairy & Achoui, 2010; Coley, Votruba-Drzal & Schindler, 2009; Pearson, Muller & Frisco, 2006) and act as protective factors against risky behaviours among adolescents (Schmied & Tully, 2009). These elements are keys for ensuring positive behaviour. They are linked to lower use of substances among adolescents, lower engagement in risky sexual behaviour, and lower level of delinquency (Loke & Mak, 2013).

Past studies that discussed the role of parenting in helping curb the initiation of risky behaviours in adolescents agreed that parenting behaviours are a consistent protective factor for adolescents across a variety of risky behaviours (Gilligan & Kypri, 2012; Terzian, Andrews & Moore, 2012; Ryan et al., 2011). The quality of parenting behaviour is related to higher quality relationships and associated with lower levels of engagement in risky behaviours (Coley, Votruba-Drzal & Schindler, 2009). Parenting characteristics have significant impact on the decision of adolescents to engage in risky behaviours (Dwairy & Achoui, 2010; Svensson, 2003).

On the other hand, though many studies have established that parenting behaviour plays a major role in influencing the positive outcome of adolescents, it should also be noted that parenting behaviour could influence adolescents in negative ways and increase the tendency of adolescents to engage in risky behaviours. While it was suggested that the lack of parenting behaviour, such as parental monitoring, may increase the likelihood of risky behaviour, there are other studies (Yi et al., 2010; Wight, Williamson & Henderson, 2006;) that found that too much parental monitoring, that bordering on over-controlling and over protectiveness, might predict risky behaviour as well.

### **Methodology**

#### *Study Design*

This study used both descriptive and correlational research design to investigate the relationship between family functioning, parenting behaviour, self-efficacy, and gender on risky behaviours amongst adolescents. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect relevant data and information to test the hypotheses. The collected data were then analysed in order to infer on current issues and to explain risky behaviours amongst adolescents by looking at the relationships between study variables

#### *Sample*

The participants in his study were male and female adolescents aged 15 to 18 years who resided in Kuala Lumpur, and participating in programmes organised by kafe@TEEN adolescent centres, managed by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB). A total of 411 adolescents were involved in this study. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire. Participants were asked to stay after their program, and given briefing on how to answer the questionnaires. They were given ample time to go through the questionnaires and answer them. Participants who does not understand any question or statement can ask for clarification.

#### *Measures*

There is a total of six scales used to measure all the variables. The Family Perception Scale (Tiffin, 2008) is used to measure and evaluates how adolescents perceived their family and family life. The Parental Monitoring Scale (Kerr & Stattin, 2000) is used to measure adolescents' perception of their parents' parenting behaviours. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jurusalem, 1995) is used to assess the self-efficacy of adolescents. The Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Involvement Scale (AADIS) (Moberg, 2005) is used to assess adolescents' involvement with alcohol and drugs. The Adolescent Sexual Activity Index (ASAI) (Hansen, Paskett, & Carter, 1999) is used to assess the risky sexual behaviour of adolescents. The Self-Reported Delinquent-Problem Behaviour Frequency Scale (Dahlberg et al., 2005) is used to assess adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviour.

#### *Data analysis*

The collected data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0. The first step was to examine the characteristics of adolescents (ethnic, religion, gender and age) and family (father and mother's education level and household income). Independent Sample t-test analysis was conducted to compare the differences between males and females. The focus of the study was to test the hypotheses that family functioning and parenting behaviours affects risky behaviours amongst adolescents through self-efficacy and gender. The moderation analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis and Hayes SPSS PROCESS Macro.

## Results

### Adolescents and Family Characteristics

Table 1 shows the descriptive summary of adolescents' characteristics. Overall, the sample consisted of 55.7% males and 44.3% females, of whom 42.8% were 15 years of age, 28.2% were 16 years, 22.1% were 17 years, and 6.8% were 18 years. In term of ethnicity, the sample explained the general population of Malaysia, with the Malays forming the majority at 83.0%, followed by the Chinese at 7.5%, the Indian at 5.8%, and other Bumiputras at 3.7%. Other Bumiputras refers to the indigenous people and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak. With regards to religion, there was not large difference with the ethnic groups because mostly the Malays are Muslim, some of the Chinese are Buddhist, and generally the Indians are Hindus. As for other Bumiputras, some are Muslim, some are Buddhist, and some are Christians. Within this sample, a few Chinese, Indians, and other Bumiputras reported that they are Christians.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Adolescents

	Total (N=411) n (%)		Total (N=411) n (%)
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Male	229 (55.7)	Malay Bumiputra	341 (83.0)
Female	182 (44.3)	Other Bumiputra	15 (3.7)
<b>Age</b>		Chinese	31 (7.5)
15	176 (42.8)	Indian	24 (5.8)
16	116 (28.2)	<b>Religion</b>	
17	91 (22.1)	Muslim	346 (84.2)
18	28 (6.8)	Christian	27 (6.6)
<b>Mean</b>	<b>15.93</b>	Buddha	20 (4.9)
<b>SD</b>	<b>.959</b>	Hindu	18 (4.4)

Note. SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows the summary of the respondents' family background. Majority of the participants' parents achieved an education level of Form 5/SPM with fathers at 29.7% and mothers at 47%. For family household income, majority of the respondents (34.5%) reported their family income at more than RM5000 monthly. The second largest group of reported household income is between RM2001 and RM3000 (19%).

Table 2: Adolescents' Family Background Information

	Father Total (N=411) n (%)	Mother Total (N=411) n (%)	Total (N=411) n (%)	
<b>Education Level</b>			<b>Household Income</b>	
Primary/Standard 6	13 (3.2)	18 (4.4)	RM1000 and below	14 (3.4)
Form 3/SRP	21 (5.1)	25 (6.1)	RM1001 – RM2000	52 (12.7)
Form 5/SPM	122 (29.7)	193 (47.0)	RM2001 – RM3000	78 (19.0)
Form 6/STPM	31 (7.5)	39 (9.5)	RM3001 – RM4000	71 (17.3)
Certificate	27 (6.6)	8 (1.9)	RM4001 – RM5000	54 (13.1)
Diploma	104 (25.3)	73 (17.8)	More than RM5000	142 (34.5)
Degree	76 (18.5)	49 (11.9)	<b>SD</b>	<b>1.564</b>
Masters	15 (3.6)	5 (1.2)		
Ph.D.	2 (0.5)	1 (0.2)		

Note. SRP = Sijil Rendah Pelajaran; SPM = Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia; STPM = Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia; Ph.D. = Doctor of Philosophy; SD = Standard Deviation

Note. SD = Standard Deviation

### Comparison between Males and Females

The Independent Sample t-test were conducted on substance use, risky sexual behaviour and delinquency. The result (table 3) revealed significant differences between male and female in substance use amongst adolescents ( $t = 2.688, p < .01$ ). Males (mean = 5.21) reported slightly higher substance use than female (mean = 2.47) in this study. There are no significant differences found between males and females for risky sexual behaviour and delinquency.

Table 3: Mean differences in risky behaviours between males and females

	Mean (SD)		t	P
	Male	Female		
Substance Use	5.21 (12.60)	2.47 (7.99)	2.6888	.007**
Risky Sexual Behaviour	1.41 (2.31)	1.43 (2.02)	-.109	.913
Delinquency	9.81 (3.71)	9.69 (2.61)	.369	.712

\*\*  $p < .01$

*Moderation analysis*

Result of the moderation analysis on self-efficacy revealed that for substance use, only parental monitoring ( $\beta = -.243, p < .001$ ) and parental involvement ( $\beta = -.209, p < .001$ ) were significant, while for risky sexual behaviour, only parental monitoring ( $\beta = -.218, p < .001$ ) and parental involvement ( $\beta = -.164, p < .01$ ) were significant, and for delinquency, only parental monitoring ( $\beta = -.202, p < .001$ ) and parental involvement ( $\beta = -.125, p < .05$ ) were significant. This indicates that self-efficacy is a potential moderator in the relationship between family functioning, parenting behaviours, and risky behaviours. Further examination of the moderation role of self-efficacy using Hayes PROCESS revealed significant interaction effect only for the relationship between parental monitoring and self-efficacy on substance use ( $\beta = -.056, p < .001$ ). This indicates that self-efficacy is a moderator in the relationship between parental monitoring and substance use.

Figure 1: Self-efficacy as moderator in the relationship between parental monitoring and substance use

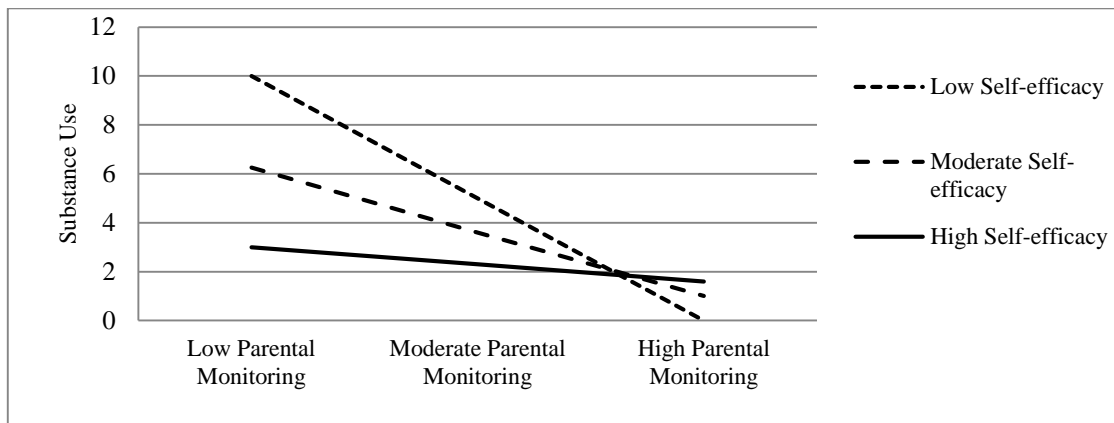


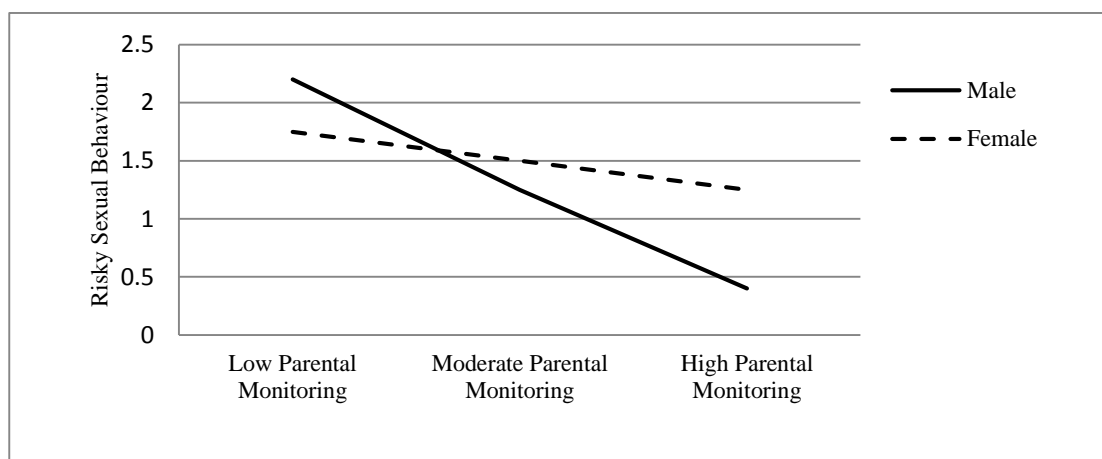
Figure 1 show the graphical presentation of self-efficacy as moderator in the relationship between parental monitoring and substance use which showed the magnitude of the relationship between parental monitoring and substance use is strongest among adolescents with low self-efficacy, and weakest among adolescents with high self-efficacy. The plot of the interaction indicates that at low parental monitoring, substance use tends to be higher for adolescents with low self-efficacy. However, when the level of parental monitoring is higher, substance use tends to be higher for adolescents with high self-efficacy.

Result of the moderation analysis on gender revealed that for substance use, family cohesion ( $\beta = -.137, p < .01$ ), parental monitoring ( $\beta = -.226, p < .001$ ) and parental involvement ( $\beta = -.243, p < .001$ ) were significant. For risky sexual behaviour, family cohesion ( $\beta = -.160, p < .01$ ), parental monitoring ( $\beta = -.264, p < .001$ ) and parental involvement ( $\beta = -.209, p < .001$ ) were significant. For delinquency, family cohesion ( $\beta = -.227, p < .001$ ), parental monitoring ( $\beta = -.258, p < .001$ ) and parental involvement ( $\beta = -.186, p < .001$ ) were significant. This indicates that gender is potential moderator in the relationships between family functioning, parenting behaviours, and risky behaviours. Further examination of the moderation role of gender using Hayes PROCESS revealed significant interaction effect only for the relationship between parental monitoring and gender on risky sexual behaviour ( $\beta = -.084, p < .05$ ). This indicates that gender is a moderator in the relationship between parental monitoring and risky sexual behaviour.

Figure 2 show the graphical presentation of gender as moderator in the relationship between parental monitoring and risky sexual behaviour which showed that the magnitude of the relationship between parenting monitoring and sexual risky behaviour is stronger among males compared to females. The plot of the interaction indicates that at low parental monitoring, risky sexual behaviour tends to be higher among male adolescents compared to females, suggesting that the relationship to be stronger for males, compared to females. However, when the level of parental monitoring is higher, the level of risky sexual behaviour is lower for male, suggesting the relationship is stronger for female.



Figure 2: Gender as moderator in the relationship between parental monitoring and risky sexual behavior



## Discussion

The present study examined whether the relationship between family functioning, parenting behaviour are associated in the similar way to risky behaviours between male and female. When comparing the difference between male and female, the study found that males reported significantly higher substance use compared to female, though no differences between male and female in risky sexual behaviour and delinquency. In other words, adolescents reported similar degree of risky sexual behaviour, and delinquency regardless whether they are male or female.

The finding of this study is consistent with other findings (Currie, 2008; Svensson, 2003; Webb et al., 2002) that indicates male adolescents have significantly higher tendency to involvement in substance use compared to females. These findings however contrasted with that of Young and colleague (2002) that showed male and female at mid-adolescents (age between 12 and 17 years) shows no differences in substance use, although for older adolescents (18 years and above) males shows significantly higher substance use comparative to female in the same age group.

Despite the findings indicating males tend to have higher tendency to engage in risky behaviours comparative to female (Weden & Zabin, 2005; Essau, 2004), other findings showed no differences between male and female, as both are prone to risky behaviours (Gammelgard et al., 2011; Carroll et al., 2008). Though there are other findings that showed the number of females involved in risky behaviours has been increasing (Negeri et al., 2014; Mturi & Gaearwe, 2014). Although this study does not find any differences between male and female in risky sexual behaviour, the mean for females is slightly higher than males. This indicates that slightly more female adolescents engaged in risky sexual behaviour. This corroborate with the finding of Mturi & Gaearwe (2014) that indicate female is more likely to indulge in risky sexual behaviour compared to male.

On the other hand, although there is no statistically significant difference between males and females in delinquency, the mean for males is slightly higher compared to female, indicating more male had involvement in delinquency. This finding support of the findings by Junger-Tas and colleagues (2004) that stated the correlates of delinquency are found to be similar in male and female, although there is a slightly higher involvement of males compared to female. In contrast, other findings showed that male adolescents are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour compared to females (Snyder & Sickmund, 2016; Fagan et al., 2011; Fagan et al., 2007; Kim & Kim, 2007). A possible reason may be that male adolescents experience higher exposure to risk associated with delinquency, compared to female.

The main aim of the present study was to examine the moderating effect of self-efficacy and gender on the relationships between family functioning, parenting behaviours, and risky behaviours amongst adolescents. The moderation model, proposing that the interaction between family functioning, parenting, self-efficacy, and gender affects risky behaviour amongst adolescents.

Result of the present study showed that self-efficacy only moderated the relationship between parental monitoring and substance use whereby the effect is strongest among adolescents with low self-efficacy, and weakest among adolescents with high self-efficacy. Greater parental monitoring has been predicted to lower risky sexual behaviour among adolescents, although the relationship between parental monitoring and risky sexual behaviour exists among the male but not female (Wang et al., 2015). According to Kerr and Stattin (2000), there is evidence that gender may moderate the effect of parental monitoring on risky sexual behaviour, whereby poor parental monitoring effect strongly for females compared to males.

Result in this study also showed that gender only moderated the relationship between parental monitoring and risky sexual behaviour, whereby the effect is stronger among males compared to female. This may be explained by the fact that Malaysia is culturally different from other countries whereby females have stronger attachment to their parents compared to males.

Adolescents who experience higher family connectedness were less likely to commence sexual activity and female adolescents are less likely to engage in unsafe sex practices (Negeri et al., 2014). On the other hand, males have more freedom compared to females, whereby parents tend to be more protective of their daughter compared to their sons (Puti et al., 2009).

Some limitations of the present study should be noted. First, due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, this study cannot be used to analyse the studied behaviour over the period of time and does not determine causal relations between variables. It can only infer an association between the variables, not the causation.

It should be noted that the sample of the present study only comprises of 411 adolescents. This sample is a very small proportion of the entire population of adolescents in the country. The adolescents used in the sample were those participating in programmes run by the adolescent centres in Kuala Lumpur, thus the sample may not be representatives of adolescents from other states. Furthermore, it is important to note that while this study included variety of different ethnics, the sample size is too small to analyse based on ethnicity and as such, cannot be generalise to any specific ethnic group. Therefore, studies with much larger sample size would be required to ensure appropriate generalisation of the findings of the study.

Finally, this study used self-reported measures. A self-report study is subjected to response bias, which refers to the respondents' tendency to respond in certain way, regardless of the actual evidence they are assessing. Respondents may be exaggerating to make the situation seems much works, or under-reporting due to various reasons, such as embarrassed to reveal private details. Furthermore, respondents may forget pertinent details or misunderstand the questions, thus provide biased responses.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of how family functioning and parenting behaviours affects risky behaviours amongst adolescents. Although risky behaviours amongst adolescents in Malaysia is not as high as in the western countries, an upward trend has been observed. The increased in social problems indicate that the country may loss many human resources that are capable of developing the country. The current study is among one in which multiple groups of adolescents with different ethnic backgrounds were studies. Instead of studying a selected high-risk sample such as youth offenders, or clinical samples, this study focused on average adolescents and examined cross-cultural similarities and differences with both family and parenting correlates of risky behaviours amongst adolescents. This highlights the need of integrating both family and parenting factors in the intervention programmes by involving adolescents, parents and professional working with adolescents. Intervention programmes to reduce risky behaviour should addressed the various risk and protective factors predictive of risk behaviour. In addition to implementing suitable intervention programmes, wider influences on risky behaviour such as culture and media needs to be addressed through broader social policy changes. Steps are needed to reduce the exposure of adolescents to negative influences that would incline them towards risky behaviours and to increase opportunities for engaging in activities that nurture positive development. Policy makers should be aware of the evidence that broader social change is needed to reduce the negative influence on adolescents.

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