



Relationship between perceived maternal parenting styles and depression with self-esteem as mediator among adolescents

Ho Meng Chuan¹, Rozumah Baharudin² and Siti Nor Yaacob²

¹Fakulti Ekologi Manusia, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

²Jabatan Pembangunan Manusia dan Pengajian Keluarga, Fakulti Ekologi Manusia, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the relationships between perceived maternal parenting styles, self-esteem and depression with self-esteem as a mediator among adolescents. Baumrind's typology parenting theory serves as the foundation concept in the model of the present study. Sample for the study consists of 202 secondary school students from Batu Pahat, Johor. Three instruments were used to measure the key variables in this study: Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991), Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and Beck Depression Inventory-Malay (Mukhtar, 2008). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to determine the model fit, and also determine the direct and indirect effect of the mediator.

Correlation analyses showed that adolescents who perceived their mothers parenting styles as: 1) authoritarian is positively correlated with depression and negative correlated with self-esteem; 2) authoritative negative correlated with depression, and positively correlated with self-esteem; and 3) permissive positively correlated with depression and negative correlated with self-esteem. Additional analyses revealed that adolescents' with higher levels of self-esteem showed low depression. Using SEM, the study model was found to have an acceptable fit (RMSEA = .059; CFI = .994 & p=.181). Implication, limitations and recommendations of the study were discussed.

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Introduction

Children often perceive their parents as role models since young. They observe the behaviors of their parents and these behaviors will eventually influence the child's well-being. Behaviors practiced by parents that aimed to educate and influence the developmental outcome of the child refer to parenting (Darling, 2000). Parenting can be complex as parents can parent either individually or collectively. Thus, the positive or negative development of the child as an outcome of the parenting influence emphasizes the importance of parenting on the child's well-being.

Given the importance of parenting, most research on parent-adolescent relationship and parenting have focused on parents collectively rather than individually. Traditionally, the role of fathers is to be the breadwinner of the family, whereas the role of mothers is to provide emotional support for the children. Contemporary studies have shifted this view and suggested that mothers serve as the primary communicators with adolescents in the family because mothers are more willing to give attention to the adolescence child's development (Feng et al., 2007; Gamble & Diaz, 2006; Ozgen, 2003). Hence, in the present study, maternal parenting was given due attention in relation to adolescents' well-being, particularly on self-esteem and depression.

Given the literatures on maternal parenting styles and adolescent depression, we noticed that there may be differences types of maternal parenting styles would have influences towards adolescent depression. In line with this interest, contemporary studies have suggested that parenting have a huge

impact towards depression of adolescents, and depression is one of the most common psychological disorders among adolescents (Davis, 2005). Depression would seriously disturb adolescents' emotions, moods and contributes several negative influences towards social interaction among adolescents. Recent study had identified that adolescent's depression always hard to detect by the professional because the symptoms expressed often misunderstood as mood "blue" of adolescents (Olson et al., 2001; Johnson & Malow-Iroff, 2008).

Thus, in this present study we aimed to examine the following hypothesis. First, this study was designed to examine the relationship between perceived maternal parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative and permissiveness), self-esteem and depression, so, maternal authoritarian and maternal permissiveness parenting styles was hypothesized to be negatively related with self-esteem, and positively related with depression, while maternal authoritative parenting styles was hypothesized to be positively related with self-esteem, and negatively related with depression.

Secondly, this study wished to investigate the direct and indirect effects between maternal parenting styles and depression, when self-esteem acts as the mediator.

Thirdly, this study aimed to explore the role of self-esteem as a mediator between maternal parenting styles and depression. Self-esteem was hypothesized to that there is a mediator effects in the relationship between maternal parenting styles and depression. Thus, Figure 1 demonstrates the baseline model of early adolescent's depression linking perceived maternal parenting styles, self-esteem and depression.

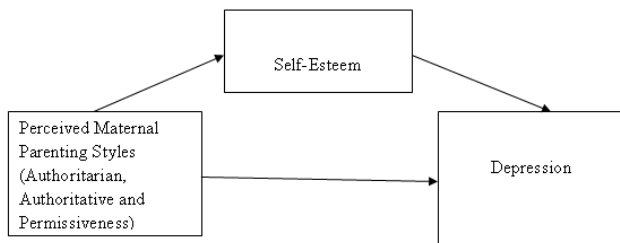


Figure 1: Model of adolescent's depression.

Literature Review

Parenting style is one of the crucial variables that regarded as one of the crucial factor in affecting several adolescent's well-being and it have been studied extensively in life span development (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008; Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006; Steinberg, 2001; Esfandyari, Baharudin, & Nowzari, 2009). Past study had documented that different types of maternal parenting styles is widely related to depression (Kim & Cain, 2008), anxiety (Cohen et al., 2008), self-esteem (Milevsky et al., 2007), academic performance (Cheung & Chang, 2008), happiness (Cheng & Furnham, 2003), substance abuse (Benchaya et al., 2011), and externalizing problems (Williams et al., 2009).

Mother naturally characterized as primary emotional and socialization agent in adolescent's life (Feng et al., 2007; Ozgen, 2003). Today, several reviews had revealed that the impact of adolescent's well-being influenced by specific attitudes and parenting styles that practiced by the mother towards the adolescents (Driscoll, Russell & Crockett, 2008; Butler et al., 2007). Prior research had identified the strong and consistent relationship between maternal parenting styles and adolescent's depression from different context. The study by Pineda, Cole and Bruce (2007) on 72 mother-adolescent in Europe revealed that depressed adolescents received lesser supportive parenting and more criticism from their mothers compared to non-depressed adolescents. The way of the mother became harsher, strict and criticism, it will provided extra burden for their children, and lost the self-confidence towards themselves which would end up with depression. Study of Yap et al. (2010) also reported similar result as negative behavior perceived by the adolescents towards their mother would negatively influence the mother-adolescent interactions and reported more depressive symptoms of the adolescent.

Kim and Cain (2010) reported on 56 Korean-American families and indicated that adolescents' perceived low maternal warmth is related with adolescent depressive symptoms. A 1970 clinically ascertained cases with major depression in Asian context were used in the study of Gao et al. (2011) reported that lower warmth and higher authoritarianism practiced by both mother and father were significantly associated with major depression, specifically, maternal protectiveness would lead to higher tendency of depression among the participants.

According to the study of Piko and Balazs (2010) on a large sample of Hungary's adolescent reported that authoritative parenting styles have a negative relationship with adolescent's depression, particularly, maternal warmth and responsiveness as an effective protective factor against adolescent's depression. In line with the present study, research of Milevsky et al. (2007) contribute an important idea and support as the result indicated that authoritative maternal parenting styles was found to relate to higher self-esteem and low level of depression among the adolescent in Northeastern of United States.

Study of Butler et al. (2007) investigate the cross-sectional relationship between maternal parenting style and well-being among adolescents with diabetes in United States, result reported that higher level maternal psychological control that perceived by the adolescent were positively associated with high depression regardless of age and gender. Besides, maternal acceptance and warmth were associated with lower level of depression among the adolescents. A longitudinal study across a three-year period by Wu (2007) in Taipei investigate the estimate trajectories of change in adolescents' depressive symptoms and their mothers' harsh parenting, result revealed that there is an interlocking relationship between mothers' negative maternal and adolescents' depressive symptoms. Result strongly supported that harsh and strict behavior that characterized by authoritarian maternal parenting styles fail to detect the positive dynamic relationship between parent-adolescents parenting and lead to high adolescent depression.

High self-esteem acts as a buffer against depression because low self-esteem and depression may be viewed as a vicious cycle (Restifo et al., 2009; Beck, 1967). There is a consistent finding of low self-esteem and high depression in several studies of large sample size in different cultural context recently. A large large-scale representative Taiwanese adolescent population was recruited in the study of Lin and colleagues (2008) reported that the prevalence of depression is high in Taiwanese adolescents, and low self-esteem is one of the main contributors of adolescent's depression. This is further supported by another large sample in Norway, Derdikman-Eiron et al. (2011) reported that there is interaction between depressive and lower adolescent well-being such as adolescent self-esteem, and lower social functioning, in other words, the lower the self-esteem of the adolescent, it would contribute various several negative effects for the adolescents and affect their daily life.

Based on the previous work, it was generally expected that authoritative and permissiveness from mothers would negatively related to adolescent depression, and that authoritarian mother would be positively related to adolescent depression. In addition, it would be an additional fruitful result to investigate the influences of self-esteem towards adolescent depression in Malaysia context.

Research Methodology

Sample and Design

For this study, the survey method was conducted by using questionnaire. The cross sectional survey had been used to examine the different types of maternal parenting styles that perceived by the adolescent, as well as the self-esteem and depression of the adolescent. We obtained 202 students from Batu Pahat, Johor. Once permissions were obtained from relevant authority, all respondents were given the questionnaire which contained a consent form and whole questionnaire set. The researchers personally delivered, explained and collected the self-administered questionnaires from the respondents. Each respondent were given 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Procedure and Measures

The questionnaires were divided into several sections, which measure different study variables. The sections are as follows:

Personal background of respondents. Respondent reported information on their age, gender, ethnicity and year of study.

The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) (Buri, 1991) was used to assess the perceived maternal parenting styles of the adolescents. There

are a total of 30 items in the measure, with a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). PAQ consists of 3 distinct parental styles, which is authoritarian, authoritarian and permissiveness. Each types of parenting style consist of 10 questions. A high score obtained on the particular distinct means a relatively high level of particular parenting styles perceived by the adolescents. This measure was reliable with Cronbach's alpha values in this study is .767 to .873.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was developed to measure adolescents' global feeling of self-worth and self-acceptance (Rosenberg, 1965). There are a total of 10 items in the measure, with a 4 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). A high score obtained on this scale indicates a relatively high level of self-esteem. This measure was reliable with Cronbach's alpha values in this study is .845.

Beck Depression Inventory for Malays (BDI-M) Beck Depression Inventory for Malays (BDI-M) is a 20 items that was translated and validated by Mukhtar and Oei (2008). There is a 4 point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 3. Respondents were required to read a series of four evaluative statements for each item and choose one statement that most accurate describe their feeling during the past week. A high score obtained on this scale indicates a relatively high level of depression. This measure was reliable with Cronbach's alpha values in this study is .925.

Data Analysis

In order to establish mediation, we used the four necessary steps suggested by Judd & Kenny (1981) and Baron & Kenny (1986). The first step is to show that the initial variable is correlated with the outcome. In this study, this would be the correlation between maternal parenting styles (Authoritarian, Authoritative and Permissiveness) and depression. While the second step is showing that the initial variable is correlated with the mediator that is self-esteem and depression of the adolescent. The third step is show that the mediator affects the outcome variable and the last step is the effect of the initial variable on the outcome variable controlling for the mediator should be zero in order to establish a complete mediation. These two steps will be completed by AMOS 18.0.

Results

Demographic Profile

There were totally 202 students participated in this study, 89 males (44.06%), 113 females (55.94%). The age range of adolescents participated in this study were from 15 years old to 17 years old. The mean age of the participants was about 16 years old (mean=15.98, sd= .23). The ethnicity distribution of the participants is: 72 Malays, 120 Chinese and 10 Indians. The mean age is 15.98 (Sd. = 0.23). Majority (96.5%) of the participants in this study was staying with their parents.

4.2 Relationships between Maternal Parenting Styles (Authoritarian, Authoritative and Permissiveness), Self-esteem and Depression

The second objective of the study was to determine the relationships between perceived maternal parenting styles, self-esteem, and depression. As shown in Table 4.1, the relationships among the key variables were significant at the .05 level.

Result shown that perceived authoritarian and permissiveness maternal parenting styles have a negative relationship with self-esteem, and a positive relationship with depression; while perceived authoritative and permissiveness maternal parenting styles have a positive relationship with self-

esteem, and negative relationship with depression. Thus, step 1 and step 2 to establish mediation was met and achieved since the initial variable (perceived maternal parenting styles) was correlated with the outcome (depression) and the mediator (self-esteem).

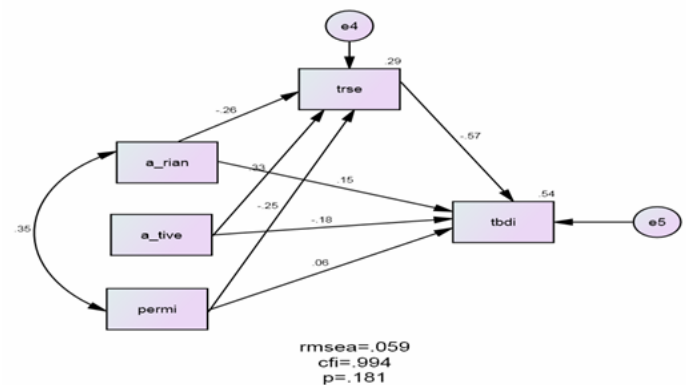
Table 1 Relationship between Perceived Maternal Parenting Styles, Self-esteem and Depression

Variable	Self-esteem	Depression
Authoritarian	-.365**	.389**
Authoritative	.405**	-.374**
Permissive	-.383**	.351**
Self-esteem	-	-.710**

** p < .01

The Role of Self-esteem as a Mediator

The data was found acceptably fit to the model as root mean square error of approximation with is less than .05, comparative fit index with a value was .90 or above are considered acceptable fit, and chi-square should be insignificant (Hoe, 2009). The result in figure 1 shown that the model is acceptable fit as RMSEA = .059; CFI = .994 and p = .181. The squared multiple correlation (R2) for self-esteem and depression were .29 and .54 respectively. The values indicated about 29% of the variability in adolescents' self-esteem could be explained by perceived maternal parenting styles. Perceived maternal parenting styles and self-esteem could explain 54% of the variability in adolescents' depression.



Note:

A_rian- authoritarian; a_tive=authoritative; permi=permissiveness; trse=self-esteem; tbdi= depression

Figure 2. Standardized path for the model of early adolescent's depression

Results revealed that the direct path from maternal authoritarian and maternal authoritative towards adolescent depression shown a significant direct effect, which are 0.154 (p=0.004) and -0.180 (p=0.000) respectively, while result revealed that the direct path between maternal permissiveness and depression shown that insignificant as 0.058 (p=0.274). Therefore, the direct path from perceived maternal permissiveness and depression was fixed to zero to investigate the possibility of self-esteem as a complete mediator.

Table 2 summarizes the standardized direct and indirect effects of perceived maternal parenting styles, self-esteem and depression. The direct effect of self-esteem to depression without controlling for perceived maternal parenting styles met the requirement in step3 to establish mediation.

It seems that the direct effect from maternal authoritarian and maternal authoritative was significant, so self-esteem is a partial mediator between authoritative, authoritarian maternal parenting styles and depression, while permissiveness maternal parenting styles was insignificant, which indicates that self-

esteem have a complete mediating effect between maternal permissiveness and depression.

Table 2: Standardized effects of adolescent's self-esteem and depression

Outcome	Determinants	Direct	Indirect
Depression	Maternal Authoritarian	.168	.152
	Maternal Authoritative	-.180	-.193
	Maternal Permissiveness	-	.148
Self-Esteem	Self-Esteem	-.582	-
	Maternal Authoritarian	-.262	-
	Maternal Authoritative	.332	-
	Permissiveness	-.254	-

Table 2, in Appendix (iii) summarizes the standardized direct and indirect effects of perceived maternal parenting styles, self-esteem and depression. The direct effect of self-esteem to depression without controlling for perceived maternal parenting styles met the requirement in step3 to establish mediation.

It seems that the direct effect from maternal authoritarian and maternal authoritative was significant, so self-esteem is a partial mediator between authoritative, authoritarian maternal parenting styles and depression, while the permissiveness maternal parenting styles was insignificant, which indicates that self-esteem have a complete mediating effect between maternal permissiveness and depression

Discussion

There is a significant correlation finding found between the three types of maternal parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative and permissiveness), self-esteem and depression. The finding supports that authoritative maternal parenting styles are closely linked to high self-esteem and low depression (Milevsky et. al., 2007; Jackson et al., 2005). Besides that, the study also found that authoritarian and permissiveness maternal parenting styles have a significant relationship with low self-esteem and high depression, which is consistent to the finding of Peckham and Lopez (2009), which showed that mother authoritarianism lead to low self-esteem, and self-esteem as the mediator which lead to high depressive symptoms of adolescents . It is a vicious cycle between authoritarian maternal parenting and low self-esteem (Bean et al., 2003), as too much control would arouse the sense of irritating and rebellious of the adolescent. This fact is also supported by Driscoll, Russell and Crockett (2008), as they reported that children with authoritarian mother experienced low level of self-esteem and high level of depression.

The finding of this study is relatively similar with previous literature. However, there is an interesting finding which showed that permissiveness maternal parenting style is negatively related to self-esteem and positively related to depression of adolescent. The study of Topham et al. (2008) explained that depressive mood of mother would transform into permissive parenting style. Based on Belsky (1984) determinants of parenting, the personal psychological resources of the parents is one of the factors that influence the parenting style applied by the mother, which will indirectly bring the depressive mood by maternal permissiveness to their children. According to Baumrind (1967), permissive parenting always relate to bossy and impulsive behavior towards their children. In permissive parenting, the warmth and care are provided through the form of "overindulgent". So, the children would have absolute freedom and authority on decision making. Research indicated that adolescent is a period which is fragile and vulnerable in decision making (Steinberg & Cauffman, 1996), without proper guidance from the mother would enhance the feeling of anxiety when

facing certain dilemma or decision-making in their life for the adolescent, so when there is no direction for them in developing their social skills to make the decision, and there is nobody could discuss with them about their problems. Indirectly, the sense of inferiority may occur among them especially there are comparisons with other children about their parents. Lamborn et al. (1991) proposed that there should be two different categories for permissiveness, which is indulgent permissiveness, which consists of a lot of warmth and zero control from the parents of neglectful permissiveness. Previous literature showed that adolescent without proper care, guidance and control from parents would experience variety of negative well-being (Tapia, et al., 2006; Pantin et al., 2003, Diaz, 2007). A healthy and functioning well family should including necessary rules and guidance based on the principle and agreement that based on every family member in order to establish a wealth of happiness, satisfaction, and effective factor to prevent depression for adolescent (Posse & Melgosa, 2001).

Both authoritarian and permissiveness maternal parenting styles do share similarities as these two types of parents have weaknesses in educating their children, either over-control or over-indulgent, and these similarities would lead to several negative effects for the children, which is related to the finding of this study. Study of Lavasani et al. (2011) supported that authoritarian and permissive parenting style shows significant negative relative with psychological well-being. Several study also revealed that mothers and fathers who were perceived as permissive mother by their children would cause a negative effect when compared to perceived authoritative parents as permissive mother were more inconsistent and presumption when educating their children (Bolkan et. al., 2010; Miller & Benson, 2001; Wahler & Cerezo, 2005). From a theoretical perspective, Individual Psychology's Parenting Model, based on Adlerian theory also supported the result of current study indicated that permissiveness parenting styles have a great potential and likelihood that harmful and bring negative consequences towards the children because too much freedom and less authority would fail to give their children sense of belongings and achievement in their daily life (Milevsky, 2007). So it is not surprise that permissive maternal parenting styles have a negative relationship with self-esteem and positive relationship with depression.

Moreover, the positive relationship between authoritative mother and self-esteem indicated that adolescents who perceived their parents to respond positively to them and always willing discuss with them will feel that they were respected by their parents (Mayseless, Scharf & Sholt, 2003 ; Li, Costanzo & Putallaz, 2010; Hossain & Shipman, 2009), indirectly, it will develop high self-esteem compared to children with authoritarian or permissive mother. The communication is essential in maintain and enhance parent-adolescent relationship, as the parents actively as listener towards the children enable them to assist and guide them, as well as a protector factor of depression.

In this study, self-esteem has been suggested to play as a mediator, as self-esteem is essentially important in adolescent's development (Ybrandt & Armelius, 2010). Supportive, warm and caring parenting attitude can be a source of high self-esteem development towards the adolescent. Children developed in supportive and encouraging atmosphere would feel that they were respected. Parent is always an important role in the adolescent life, and they will provide necessary guidance and

support in adolescent life (Chaplin & John, 2010). Study of Yamawaki et al. (2010) also suggested that self-esteem is an effective mediator between parental care and Japanese teens, as care and warmth practiced by the parents for the youth can be a universally important elements for an individual to develop positive psychological well-being in the future. Self-esteem had been taken as one of the most important predictor of adolescent depression (Orth, Robins & Roberts, 2008; Orth, Robins, & Meier, 2009). It is further supported by Yaacob et al. (2009) reported that self-esteem had shown a relationship with adolescent depression as low self-esteem would lead to internal emotion deficiency, which contribute to adolescent depression.

Beck's (1967, 1974) idea regarding depression stated that having negative view towards self was the main factor of depression as self-esteem can be an effective protective factor to prevent depression and has the strongest direct effect in the mediation model. This idea was supported by Restifo et al. (2009) who reported that high depressive features were characterized by low self-esteem. They further explained that self esteem plays a great role which underlying the link between parental influence towards adolescent depressive symptoms, which is consistent with the finding of this study.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, depression is very dangerous. If it is not treated properly, it can transform into several negative consequences for the adolescent in the future. Thus, with findings from present study, different types of maternal parenting styles and self-esteem are factors contributing to depression among adolescents. In this study, maternal influences become the main factor to be investigated and studied. This is not to underestimate the paternal influences towards the children, but to emphasize the importance of maternal influence towards the children due to special bonding between mother and children since pregnancy. Therefore, it is essential to have a deeper understanding regarding maternal influences towards the children. Moreover, relative authority such as school or mental health practitioners can gain awareness on the importance of self-esteem towards adolescent in order to prevent depression.

Implications

The findings of current study showed that both perceived maternal parenting styles were significantly correlated with adolescent's depression and academic performance. The implication of the findings is that part of the Baumrind's (1967) parenting typology does be applicable in Malaysian context. However, permissiveness which characterized by non-punitive, acceptant, high tolerant and affirmative manner towards the child's desires, so their children may involved in several externalizing problems, senses of rebellious when desires are not fulfilled, and antisocial behaviors, rather than internalizing problems such as low self-esteem and depression. In this study, result shown that permissiveness maternal parenting styles have a negative relationship with self-esteem and positive related with depression. Therefore, the findings suggested that it is crucial for future researchers and educators to be aware and careful in interpreting, and do not over-generalized the finding of particular research.

Since the finding of present study is consistent most of the previous study which reported that there is a relationship between perceived authoritative maternal parenting style and adolescent's self-esteem and depression, present findings help the educators to increase awareness about their influences towards the adolescents, as well as provide necessary help,

guidance and precaution step in order to prevent the occurrence of depression towards the adolescent that found have tendency of depression, as school is the second place that adolescent spent. Whenever the teacher could detect the problems earlier, it can help the adolescent to solve the problem efficiently.

The negative impacts that contributed by depression continues to be a fruitful focus of scientific inquiry. By producing this research, we hopefully provide awareness and insight to the parents and relevant authority by highlighted the influences of the maternal parenting styles towards the adolescent's self-esteem and depression, as well as by addressing the mediator role of self-esteem in affecting the depression of adolescent. Therefore, as the most significant role in the adolescent life, the mother should aware their influence towards their adolescent child's well-being, such as self-esteem and depression. Therefore, whenever the mother found that their children having tendency of depression, then they can provide necessary help, guidance and precaution step in order to prevent the occurrence of depression.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified in the present study. Firstly, all of the participants were came from the same school, in other words, there might have response bias as the participants may not able to represent the larger population. Second, the questionnaire were self-administered questionnaire, in other word, the maternal parenting styles was a perceived construct in the present study which answered by the student, and it might not able to reflect the actual parenting practiced by the mother. Indirectly, respondent bias may occur which may be unfair for the mother. This is supported by Wu (2011) revealed that adolescents from tend to their parents more negative and strict due to cultural norms. Therefore, it is necessary that in future studies should include an inter-rater assessment in order to capture actual maternal parenting that practiced by the mother as a comparison with their children's result.

Thirdly, there have various dimensions of self-esteem such as global self-esteem and specific self-esteem (exp: academic self-esteem), as various dimensions of self-esteem would have different influences (Rosenberg et al., 1995), in this study, different types of self-esteem were not taken into account when determining the role of self-esteem as a mediator. It is supported by Ang et al. (2006) also proposed preliminary supported that the unidimensionality of self-esteem of RSE had been doubted in Asian-sample. Therefore, it is essential different elements of self-esteem should be examined and study in future study when related with self-esteem.

The last limitation is the differences of adolescent depression between females and males were not included in this study. Obviously, there is a difference as depression rate of female to male among adolescent is 2:1 ratio (Hazler & Mellin, 2004). Moreover, there is also a difference between females and males towards maternal parenting styles as research shown that females would tend to perceive their mother as more demandingness (Shek, 2007). Besides, study of Ornelas et al. (2007) also reported that females would have less family cohesion than males, and those factors would contribute significant lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of depressive symptoms than males. However, those differences were not highlighted in the study; therefore, it is encouraged that the differences of gender can be included in the future study.

Notwithstanding these limitations, findings from this study have important implications for families, particularly for 21st

century new mother who are raising adolescent children. More importantly, the well-being and influences of mothers should be highlighted in national campaigns addressing the issue, with current understanding that warmth, encouraging and resourceful mother are able to provide unconditional care and support for their adolescents in order to enhance a healthy lifestyle.

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