



Maternal parenting style and adolescent's self-efficacy: the moderating role of mother's age

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the moderating effects of mother's age on the relationships between maternal parenting style and adolescent's self-efficacy. Participants included 382 school-going adolescents with an average age of 14.27 years. The data was collected by using multi-stage cluster sampling. Results revealed that maternal authoritative and authoritarian mothers tend to foster high level of self-efficacy. Nonetheless, no significant moderating effect was found for mother's age. The current study underscore the need to focus on the role of parenting style and adolescents' self-efficacy especially in Asian countries.

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Introduction

Since adolescents experience remarkable amount of changes, the indicators which provide the means for adolescents to overcome stressors and challenges in their life become important matters. Self-efficacy is one of these indicators that become increasingly critical during adolescence because they influence adolescents' effort and resilience in the face of setbacks, as well as the level of stress which they experience in their life (Benard, 2004). Self-efficacy is defined as the beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform behaviors at designated levels. Such self-perceptions of capability are influential to the goals that people pursue, since they have an effect on the choices they make and the courses of actions they engage. In addition, there is direct and positive relationship between self-efficacy and various health outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Previous studies (Baldwin et al., 2006; Caprara et al., 2006; Ferla et al., 2008) revealed that self-efficacy affects on individual's thought patterns, stress level, academic achievement and level of success attained. Many individuals with low sense of self-efficacy and who are relatively powerless to control their lives have been associated with a worldview that reduces the value of effort on the part of the individual with regard to goal attainment.

In raising high self-efficacy among adolescents, it is important to study what factors that contribute to the development of this construct. Parents are viewed as major contributors to children's self-efficacy (Pajares, 2002; Meesters & Muris, 2004). In other words, initial sources of self-efficacy are undoubtedly rooted in the family. In all cultures, parents are recognized as a fundamental influence for their children's and adolescents' well-being (Sorkhabi, 2005). Parents who are approving and responsive tend to build high self-efficacy in their children, whereas disapproving, unresponsive and uninterested parents may break down self-efficacy levels in their children.

Diana Baumrind (1991) identified three major parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) which are

linked to a variety of developmental outcomes. Generally, authoritative parenting which is described by high warmth, responsiveness and demandingness is associated with positive child's outcomes (Supple & Small, 2006; Pong et al., 2010). Authoritative parents apply verbal reasoning and emotional support which lead to high level of moral reasoning and self efficacy in children (Carlo et al, 2007). In contrast, it has been revealed that authoritarian and permissive parenting appear unsuccessful in enabling children to develop a range of self-directing and self regulatory abilities that underlie a strong sense of self-efficacy and academic success (Diaz, 2005). Therefore, it has been shown that familial influences on self efficacy have enduring effect throughout life. Considering the important contribution of mothers to the development of their children, it is important to clarify how maternal parenting styles contribute to adolescents' self-efficacy. In the current investigation, the relationship between maternal parenting styles and adolescents' self-efficacy will be examined.

Nonetheless, associations between parenting and child outcomes might vary when mother's age is taken into account. Older parents are more experienced, skillful and knowledgeable in comparison to younger ones and they tend to indicate more confidence in their ability to solve problems. They have more general and specific experiences in surviving similar problems in the past. Their greater maturity leads to reduce the conflict in the family. Life experiences may help people to deal with life's problems and make them less frustrated, supportive and disciplined (Gove et al., 1989). Moreover, older adults will be more capable to decrease the effects of stressors in life and deal with crises happening within the family which in turn influence how family members grow together through life's challenges (Mirowsky & Ross, 1990). Scaramella et al. (2008) surveyed 558 adolescents and their parents to determine the relationships between early parenthood and risk for harsh parenting as well as child problem behavior. This study concurred with the previous

research that younger parents tend to participate in a harsher parenting style. These parents may utilize corporal punishment with their children. Previous studies demonstrated that most teenage mothers provide less supportive environments for their children than older mothers (Luster & Mittelstaedt, 1993). However, studies have generally looked at the direct relationships between parenting styles with adolescents' outcome (Chao, 2001; Cohen et al, 2008) and largely ignoring the moderating or indirect influence of mother's age. Hence, this study aims to scrutinize the moderating effect of mother's age on the relationships between maternal parenting styles and adolescents' self-efficacy.

Methodology

Participants

579 students filled out the questionnaire, and a sum of 382 qualified responses accumulated for the present study.

Procedures

The first contact with the schools selected for this study was made through a letter to the educational planning and research division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia. A study packet which included a letter, a complete set of questionnaire and explanation with regard to the aim of the research sent to the chosen schools. After which, the present writer determined a suitable date and time for a meeting with the headmaster of each school to gain permission for conducting data collection.

At the beginning of the semester, the researcher visited all the selected classes at the schools. Data were collected by means of adolescents' self-report using standardized instruments. Each time before the administration of the questionnaire, a brief explanation was given prior to the survey to inform the respondents on the objectives of the study and also on the content of the instrument. The questionnaire included three parts and translated in Malay version by using back translation. The first part of the questionnaire covered background information and was filled out by the mothers, the second part included the maternal authority questionnaire, followed by a scale which was developed to assess the respondent's self-efficacy. Students answered the questions in the class, and they were reminded that their responses did not have any influence on their grades.

Measures

Demographics

The demographic or background information needed for this study included mother's age, level of education and family income.

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)

Perceived maternal behaviors were assessed with the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), which is designed to measure Baumrind's parenting prototypes (Buri, 1991). It consists of 30 items per parent but in this study the mother form was used. Each subscale includes ten statements that describe behaviors representative of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting.

General Self-Efficacy (GSE)

In the current study self-efficacy evaluated with the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1992). This scale intends to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy with the aim in mind to predict coping with daily hassles as well as adoption after experiencing all kinds of stressful life events. It consists of 10 statements and responses to the GSE that are made on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = not at all true to 4 = very true. By summing the responses to all ten items, the GSE yields a total composite score with a range of 10 to 40.

Higher scores on the GSE indicate a higher sense of general self-efficacy.

Results and discussion

Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations, actual range of scores as well as possible range of scores are summarized in Table 1. Perceived parenting styles were assessed with the 30-item Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ). This research instrument aims to measure Baumrind's authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting prototypes. scores on each parenting style subscale can range from 10 to 50 (Buri, 1991). A review of the descriptive statistics indicated that the leading style of parenting in this sample was authoritative parenting followed by authoritarian and permissive parenting respectively.

Furthermore, general self-efficacy was examined with the General Self-Efficacy Scale. Higher scores on the GSE reflect a higher sense of general self-efficacy (Schwarzer, 2003). The mean score of this scale revealed that the overall self-efficacy in this sample was relatively high (Mean = 28.85, SD = 3.44).

Reliability Of Instruments

Reliability refers to the extent to which the measurement is free of unpredictable kinds of errors and therefore presents consistent measurement across time and across a variety of items in the instrument (Portney & Watkins, 2000; Salkind, 2006). The reliability of the scales for the study variables such as parenting styles, and self-efficacy was determined by using the Cronbach's alpha reliability test. The reliability coefficients of the scales used in the study are presented in Table 2. According to Hair et al. (1998), the suggested level of reliability is 0.70 and above. Hence, internal consistency estimates in this study were judged adequate.

Correlational Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation analyses were computed to determine the relationships between the study variables. However, before calculating the strength of the association between independent and dependent variables through bivariate analyses, scatterplots were used to explore the relationships between these variables. The examination of the scatterplots indicated that Pearson Product-Moment correlation can be used since there was no clear indication of curvilinear relationships between variables. Therefore, Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated in order to examine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables of study. Following the scientific research tradition, the level of confidence for all calculations was set at alpha 0.05 (2-tailed).

As displayed in Table 3, there was positive relationship between maternal authoritative parenting style and self-efficacy ($r=0.53$, $p<0.001$). The finding showed that adolescents developed high self-efficacy when they perceived their mothers as highly authoritative. Interestingly, there was a positive relationship between maternal authoritarian parenting style and self-efficacy ($r=0.17$, $p<0.001$).

Hierarchical Multiple Regressions

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to determine whether mother's age moderates the relationships between perceived maternal parenting styles and adolescent's self-efficacy. Prior to data analyses, the predictor variables were centered to decrease multicollinearity, as recommended by Aiken and West (1991). The mean was subtracted from each individual scale score to create variables with means of zero. These centered variables were then multiplied to generate the

interaction term. Moreover, hierarchical multiple regression analysis examine a moderator effect by including their product or interaction term at a later step in the regression equation (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Baron & Kenny, 1986).

As it has been shown in Table 4, maternal parenting styles as the independent variables entered in Step 1 accounted for

30% significant variance in self-efficacy. The R^2 change for maternal age in step 2 was not significant. The R^2 change in Step 3 containing the interaction terms was not also significant. The examination of Step 3 revealed that maternal age did not have any moderating influences on the relationships between maternal parenting styles and self-efficacy.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, Min/Max and Possible Range of Scores for the Predictors and Criterion Variables (N=382)

Scale	Mean (SD)	Min/Max	Possible Range
Maternal Parenting Style			
Permissive	23.11(6.04)	11/41	10-50
Authoritarian	34.30(5.83)	19/49	10-50
Authoritative	35.76(4.911)	23/50	10-50
Self-Efficacy	28.85 (3.44)	21/38	10-40

Note: SD= Standard Deviation, Min=Minimum, Max= Maximum

Table 2: Reliability Coefficients for Study Instruments

Scale	No. of items	Alpha
Maternal parenting style		
Permissive	10	0.74
Authoritarian	10	0.71
Authoritative	10	0.70
Self-Efficacy	10	0.77

Table 3: Relationships between Maternal Parenting Style with Adolescents' Self-Efficacy (N=382)

Variables	Self-Efficacy
	r(p)
Maternal Parenting Style	
Maternal Permissive	0.08 (0.10)
Maternal Authoritarian	0.17 (0.00) ***
Maternal Authoritative	0.53 (0.00) ***

Note. *** $p \leq 0.001$

Table 4: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for Predicting Adolescents' Self-Efficacy from Maternal Parenting Styles, and Maternal Age (N=382)

Predictor	Step one		Step two		Step three	
	B	b	B	b	B	b
Maternal Permissive	.003	.005	.002	.004	.004	.006
Maternal Authoritarian	.067**	.114**	.068**	.115**	.067**	.114**
Maternal Authoritative	.362***	.518***	.362***	.518***	.362***	.517***
Maternal Age			.007	.011	.010	.015
M Permissive x Age					-.001	-.009
M Authoritarian x Age					.002	.017
M Authoritative x Age					-.007	-.053

Note. $R^2 = .30$ *** for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .00$ for Step 2; $\Delta R^2 = .00$ for Step 3. * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$ *** $p \leq 0.001$, M in Step 3 denotes mother; *** $p \leq 0.001$

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