

Parental Support and Bullying: An Imperative Factor to Promote Malaysian Adolescents' Life Satisfaction

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Bullying has become widespread among secondary school students. Early life experiences in bullying may have long-term impact on multiple facets of adulthood especially life satisfaction, making parental support is crucial. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of bullying and parental support on adolescents' life satisfaction. A cross-sectional survey design was employed. Students' Life Satisfaction Scale, Personal Experience Checklist, and Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale were completed by 417 adolescents. A significant main effect of parental support on life satisfaction was found using factorial ANOVA. Among the cultural and relation-based bully groups, parental support had a substantial main effect on life satisfaction. Low life satisfaction was revealed to have a significant main effect across low experiences of physical, cyber, and relation-based bully groups. No significant interaction effect was discovered in any of the combinations. High parental support, has a favourable impact on adolescents' life experiences. Students with lower ratings on physical, cyber, and relational experiences, had better life satisfaction. Findings suggest that parents are encouraged to become more conscious of their roles in supporting their children's life journey in achieving healthy life satisfaction. Schools should consider the findings of this study into account when implementing the Parent-Teacher Association regulations.

Keywords: adolescent, bully, victimisation, life satisfaction, parental support

For a number of years bullying numbers have remained consistently high in Malaysian schools. Malaysia's Ministry of Education (2018) reports that between 2012 and 2015, over 14,000 cases of bullying were reported at public secondary schools in Malaysia, with physical bullying being the most common type. In addition, 338 incidents of cyberbullying were reported in 2017 among Malaysian youths, indicating that it occurred almost daily. The time of life between the two extremes of childhood and adulthood, when fresh possibilities and perspectives blossom. The trials and tribulations of adolescence present

opportunities for growth and change, but they also put fundamental human values to the test (Riquelme et al., 2018).

A person's social network, which includes his or her family, friends, classmates, and teachers, as well as their subjective assessment of their own quality of life or level of happiness, have an impact on their chance of getting amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) (Proctor et al., 2017). Lack of social support from family members increases the chance of developing ALS since it offers no protection from traumatic situations (Blau et al., 2018).

Adolescents who scored extreme values of ALS are exposed to more positive school experiences, fewer unfavourable peer interactions, improved social skills, and enhanced ability to control negative emotions (Povedano-Diaz et al., 2019). Teens who believe in themselves and have developed effective strategies for dealing with stress report more happiness (Jiang et al., 2019). However, low ALS has been associated with issues including sadness, anxiety, and loneliness, as well as bad social interactions and bullying at school (Lazaro-Visa et al., 2019).

In this analysis, the two most important factors were the participant's own background and the level of encouragement they received from their parents. A significant improvement in adolescents' well-being can be achieved through the development of effective support treatments, but this can only be accomplished if researchers have a firm grasp on the interplay between bullying and parental support and their impact on adolescents' levels of life satisfaction. Therefore, the research objective is to determine whether adolescent well-being is affected by parental support and exposure to school bullying.

The adolescent generation is a rising power that will shape the world to come. For their own happiness, it's a must. Happier adolescents are less likely to struggle with depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues, and have a more favourable view of themselves (Guzman et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2020). However, negative life experiences can result from a distorted perception of quality of life (Willroth et al., 2021). One's sense of well-being in the classroom can be negatively impacted by bullying, interpersonal conflict, violence, and isolation among peers (Aldridge et al., 2020). Adolescents that score low on the ALS scale are more prone to partake in dangerous behaviours and attitudes, for

instance, substance abuse, violence towards others, and bullying (Haranin, Huebner, & Suldo, 2007; Sun & Shek, 2010).

The development of suicidal ideation, thoughts, and actions in adolescents is also strongly associated with the degree to which they are dissatisfied with their lives (Park, Koo, & Schepp, 2005). An increase in suicidal ideation and behaviour is linked to a person's level of life dissatisfaction, according to this view (Kim & Leventhal, 2008). Adolescent mental health research has found strong correlations with ALS and issues like social dysfunction, anxiety problems, and sadness (Tamini & Kahrazei, 2010; Wahab et al., 2013). It has been discovered that social support from significant adult figures, such as parents, is a predictor of ALS, in addition to one's own experiences. Parental support was found to have a greater effect on adolescents' happiness than other factors like school satisfaction and peer support (Suldo & Huebner, 2006).

Malaysian adolescents' inability to deal with growing societal problems is indicative of broader problem-solving deficits that undermine happiness (Hashim, 2007). Although many studies have been conducted in many parts of the world to investigate the link, more studies on a more representative population in the Malaysian context are required.

In contrast, adolescent children's emotional and physical needs begin to diverge from those of their parents, and they begin to spend more time and share more of their daily experiences with friends they make at school and through social media (Kapetanovic et al., 2020). Adolescents may develop a sense of independence and individuality in many parts of the world, but the significance of a loving and nurturing parent-child relationship cannot be denied (Bi et al., 2018). Adolescents express greater happiness with their lives if they believe their parents give them quality time,

listen to them, and include them in major decisions (Salgado et al., 2021).

Being a perpetrator or victim of peer aggression is correlated with reductions in life satisfaction (Varela et al., 2018). Apart from that, studies also revealed that typical human events such as bullying, cyberbullying, verbal aggressiveness, and interpersonal disputes play critical roles in the disease's maintenance (Eccles & Roeser 2011; Turner et al., 2014; Varela et al., 2018).

The family is the earliest and most influential social group for adolescents, according to Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Theory of Ecology. Bowlby's (1973) theory of attachment also believed that social support is relevant to ALS. A Chinese study shows that children who have strong parent-child bonds are more likely to seek help, talk to their parents about their problems, and ultimately emerge from adversity stronger (Chen et al., 2017).

In Malaysia, unfriendly school environments, a lack of parental and peer support, and behaviour issues have all been linked to lower levels of satisfaction (Nasir et al., 2011). In particular, the participation of parents is crucial in reducing bullying behaviour. A study of 2,844 Korean adolescents indicated that, when parents were involved and their kids didn't hang out with bad influences, bullying incidences dropped significantly (Cho et al., 2019). This lines up with a growing body of research that finds parental participation decreases bullying (Walters et al., 2020; Chan & Wong, 2015; Espelage, 2014). The likelihood of a child being involved in negative experiences is reduced when parents provide a safe, loving, and accepting home for them. In addition to protecting their own adolescent, parents can protect other adolescents from becoming victims by encouraging positive behaviour in their own children (Cho et al., 2019). Support from parents can mitigate the

negative effects of bullying, boost self- and social-awareness, and eventually lead to higher ALS scores, regardless of the severity of bullying (Oriol et al., 2017).

Adolescents who have experienced school peer aggression greatly benefit from having their parents' support (Oriol et al., 2017). According to a study of 3,675 Chinese teenagers, interactions between adolescents and their parents, instructors, and classmates were associated with bullying, poor self-rated health, and a lack of enjoyment in life (Chai et al., 2020). Furthermore, adolescents with high level of life satisfaction and who had greater access to social support from home were more likely to successfully cope with bullying (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Miranda et al., 2019). Academic failure was linked to traditional bullying among Chinese adolescents in a recent study (Li et al., 2019).

Flexible and spontaneous communication, tenderness, encouragement of autonomy, humour, and self-disclosure freedom are all factors that support the wellbeing of their children. It has also been demonstrated that parental support promotes greater adolescent academic performance, emotional intelligence, cognitive growth, interpersonal trust, and less rule-breaking behaviour (Chetty et al., 2019; Khalil & Mayer, 2016). According to studies by Alvarez et al. (2015), Cummins et al. (2014), and Pérez-Fuentes et al. (2019), adolescence who see their parents as psychologically dominating, indulgent, authoritative, and encountering hostile and conflict situations reported lower levels of life satisfaction.

From a global standpoint, a survey of 2,215 Korean adolescence found low ALS, rising loneliness, emotional alienation, felt parental neglect due to a dearth of meaningful talks with parents about subjects other than academic success, and other relevant issues (Chan & Yang, 2020). In their 2017 study of 5,774 teenage

students from 71 secondary schools in Peru, Miranda, Oriol, Amutio, and Ortuzar discovered that, regardless of the level of school bullying, children who had less adult support at home or at school were likely to have low life satisfaction. Dramatic changes at home environment would affect adolescents' overall well-being during this critical developmental stage, such as communication breakdowns and a loss of focus (Proctor & Linley, 2014). Parental support also contributed to adolescents' psychological health, enabling them to positively assess and handle their own experiences and other developmental outcomes (Yaacob et al., 2017).

Numerous studies conducted in Malaysia have examined the link between ALS and parental support. A research of 395 secondary school children in Selangor, Malaysia, found that having strong parental and family support was a key indicator of having severe ALS symptoms (Yaacob et al., 2017). A secondary school in Malaysia, revealed that adolescents were able to manage with traumatic life events and maintain life satisfaction with the presence of parents (Chong & Baharudin, 2017).

Additionally, the study found that mothers' support increased optimism, which in turn increased life satisfaction (Chong & Baharudin, 2017). Family structure was found to be one of the most significant predictors of ALS among Malaysian school-age adolescence. Adolescence who had stable, two-parent households as opposed to single-parent or stepfamilies indicated higher levels of life satisfaction (Chiong et al., 2016). Similar results were observed among 410 primary six students in Kuala Lumpur, where older fathers appeared to be a protective factor against bullying experience due to their greater expertise supporting school-age children (Ismail, et al., 2009).

Furthermore, a supportive home environment was linked to decreased levels of criminal behaviour among Malaysian samples (Syariani et al., 2014). Life satisfaction of Korean adolescence declines near middle school, the lowest ALS among the Economic Co-operation and Development countries. Malaysian adolescents, on the other hand, have a high ALS rate (Yaacob et al., 2012; Nee et al., 2016). (Chan & Yang, 2020).

Method

Participants

The characteristics of samples are secondary school students from nine principal zones or districts that make up Selangor (Gombak, Hulu Langat, Hulu Selangor, Klang, Kuala Langat, Kuala Selangor, Petaling Perdana, Petaling Utama, and Sabak Bernam). Among them, randomization was made from 3 public secondary schools located in two zones. Participants were chosen at random using the Cluster Random Sampling (CRS) technique, possesses equal selection probability.

According to the Selangor Education Department, states 278 government secondary schools are home to 361,483

students, therefore based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size calculation samples derived are 417. The inclusion criteria are as follows: (1) aged between 13 and 16 (ages 15 and 17 were disqualified due to national exams); (2) registered in a public secondary school in Selangor; and (3) possessed a fundamental understanding of both English and Bahasa Malaysia.

The university Joint Ethics Committee and Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD) had approved the proposal. The Selangor State Department of Education was contacted for approval following receipt of EPRD's clearance (JPN). Getting both approvals took about four weeks. The distribution of questionnaires to participants in their respective secondary schools was approved by the school administration. A second visit was made to collect information after written permission forms were distributed. Hard copy questionnaires were distributed. The responses were gathered on the same day. A debriefing session was held following that.

Instruments

Personal Experience Checklist (PECK), Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS) and Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS). All of the questions were bilingual (English and Malay).

Upon cleaning up the data, normality was performed followed by factorial ANOVA to analyse the hypothesis using SPSS V26.

A measure of bully victimization

Personal Experience Checklist (PECK) was used developed by Hunt and Rapee (2012). The objective of the assessment is to determine the experiences of bully, mainly focusing on types of bully behaviour. The scale provides multi-domain assessment for children aged between 8-15. The questionnaire consist of 32 items with four domains: culture based bullying (4 items),

relational-verbal bullying (11 items), cyberbullying (8 items), and physical bullying (9 items) and takes 10 minutes to administer.

The items measured on a 5-point Likert scale based on how frequently bullying occurs: never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), once a week (4), and most days (5). A composite total score is obtained by summing up, the higher the scores depicts high bully victimization. Moderate to strong correlations are obtained among the four variables (Hunt & Rapee, 2012). Internal consistency ranges between .80 to .91. Discriminant and construct validity were established (Schniering & Rapee, 2002).

A measure of social support

Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS) is used to measure adolescent's social support from parents, teachers, classmates, and close friends (Malecki and Demaray, 2002). This study employed only the 12-item parenting scale for 8–18-year-olds. Affirmative statements on the CASSS items describe parental support. Administration of the assessment is 5 minutes.

The items are measured on a 6-point Likert scale (never = 1, almost never = 2, sometimes = 3, most of the time = 4, almost always = 5, and always = 6). A composite score ranges between 12 to 72, the higher the score, the higher more social support provided. The scale establishes overall Cronbach's Alpha of .95, and .89 for parental subscale. Several scales were used to validate CASSS (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1998). CASS and Social Support Scale for Children establishes a convergent validity of .71 to .78 correlation (Harter, 1985).

A measure of student's life satisfaction

Huebner (1991) developed the Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS), that measures the general quality of life for children and adolescents between the ages of 8 and 17. Seven items are measured using 6-point Likert scale, and items 3 and 4 are reverse coded. Composite score is derived by adding all the items. The higher the score, the higher the life satisfaction. The assessment takes 5 minutes to administer. Cronbach's Alpha of .82 is established, infers that it has strong internal consistency. Correlations with many scales establishes construct validity (.53 to .62.) (Windle & Lerner, 1986).

Results

Four hundred and seventeen adolescences participated in this study. The mean age of the students was 14.78 ($SD = 1.333$). The values for the mean and standard deviation are as follows: The mean value for on a life satisfaction scale was 26.56 ($SD: 7.616$), parental support ($M = 45.91$; $SD = 13.22$), and personal experience of bully ($M = 50.72$; $SD = 15.11$).

A factorial ANOVA was employed to determine the primary impact of parental support on students' life satisfaction. Levene homogeneity test's assumption were not violated.

Two-way Anova

A two-way ANOVA was employed to test the hypotheses. The main hypotheses are as follows:

H₀₁: There is no significant main effect of personal experience of bully on students' life satisfaction.

H₀₂: There is no significant main effect of parental support on students' life satisfaction.

H₀₃: There is no significant interaction effect of personal experience of bully and parental support on students' life satisfaction.

Levene's homogeneity tests assumption were not violated (Refer to Table 1). The statistical analysis reveals that several factors play a significant role in the context of bullying. Specifically, the level of Bully Victimization and the degree of Parental Support are found to be statistically significant. The pairwise comparisons indicate that adolescents experiencing low levels of victimization have higher life satisfaction.

Also, adolescents facing low Relation-based Bullying have higher life satisfaction. High parental support stands out as a significant factor on all the analysis. On the other hand, Culture-Based Bully, Physical Bully, and Cyber Bully do not seem to significantly impact the studied outcomes. Furthermore, there are no significant interaction effects between Bully Victimization (its' domains) and Parental Support on Adolescent's Life Satisfaction. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of addressing Bully Victimization and enhancing Parental Support to mitigate the effects of bullying in certain contexts, particularly relational bullying, which shows a strong influence.

Table 1

Results of Two-way Anova (n = 417)

Constructs of Bully	Levene's Test Sig.	F	Sig	Pairwise Analysis Sig.	Result
Bully Victimization	.801 (.494)	10.867	.001*	.001*	Low Victimization
Parental Support		72.217	.001*	.001*	High Parental Support
Interaction Effect		1.040	.308	-	-
Culture-Based Bully	2.480 (.061)	2.998	.084	-	-
Parental Support		63.353	.001*	.001*	High Parental Support
Interaction Effect		1.701	.193	-	-
Physical Bully	1.077 (.359)	2.285	.131	-	-
Parental Support		63.014	.001*	.001*	High Parental Support
Interaction Effect		1.487	.223	-	-
Cyber Bully	.533 (.660)	2.521	.113	-	-
Parental Support		71.490	.001*	.113	High Parental Support
Interaction Effect		.016	.900	-	-
Relation-based Bully	.230	64.914	.001*	.001*	Low Relational Bully
Parental Support	(.876)	12.117	.001*	.001*	High Parental Support
Interaction Effect		2.561	.110	-	-

Notes. * $p < .001$

Discussion

The study adds to the evidence revealing that parental support is a significant factor in a teen's happiness. Parental support affects teenage health, happiness, and well-being based on prior studies. Warmth, acceptance, clear communication, attending to the needs of adolescence, and emotional support are just a few examples of the various ways that parents can help their children. These nutrients are necessary for adolescents' survival and overall well-being (Leung et al., 2010).

Adolescents who experience their parents' love and care have a high sense of flexibility to address issues without risky behaviour. Adolescents were given a sense of belonging and self-fulfillment by basic parental practises like acknowledging accomplishments, listening, and encouraging them.

Due to their little time with their children, fathers in Asian societies have less effect on conventional family values (Chong and Baharudin, 2017). On the other side,

mothers support adolescent optimism, which lessens ALS symptoms, particularly in adolescent boys (Chong & Baharudin, 2017). As a result, the current study emphasises how crucial it is for parents to comprehend their responsibilities as ALS predictors in adolescents who look up to them as major role models.

Positive parent-child interaction has been linked to increased adolescent life satisfaction and self-esteem, according to studies (Proctor & Linley, 2014). However, how parents raise their children will determine this. Parental dominance and authority are still firmly embedded in family relationships throughout Asia.

Adolescence in Selangor display high levels of life satisfaction when they are exposed to less bullying. This study supports past research from Malaysia that showed people are happier when they experience less relational, online, and physical bullying.

The findings of this study will support programmes and interventions aimed at enhancing adolescence's quality of life and wellbeing in Malaysia. Abdul Kadir and colleagues (2012) emphasised the value of forging close bonds with significant adults who can provide support, love, and care to youngsters who are weak or at risk (e.g., delinquency, bullying). Adolescence at risk gain from carer interactions because they experience a sense of acceptance, respect, and trust.

Additionally, studies demonstrate that adolescents' levels of life satisfaction change over time as their perspectives on life and their own experiences change from earlier to later in adolescence (Lewis et al., 2011). The Ministry of Education would therefore want to consider including polls that gauge adolescent life satisfaction into the curriculum. As a result, ALS levels can be monitored during the course of an adolescence's academic career. Schools may then put in place the necessary programmes and assistance mechanisms.

Overall, the objective of this study is to determine whether adolescent well-being is affected by parental support and by exposure to school bullying comprising of level of bully towards life satisfaction. The results of this study shed light on the impact of bullying experiences and parental support on adolescent life satisfaction in Selangor. The results also indicate the significance of creating supportive environments and addressing bullying issues within the context of relationships and victimization. For policymakers and educators, this suggests a need to focus on strategies that foster Parental Support and address issues related to Bully Victimization, especially in cases of relational bullying. However, the lack of significance in Culture-Based, Physical, and Cyber bullying may indicate that interventions in these areas may not have as significant an impact or may require further investigation. In conclusion, these findings

provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of bullying and point towards areas where intervention efforts can be most effective. The results of this study have also prepared the way for more investigation into issues like mental health, which has a direct bearing on how satisfied adolescence are with their lives. The findings of this study could potentially increase parents' awareness of the pivotal role their children play in shaping their overall well-being and health.

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