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Fathers' Parenting Behavior and Psychological Well-Being of Adolescents in a Collectivist Society

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Abstract:

The present study examines the relationship between perceptions of a father's parenting behavior (i.e., warmth, monitoring, harsh discipline, and indigenous) and psychological well-being (self-esteem and psychological health) among 707 Malaysian adolescents aged between 13 and 16 years. The study also tests whether the relationships are mediated by self-esteem. Finally, the study also examines whether these relationships varied by adolescents' sex and age group. Cross-sectional data were collected from a battery of questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and structural equation modelling multi group test was employed to note the difference between groups. Bootstrapping analysis was performed to test the mediation effect. Father's warmth and indigenous parenting were indirectly related to the adolescents' psychological health via self-esteem, while harsh discipline was directly yet negatively related to the adolescents' psychological health — no significant contribution of fathers' monitoring behavior toward adolescents' psychological well-being. The structural study model was stable across younger and older adolescents but varied across sex. Findings from the present study build on existing literature by providing a better framework for understanding adolescents' psychological well-being. Educators, practitioners, and those working with or for adolescents may find information from the present valuable study for designing various prevention and intervention programs related to adolescents' psychological well-being.

Keywords: fathers, parenting behavior, adolescents, psychological well-being.

集体主义社会的父亲育儿与青少年心理健康

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摘要:

本研究调查了 707 名 13 至 16 岁马来西亚青少年对父亲养育行为（即温暖、监督、严厉管教和本土）的看法与心理健康（自尊和心理健康）之间的关系。该研究还测试了这种关系是否是由自尊来调节的。最后，该研究还检验了这些关系是否因青少年的性别和年龄组而异。从一系列问卷中收集横截面数据，并使用描述性统计、相关性分析和结构方程模型多组检验进行分析以记录组间差异。进行自举分析来测试中介效应。父亲的温暖和本土教养方式通过自尊间接与青少年的心理健康相关，而严厉的管教则与青少年的心理健康直接负相关——父亲的监督行为对青少年的心理健康没有显著贡献。结构研究模型对于年轻和年长的青少年来说是稳定的，但不同性别之间存在差异。本研究的结果建立在现有文献的基础上，为理解青少年的心理健康提供了更好的框架。教育工作者、从业者以及青少年工作人员可以从当前有价值的研究中找到信息，以设计与青少年心理健康相关的各种预防和干预计划。

关键词: 父亲、养育行为、青少年、心理健康。

1. Introduction

In one structural model, the current study investigates a mediational model of the relationships between fathers' parenting behavior (warmth, monitoring, harsh discipline, and indigenous), self-esteem, and psychological health. Furthermore, we examined sex and age invariance in the structural relationships between fathers' parenting behavior (warmth, monitoring, harsh discipline, and indigenous), self-esteem, and psychological health. Based on extant research (Garthe et al., 2014; Jun et al., 2013), the present study expected that the father's parenting variables would be associated with the development of psychological health in adolescents. Furthermore, this study predicted that fathers' parenting with high warmth and monitoring and indigenous parenting would contribute to better adolescent psychological health. On the other hand, harsh discipline will negatively affect adolescents' psychological health.

Father's parenting behavior is a critical shaping force on adolescents' later psychological health development. Researchers have consistently revealed that there are clear associations between father's parenting behavior and adolescents' psychological health (Boe et al., 2013; Jafari et al., 2013; Jun et al., 2013; Lewis, Collishaw, Thapar, & Harold, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2014; Wang & Kenny, 2014). Previously, the dynamics of a father's parenting behavior have been commonly delineated by two general constructs: support and control (Wang & Kenny, 2014). However, Wang et al. (2014) posited that the father's parenting behavior construct is multidimensional and complex. Conceptualizing a father's parenting behavior as a multidimensional measure would provide a strong framework for understanding how a father's parenting behavior influences adolescents' psychological health (Jafari et al., 2013).

Father's parenting behavior, however, may not only be directly associated with adolescents' psychological health. Fathers' parenting behavior could improve

adolescents' psychological health through self-esteem (Wang et al., 2014). Self-esteem is a favorable or unfavorable feeling toward self (Rosenberg, 1965) and is related to fathers' parenting behaviors and psychological health. This study assumed that self-esteem would mediate the relationship between fathers' parenting behavior and psychological health. Positive parenting, such as parental warmth and monitoring, could contribute to the long-term positive development of self-esteem and foster psychological health in adolescents (Park et al., 2021). Meanwhile, harsh fathers' parenting could direct adolescents to negative views of them, leading to disruptive psychological health (Wang et al., 2014).

In summary, fathers' parenting behavior is measured based on four dimensions: warmth, monitoring, harsh discipline, and indigenous parenting. The study investigated relationships between fathers' parenting behavior and adolescents' psychological well-being (self-esteem and psychological health) and tested whether the relationships are mediated by self-esteem. Furthermore, the study also examined whether these relationships varied by adolescents' sex and age groups.

2. Literature Review**2.1. Fathers' Parenting Behavior**

In modern societies, an individual socialization process usually occurs in at least three major contexts (i.e. families, peer groups, and environment) (Maccoby, 2000). Therefore, fathers are not the only socialization agents contributing to adolescents' development. However, they are considered the main protective factor for optimal child development (Bond, 2019). Fathers offer a unique contribution to the development of adolescents. Although fathers are typically judged by their ability to provide household income, much less attention has been paid to their contributions as nurturers of children. Yet, fathers are both directly and indirectly related to adolescents' positive and negative

development (Park et al., 2021). Drawing on a decades-long trend, researchers investigated the possibility that fathers' parenting behavior might play a significant role in adolescents' development. Fathers' parenting behavior is a socialization process whereby the father practices childrearing strategies and behaviors in shaping their children's development, such as disciplining and providing emotional warmth (Belsky, 1984).

Warmth refers to behavior that expresses support, acceptance, encouragement and affection toward offspring (Baumrind, 1966). As Lee et al. (2018) described, fathers' warmth is formed through an affective quality of the father-child relationship regarding how fathers nurture and accept their children.

In recent work, fathers' warmth is described as physical and verbal affection behaviors. The affection behavior subsequently encourages the feeling of being accepted and loved by oneself. Additionally, fathers' warmth is a positive behavior underlying fathers' acceptance that could enhance the effectiveness of parenting practices. In particular, the warmth that fathers express to adolescents can be considered a building block of their parenting (Di Maggio & Zappulla, 2013).

Over several decades, numerous aspects of positive parenting, such as warmth, monitoring, support, and supervision, have been identified as protective factors in adolescents' positive developmental outcomes (Park et al., 2021; Jafari et al., 2013; Quach et al., 2013). Recently, researchers have emphasized that negative parenting behavior is related to poor adolescent development (Park et al., 2021; Jafari et al., 2013; Wang & Kenny, 2014). One risk factor that dramatically affects adolescents' behavioral and emotional development is fathers' harsh discipline (Lewis et al., 2014; Wang & Kenny, 2014). Fathers' harsh discipline is a less extreme form of parenting discipline involving harsh verbal discipline, psychological force, or physical punishment (Wang & Kenny, 2014). They were associated with adverse outcomes in adolescents, such as conduct problems behavior (Lysenko et al., 2013; Wang & Kenny, 2014) and symptoms of psychological disturbances (Park et al., 2021). Harsh discipline in fathering, for example, using verbal intimidation (yelling or shouting to adolescents), cursing adolescents, improper punishment, and rejection, may increase the risk for conduct problems in adolescents (Lysenko et al., 2013). The association between harsh discipline and adverse outcomes is bidirectional over time, involving both fathers and adolescents. Adolescents vulnerable to harsh discipline will absorb negative cognition supplied by their fathers. Negative cognition may contribute to a negative self-schema in adolescents and foster inadequate and worthless feelings. Considering adolescence as a period of physical, psychological, and social changes, adolescents are very conscious about

others' thoughts, especially from their parents (i.e., fathers). Therefore, positive interaction with fathers will protect them from negative feelings about themselves and prevent psychological disturbances (Miconi et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2014). Based on previous studies, it can be concluded that fathers' parenting behavior can significantly influence adolescents' self-esteem and consequently significantly impact their psychological health.

Rare research on fathers' parenting is available in non-Western populations, including Malaysia. Research on parenting within the Malaysian population typically focuses on both the father and mother concurrently (Krauss et al., 2013) or mother only (Baharudin et al., 2014; Chia & Baharudin, 2013). To date, there is a paucity of parenting research solely focusing on Malaysian fathers (Jafari et al., 2013). A study conducted by Krauss et al. (2013) demonstrated the role of parental support and supervision as promotive factors of positive behavior and protective factors of negative behavior. Furthermore, Baharudin et al. (2014) indicated that maternal warmth, discipline, and monitoring were uniquely predictive of school adjustments in Malaysian adolescents. The parenting behavior of these studies was measured using different dimensions from different measures, but there is still no concrete conclusion on the permanent structure of parenting behavior.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

This study recruited 707 public high school students from four selected regions in Peninsular Malaysia (Perak (North region), Terengganu (East region), Kuala Lumpur (Central region), and Malacca (South region)). The average age of participants was 13.86 ($SD = 1.045$). 345 (48.8%) male and 362 (51.2%) female adolescents participated in this study. The main steps of the research process are summarized in Figure 1.

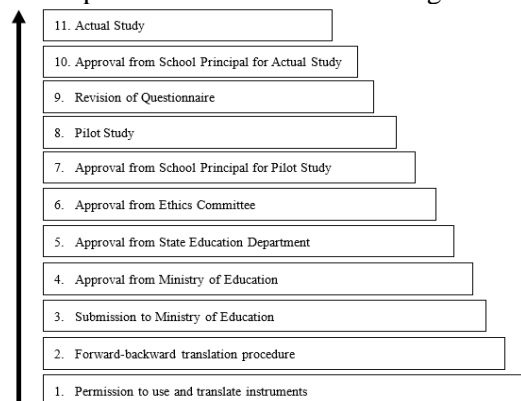


Figure 1. Research process

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Malaysian Parenting Behavior Inventory (MPBI)

A 32-item MPBI scale developed by Zulkefly et al.

(2021) was used to measure the participants' current perceptions of their fathers' parenting behavior. Participants were asked to indicate their fathers' parenting behavior based on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 0 = *never* to 4 = *very often*. The MPBI scale included four dimensions, where the sum score represents the father's degree of warmth in 10 items (i.e., "Spend time listening, talking, laughing or playing games with you. "), monitoring in five items (i.e., "In a day, your parents know your whereabouts"), harsh discipline in 6 items (i.e., "Criticize you or your views"), and indigenous in 11 items (i.e., "Ensure you obey religious rules"). The internal consistencies for the MPBI dimensions were reported to be satisfactory for warmth (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$), monitoring (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$), harsh discipline (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$), and indigenous (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$).

3.2.2. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

The participants' self-esteem was assessed using the RSES, an instrument developed by Rosenberg (1965). The RSES consists of 10 items (i.e., "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" and "At times, I think I am no good at all"). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale indicating participants' levels of agreement or disagreement, ranging from 0 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. The five negatively worded items (items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9) were reverse-coded and summed up with the remaining five items to yield the score for adolescents' self-esteem. Higher scores indicated a greater level of self-esteem. In the study, Cronbach's alpha for RSES was 0.60.

3.2.3. General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)

The psychological health of the participants was measured by 12 items of GHQ developed by Goldberg (1978). The GHQ focuses on two main classes of problems: (1) the inability to perform one's normal 'healthy' functions, and (2) the appearance of new phenomena of a distressing nature (i.e. "Being able to concentrate on whatever you are doing" and "Lost must sleep over worry"). This measure emphasizes breaks in normal functioning rather than lifelong traits; therefore, it only covers disorders or patterns of adjustment

associated with distress. Participants indicated agreement or disagreement on a 3-point Likert scale for each statement ranging from 0 (very less than usual) to 3 (better than usual) — higher scores on the GHQ indicating better psychological health. The measure displays an acceptable level of internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.70$).

3.3. Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses were used to determine preliminary results. Furthermore, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to develop measurement models of fathers' parenting behavior, self-esteem, and psychological health. Then, the structural model was tested using maximum likelihood estimation in the AMOS Graphics software. Bootstrapping analysis was employed to examine the mediation effect of self-esteem. The mediation or indirect effect is significant when zero is not included in the upper and lower limits of the 95% confidence intervals. Bootstrapping confidence intervals are usually more precise because they do not depend on an assumption of normality (Cheung & Lau, 2007). Multigroup invariance testing was conducted to examine the factorial structure equivalence of a structural model across adolescents' sex.

4. Results

4.1. Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 shows data means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, and zero-order correlations amongst the study's key measures. The distribution of the variables is considered normal based on skewness less than 3.0 and kurtosis less than 10.0 (Kline, 2011). The results of zero-order correlations revealed that fathers' parenting behavior variables had moderate correlations between each other. However, all four fathers' parenting variables were found to have low correlations with self-esteem and psychological health. The magnitude of the correlations ranged from 0.21 to 0.54 and was found to be in the expected direction.

Table 1. Zero-order correlations for all key measures (** $p < .01$, *** $p < 0.001$; PH = psychological health; SE = self-esteem)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Warmth	1					
2. Monitoring	.589***	1				
3. Harsh Discipline	.002	.093**	1			
4. Indigenous Parenting	.526***	.510**	.007	1		
5. SE	.205***	.161***	-.272***	.226**	1	
6. PH	.311***	.204***	-.250***	.235**	.554**	1

4.2. Testing the Structural Model

4.2.1. Initial Structural Model

Structural equation analysis involved a full path

structural model, which included parceled indicators of the fathers' parenting behavior, self-esteem, and psychological health. The full path structural model was examined to determine whether the model fits the study

data adequately according to the recommended goodness-of-fit parameters. The indices for goodness-of-fit indicated that the structural model achieved an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 273.48$, $df = 104$, $\chi^2/df = 2.63$, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.96; GFI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.05). Figure 2 shows the structural model with estimated standardized regression coefficients. The model demonstrated that four (warmth to psychological health, monitoring to self-esteem, indigenous to psychological health, and monitoring to psychological health) out of nine paths were not significant at the $p < 0.05$.

Following a suggestion by Kline (2011), the acceptable model of fit obtained earlier could be improved by deleting the four insignificant paths. Thus, these paths were deleted in this study to create a more parsimonious model. Once the insignificant paths were deleted, the revised model's statistical fit indices were re-analyzed (Figure 2).

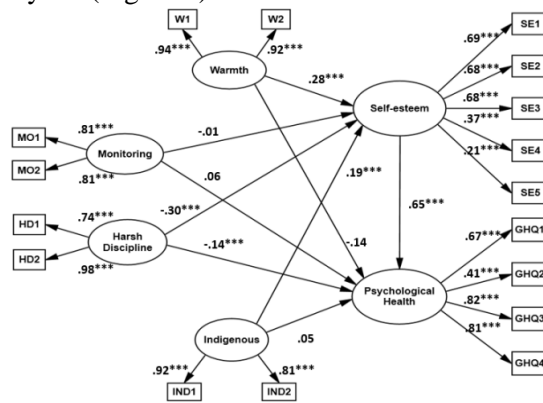


Figure 2. Model 1 (N = 1000; factor loadings are standardized; W1 and W2 - two parcels of warmth; MO1 and MO2 - two parcels of monitoring; HD1 and HD2 - two parcels of harsh discipline; IND1 and IND2 - two parcels of indigenous; SE1- SE5 - five parcels of self-esteem; GHQ1 – GHQ4 - four parcels of psychological health; *** $p < .001$)

4.2.2. Final Structural Model

Overall, the revised model (see Figure 3) successfully yielded better goodness of fit where $\chi^2 = 277.90$, $df = 108$, $\chi^2/df = 2.57$, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.96; GFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.05, and therefore, taken as the final model for the study (Figure 3).

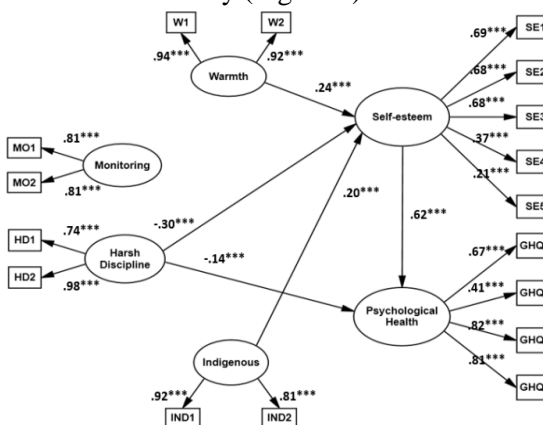


Figure 3. Model 2 (N = 1000; factor loadings are standardized; W1 and W2 - two parcels of warmth; MO1 and MO2 - two parcels of monitoring; HD1 and HD2 - two parcels of harsh discipline; IND1 and IND2 - two parcels of indigenous; SE1- SE5 - five parcels of

self-esteem; GHQ1 – GHQ4 - four parcels of psychological health; *** $p < .001$)

Results revealed that only fathers' harsh discipline had a direct, albeit small, influence on adolescents' psychological health (-0.14) and was statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. All paths weights in this final model were also found to be in the appropriate directions and significant at $p < 0.05$. The model accounted for 25% of the variance in self-esteem and 48% in psychological health.

4.3. Mediating Role of Self-Esteem

Bootstrapping analyses revealed that there were three significant indirect effects. Specifically, fathers' warmth was indirectly related to psychological health via self-esteem (indirect effects = 0.13, 95% BC CI: [0.05, 0.20]). Self-esteem also mediated the relationship between fathers' harsh discipline and psychological health (indirect effects = 0.19, 95% BC CI: [-0.16, -0.09]). Fathers' indigenous factors were related to adolescents' psychological health, as mediated by self-esteem (indirect effects = 0.17, 95% BC CI: 0.09, 0.26). Table 2 displays the standardized indirect effects and their 95% confidence intervals.

Table 2. Bias-corrected confident interval bootstrapping for the final model (** $p < .01$, *** $p < 0.001$, PW - warmth, PHD - Harsh discipline, PI - indigenous, SE - self-esteem, PH - psychological health, SIE - standardized indirect effect, SE - standard error)

Path	SIE	SE	Bootstrap BC 95% CI		
			Lower	Upper	p
PW → SE → PH	.152	.036	.087	.221	.001
PHD → SE → PH	-.187	.027	-.241	-.136	.001
PI → SE → PH	.125	.034	.055	.197	.001

4.4. Sex Moderation

The sex moderation model in this study compared male and female adolescents. Two different models were analysed using multi-group comparison analyses to examine whether the final structural model was stable across the sex group. Initially, the multi-group comparison analyses compared an unconstrained model in which every path was free to vary for male and female adolescents (the baseline model; $\chi^2 = 446.50$, $df = 216$, $\chi^2/df = 2.07$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.95, GFI = 0.93, and RMSEA = 0.04) to a constrained model in which cross-group equality constraints were compulsory on every path in the final structural model ($\chi^2 = 475.03$, $df = 227$, $\chi^2/df = 2.09$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.95, GFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.04). The change in chi-square between the unconstrained and constrained models was significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = 28.53$, $d = 11$, $p < 0.05$). Findings indicating that the final structural model was unstable across sex, moderation effect of sex were presented.

Results in Table 3 revealed that female adolescents had a slightly higher association between warmth and self-esteem than male adolescents (SRW male vs female: $\Phi = .192$ vs $.193$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, the path between harsh discipline and self-esteem was higher in

female and male adolescents (SRW male vs female: $\Phi = -.267$ vs $-.268$, $p < 0.001$). However, the path between indigenous parenting and self-esteem was higher for male than female adolescents (SRW male vs female: $\Phi = .277$ vs $.264$, $p < 0.001$). The path from self-esteem to psychological health was also stronger for males than females (SRW male vs female: $\Phi = .659$ vs $.632$, $p < 0.001$). Equally, the path from harsh discipline to psychological health was also higher for males than females (SRW male vs female: $\Phi = -.132$ vs $-.127$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3 Sex invariance (***) $p < 0.001$, SRW - standardized regression weight, PW - warmth, PHD - harsh discipline, PI - indigenous, SE - self-esteem, PH - psychological health, CR - critical ratio)

Paths	Male	Female	CR	p-value
	SRW	SRW		
Structural Components				
PW → SE	.192	.193	5.145	***
PHD → SE	-.267	-.268	-8.499	***
PI → SE	.277	.264	4.455	***
SE → PH	.659	.632	12.780	***
PHD → PH	-.132	-.127	-3.875	***

4.5. Age Moderation

Multi group comparison analyses were also conducted across age groups. An unconstrained model in which every path was free to vary for younger and older adolescents was compared to one in which every path was constrained to be equal. The results of the model fit comparison between both constrained and unconstrained models did not show significant age differences in the final structural model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 19.68$, $df = 11$, $p > 0.05$). Findings showed that the final structural model was stable across age; hence, no moderation effect was presented.

5. Discussion

The primary goal of the present study was to investigate the association between fathers' parenting behavior (warmth, monitoring, harsh discipline, and indigenous) and adolescents' psychological health and the extent to which self-esteem mediates the association. This study found distinct pathways between each father's parenting behavior and adolescents' psychological health. Additionally, there was evidence of indirect effects (via self-esteem) in the link between fathers' parenting behavior (i.e., warmth, harsh discipline, and indigenous parenting) and adolescents' psychological health.

Generally, different fathers' parenting behavior dimensions have uniquely influenced the psychological health of Malaysian adolescents in this study. Paternal harsh discipline in the study was predicted to lower adolescents' psychological health. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Boe et al., 2013; Jafari et al., 2013; Wang & Kenny, 2014), which indicates that more distressed adolescents tend to come from a

home with fathers who often parent punitively. Adolescents who receive harsh treatment may feel psychologically distressed due to their unreceptive relationship with their fathers. Such emotional rejection in the family microsystem, particularly by a significant other, will more likely damage the adolescents' psychological well-being. However, an unexpectedly positive relationship between fathers' warmth, monitoring, and indigenous parenting with adolescents' psychological health was not evident in this study. Overall, positive father parenting behavior (i.e., warmth, monitoring, indigenous parenting) created a positive context in which adolescents interpret the parenting practiced by their fathers as a buffer to the negative effect of psychological distress (Miconi et al., 2017; Jafari et al., 2013; Lowe & Dotterer, 2013; Smokowski et al., 2014), whereas negative fathers' parenting behavior (i.e., harsh discipline) increased the risk of unhealthy psychological development (Boe et al., 2013; Jafari et al., 2013; Wang & Kenny, 2014).

Furthermore, the present study's findings shed light on the indirect path through which fathers' parenting behavior may influence adolescents' psychological health. Overall, the obtained results of the bootstrap analyses contributed to the growing body of research on adolescents' self-esteem as a mediator. Results of the study were consistent with earlier studies that reported the role of self-esteem as a mediator in the relationships between fathers' parenting behavior and adolescent psychological health (Jun et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2014). The present study suggested that fathers' parenting behavior (warmth, monitoring, harsh discipline, and indigenous) influences the development of self-esteem in adolescents, which in turn predicts their psychological development. This is consistent with past studies that have demonstrated that positive fathers' parenting behavior, such as fathers' warmth (Hu & Ai, 2014; Lowe & Dotterer, 2013; Wang et al., 2014) and indigenous parenting (Barton, Snider, Vazsonyi, & Cox, 2014; Bender & Yeresyan, 2014) might improve adolescents' sense of worth and boost healthy psychological development when they have better self-regard (Brausch & Decker, 2014; Hu & Ai, 2014). Nonetheless, the negative influence of harsh discipline parenting on self-esteem and psychological health is consistent with recent findings (Brausch & Decker, 2014; Chan & Lo, 2014; Hu & Ai, 2014; Orth & Robins, 2014; Smokowski et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Wang & Kenny, 2014) which indicated that fathers' harsh discipline promotes negative self-regard in adolescents and might be a fundamental risk factor for the development of psychological distress.

Finally, the study revealed that the adolescents' characteristics (sex) moderated the relationships between fathers' parenting behavior, adolescents' self-esteem, and psychological health. Findings indicated that the structural model of the present study was

unstable between male and female adolescents. As discussed earlier, female adolescents need more warmth and less harsh discipline from their fathers to attain healthy psychological development. In contrast, fathers' less harsh discipline and high indigenous parenting practices tend to foster better psychological health among male adolescents. Overall, the present study findings were supported by prior studies (Quach et al., 2013; Zhang, Zhao, Ju, & Ma, 2014), which found that female adolescents need more warmth, high indigenous parenting, and less harsh discipline from their fathers to have healthy psychological development. In contrast, less harsh discipline parenting fosters better psychological health in male adolescents (Gomez & Suhaimi, 2014).

6. Conclusion

The findings of the present study have several theoretical contributions to acquiring a comprehensive understanding and expanding knowledge on the processes involved between fathers' parenting behavior and adolescents' psychological health. This study empirically enriches the existing literature, demonstrating that studying fathers' parenting behavior is crucial in predicting adolescents' psychological health. The above findings shed light on specific fathers' parenting behavior that contributes to psychological health in Malaysian adolescents. Given the scarcity of investigations of fathers' parenting behavior in the literature, specifically in Malaysian contexts, this study provided a unique insight.

The present study also demonstrated the usefulness of examining adolescents' sex as a moderator of the relationships between fathers' parenting behavior, adolescents' self-esteem, and psychological health. The findings add to the discourse regarding the adolescents' sex as having an important contextual role that influences the degree to which fathers' parenting behavior shapes adolescents' psychological health. Fathers' parenting behavior (i.e., warmth, monitoring, harsh discipline, and indigenous parenting) differently predicts adolescents' psychological health based on sex. Therefore, this study fills the literature gap on this topic and provides valuable empirical evidence about how adolescents' sex moderates fathers' parenting behavior and shapes adolescents' self-esteem and psychological health in Malaysia.

6.1. Limitations and Further Study

While the present study's findings have contributed valuable key areas of strength to the study of fathers' parenting behavior and adolescents' psychological well-being; however, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. There are several limitations presented in this study. First, the current study was based on a cross-sectional design to explore the relationship between fathers' parenting behavior, self-esteem, and psychological health. Cross-sectional data represents a

snapshot in time; therefore, the nature of the cross-sectional design could not indicate causality or symptom development over time. Additionally, the cross-sectional design was limited to investigate developmental effects by observing age chunks (i.e., 13, 14, and 16 years old). Future studies may consider conducting longitudinal investigations on the influence of fathers' parenting behavior on adolescents' self-esteem and psychological health when time and finances are permitted. A longitudinal investigation of the father-adolescent relationship from pre-adolescence at multiple time points is vital to clarify significant interactional patterns and propose potential causal links (Demidenko et al., 2014). Other than that, the nature of the longitudinal study may enhance the rigor of the research base.

The second limitation of this study is regarding the measure. Data from this study were retrieved only from self-report questionnaires collected based on retrospective reports of adolescents who recall their fathers' parenting behavior. The information obtained may not correspond to the fathers' reports of their personal opinions, practices, and beliefs. How adolescents view their fathers' parenting behavior may differ from how fathers perceive their behaviors. Therefore, the adolescents may have provided a biased interpretation of their relationships with their fathers. Thus, the reliability and validity of the information obtained depended solely on the respondents' honesty as well as their ability to resist subjective biases in their recollection and assessment of paternal parenting behavior. The present study findings underscore the need for future research to investigate the influence of fathers' parenting from the perspective of fathers. It would be worthwhile to employ multiple methods and informants to improve the accuracy of the data obtained. The multiple informants allow future researchers to compare fathers' and adolescents' perceptions of fathers' parenting behavior, self-esteem, and psychological health.

Moreover, this study delimits data on adolescents recruited from a community sample of school-going students in daily government schools. The generalizability of the findings is limited to such a population. The study is also limited to fathers' parenting behavior, self-esteem, and psychological health. In reality, there could be exogenous factors that may influence the outcome. Future studies may need to extend the study sample to other age groups and samples. Future research could replicate these findings with older and clinically depressed adolescents. The study of different populations from diverse age groups and backgrounds would possibly provide different outcomes.

Authors' Contributions

Amira Najiha Yahya: conceptualization, methodology. Melati Sumari: data curation, original

draft preparation. Nor Sheereen Zulkefly: investigation. Rozumah Baharudin: supervision. Nursyuhaidah Mohd Kadri: writing and editing.

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