



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY ENVIRONMENT, PARENTING
STYLES AND ADOLESCENTS' WELL-BEING IN CAMEROON**

GALY MOHAMADOU

FEM 2007 5



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By

GALY MOHAMADOU

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

September 2007



DEDICATION

To the memories of my late parents Alhadj Younous Sada and Hadjah Bilqiss.
My dedication also goes to all those parents who are striving to bring up their
children to be healthy and to treat others with care and respect

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2007

Chairman: Professor Rozumah Baharudin, PhD

Faculty: Human Ecology

The main objective of this thesis was to explore the relationship between family environment, parenting styles and adolescents' well-being in a sample of Cameroonian adolescents. A number of factors in adolescents' home environment are believed to influence adolescents' well-being. A theoretical framework of the relationship between the predictor variables of family environment, parenting styles and the moderator variables of family socio-economic status (parents' education, parents' occupation, family income and the type of family structure) and adolescents' sex, age, with the criterion variable of well-being (measured in terms of adolescents' self-esteem, level of functioning and academic achievement) was constructed. Three hundred and thirty eight (338) adolescents aged between 12 to 19 years from three bilingual schools in the Adamaoua and Centre provinces in Cameroon were included in the sample. Of these respondents, (56.8%) and (43.2%) were males and females respectively. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire battery. The Family Environment Scale (FES) was used as a measure of family environmental dimensions; Buri's Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) was used as a measure of parenting styles. In addition, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ 12), the

Hare Self-esteem Scale (HSES) and school grades were used as measures of adolescents' well-being. Data analysis uncovered three parenting styles as perceived by the adolescents using z-scores. The findings reveal no age and sex differences on measures of well-being. Majority of the adolescents (41.1%) reported having authoritative parents followed by authoritarian parents (34.6%) and only (24.3%) of the respondents viewed their parents as permissive. The results of the factor analysis revealed family environmental dimensions similar to those described by Moos and Moos. These dimensions were labelled as factor 1: supportive dimension, factor 2: growth dimension and factor 3: organized dimension. Correlations between perceived family environmental factors, parenting styles and adolescents' well-being were investigated. The results indicated positive correlation between permissive and authoritarian parenting styles with FES conflict ($r=.11$) and intellectual-orientation ($r=.10$) subscales respectively. Authoritative parenting style did not correlate with any dimension of the family environment despite being the main style used by parents as perceived by the adolescents. Authoritarian parenting style positively correlated with adolescents' school self-esteem ($r=.14$) and general level of functioning($r=.14$). Permissive parenting correlated with the three domains of adolescents' self-esteem: home($r=.20$), school($r=.21$) and peer($r=.22$) and their general level of functioning($r=.17$). General functioning correlated with measures of self-esteem. There was negative correlation between authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles ($r= -.20, p<0.01$). There were no gender differences in perceptions of both family environment and parenting styles by the adolescents. Significant relationships were found between parents' characteristics and family characteristics and moderate relationships were found between family income and adolescents' class level on the one hand, and between the type of family structure and

adolescents' sex on the other. Multiple regression analysis with the FES five growth dimension subscales did not predict adolescents' self-esteem (peer self-esteem, home self-esteem, and school self-esteem,) and level of functioning. Academic achievement however was predicted by the regression model, $R^2 = .032$, $F(5, 332) = 2.171$, $p < .05$. The regression model with the three FES supportive dimension predicted only adolescents' home self-esteem, $R^2 = .020$, $F(3, 334) = 2.218$, $p > .05$, level of functioning, $R^2 = .22$, $F(3, 334) = 2.47$, $p < 0.5$ and academic achievement, $R^2 = .029$, $F(3, 334) = 4.305$, $p < .005$. Finally the FES organized dimension did not predict adolescents' well-being. As for the parenting styles, the regression model which included parenting styles predicted peer self-esteem, $R^2 = .048$, $F(3, 334) = 5.65$, $p < .001$, home self-esteem, $R^2 = .040$, $F(3, 334) = 4.58$, $p < .005$, school self-esteem, $R^2 = .052$, $F(3, 334) = 6.15$, $p < .0005$ and level of functioning, $R^2 = .045$, $F(3, 334) = 5.25$, $p < .001$. The regression model did not show the effects of parenting styles on academic achievement.

Moderator regression analyses were performed to test the moderating effects of family socioeconomic status and adolescents' sex, age on the relation between family environment, parenting styles and adolescents' well-being. The interactions of these moderator variables with FES supportive, growth, and organized dimensions and authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were partially significant. Two subscales of FES factor 2 with income were significant for adolescents' level of functioning but not for the other two measures of well-being. Moderator regression of family income with FES factors 1 and 3 was not significant for adolescents' well-being. Family income moderated the relation between authoritative and adolescents' peer self-esteem. Authoritarian ($\beta = .50$) and permissive ($\beta = -.63$) parenting styles

were the best predictors of adolescents' academic achievement as compared to authoritative and their interactions with family income were statistically significant; authoritarian $t(338) = 2.35, p < 0.05$, permissive $t(338) = -2.22, p < 0.05$. Parents' education and occupation partially moderated the relation between the predicted variables and outcome variables. The interactions between the type of family structure and parenting styles and their relation with adolescents' well-being were not statistically significant. As for adolescents' sex and age, their interactions with FES (growth, supportive, organized) were not significant. Sex however, did not fully moderate the relation between parenting styles and adolescents' well-being. Overall, the study has shown the validity of the ecological perspective in that certain factors contribute to adolescents' well-being in Cameroon and the moderating effects of certain family SES on the relationship between family environment, parenting styles and adolescents' well-being. Future studies should include both parents and adolescents' views in assessing the social climate of the environment, parenting styles with a more rigorous hypotheses testing.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

HUBUNGAN ANTARA PERSEKITARAN KELUARGA, CARA IBUBAPA MENDIDIK ANAK-ANAK DAN KESEJAHTERAAN REMAJA DI NEGARA CAMEROON

Oleh

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September 2007

Pengerusi: Profesor Rozumah Baharudin, PhD

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Tujuan utama (kajian) tesis ini adalah untuk menyelidik kekuatan perhubungan antara persekitaran keluarga, cara ibubapa mendidik anak-anak dan kesejahteraan remaja di kalangan remaja di Negara Cameroon. Beberapa faktor didalam persekitaran rumah di kalangan remaja dikatakan mempengaruhi perkembangan remaja. Satu rangka teori mengenai perhubungan di antara pembolehubah bebas persekitaran kekeluargaan, cara ibubapa mendidik anak-anak dan pembolehubah *moderator* iaitu tahap pendidikan ibubapa, pekerjaan ibubapa, pendapatan isi rumah dan susunan keluarga, jantina, umur remaja, dengan pembolehubah terikat kesejahteraan (self-esteem, tahap berfungsi dan pencapaian akademik) telah dibentuk. Tiga ratus tiga puluh lapan (338) remaja yang berusia antara 12 hingga 19 tahun dari pada tiga buah sekolah di Adamaoua dan daerah tengah di Cameroon disertakan dalam sampel ini. 56.8% daripada responden adalah lelaki, manakala 43.2% adalah perempuan. Maklumat diperolehi dengan menggunakan borang soal selidik. “Skala *Family Environment*” digunakan sebagai pengukur untuk dimensi persekitaran; *Buri’s Parent Authority Questionnaire* telah digunakan sebagai pengukur kepada cara ibubapa mendidik anak-anak. Sebagai tambahan, *General*

Health Questionnaire (GHQ 12), Skala *Hare Self-Esteem* dan gred sekolah telah digunakan sebagai pengukur kepada kesejahteraan remaja. Analisis maklumat menunjukkan tiga cara mendidik anak-anak yang dilihat oleh remaja menggunakan *z-scores*. Kebanyakan daripada para remaja (41.1%) melaporkan mempunyai ibubapa yang autoritatif diikuti oleh ibubapa yang authoritarian (34.6%) dan hanya (24.3%) daripada responden melihat ibubapa mereka sebagai permisif. Keputusan faktor analisis menunjukkan dimensi persekitaran keluarga adalah menyamai kajian Moos dan Moos dan dilabelkan sebagai faktor 1: dimensi sokongan, faktor 2: dimensi pembesaran, dan faktor 3: dimensi tersusun. Hubungkait antara faktor persekitaran keluarga, cara ibubapa mendidik anak-anak dan kesejahteraan remaja telah diselidik. Keputusan selidik menunjukkan hubungkait positif antara didikan permisif dan *authoritarian* dengan menggunakan *FES conflict* ($r=.11$) intelektual orientasi ($r=.10$). Cara mendidik yang bersifat autoritatif tidak menunjukkan sebarang sangkut paut dengan dimensi enviromen keluarga walaupun ianya merupakan Cara mendidik anak yang paling dipraktikkan oleh golongan ibubapa sepertimana yang dipersepsi oleh remaja. Cara mendidik anak-anak yang bersifat autoritatif menunjukkan hubungan yang positif dengan keyakinan diri sekolah ($r=.21$) serta cara berfungsi golongan remaja ($r=.22$). Cara mendidik yang permisif menunjukkan hubungan dengan tiga *domain* kerohanian golongan remaja iaitu (rumah, sekolah dan remaja sebaya umur) serta cara berfungsi. Keyakinan diri di sekolah menunjukkan hubungan dengan cara berfungsi secara amnya. Ada hubungan yang negatif di antara cara authoritarian dengan cara autoritatif ($r=-.20$, $p<0.01$). Tidak ada beza di antara seks bagi persepsi golongan remaja. Hubungan yang signifikan ditemui di antara ibubapa dan hubungan yang moderat ditemui antara pendapatan keluarga dan tahap kelas remaja, dan di antara jenis struktur keluarga dan seks remaja. Beberapa analisis

regresi (menyusut) dengan menggunakan FES tidak dapat meramal keyakinan diri remaja (keyakinan diri persendirian, rumah dan sekolah) serta tahap berfungsi. Walaubagaimanapun pencapaian akademik telah berjaya diramal dengan menggunakan model regresi (menyusut), $R^2 = .032$, $F(5, 332) = 2.17$, $p < .05$. Model regresi (menyusut) dengan tiga dimensi sokongan FES hanya dapat meramal keyakinan diri rumah remaja, $R^2 = .020$, $F(3, 334) = 2.21$, $p > .05$, tahap berfungsi $R^2 = .22$, $F(3, 334) = 2.47$, $p < 0.5$ dan pencapaian akademik, $R^2 = .029$, $F(3, 334) = 4.30$, $p < .005$. Dimensi teratur FES tidak dapat meramal kesejahteraan remaja. Bagi Cara pendidikan anak, model regresi (menyusut) yang merangkumi cara pendidikan anak telah meramal keyakinan diri remaja $R^2 = .048$, $F(3, 334) = 5.65$, $p < .001$, keyakinan diri dari segi rumah, $R^2 = .040$, $F(3, 334) = 4.58$, $p < .005$, keyakinan diri sekolah, $R^2 = .052$, $F(3, 334) = 6.15$, $p < .0005$ dan serta tahap berfungsi, $R^2 = .045$, $F(3, 334) = 5.25$, $p < .001$. Model regresi (menyusut) tidak menunjukkan sebarang kesan sampingan dari Cara mendidik anak-anak terhadap pencapaian akademik. Analisis regresi (menyusut) moderator telah digunakan untuk menguji kesan moderating ke atas status socioekonomi sesebuah keluarga dan seks serta umur remaja ke atas hubungan di antara environmen keluarga, cara mendidik anak-anak dan kesejahteraan remaja. Interaksi di antara faktor moderator ini dengan ketumbuhan FES faktor penyokong serta dimensi teratur serta cara mendidik anak-anak yang autoritatif, authoritarian dan permisif menunjukkan signifikan separa 2 subskala FES Faktor 2 dengan punca pendapatan menunjukkan signifikan untuk tahap berfungsi para remaja tetapi bukan untuk 2 cara menentukan kesejahteraan remaja yang lain. Punca pendapatan keluarga moderator bersangkut paut di antara autoritatif serta keyakinan diri remaja. Authoritarian ($\beta = -.55$) and permisif ($\beta = .57$) cara mendidik anak-anak adalah indicator yang terbaik untuk tahap pencapaian

akademik remaja dibandingkan dengan autoritatif serta interaksinya dengan punca pendapatan keluarga; authoritarian $t(338) = -2.53, p < .05$, permisif $t(338) = 2.01, p < .05$. Tahap pendidikan ibubapa serta pekerjaan yang *moderat* separa hubungan di antara pembolehubah yang diramal dengan pembolehubah *outcome*. Interaksi antara cara struktur keluarga dan cara mendidik anak-anak serta hubungannya dengan kesejahteraan remaja tidak signifikan. Bagi seks dan umur remaja, interaksinya dengan (pertumbuhan, menyokong, teratur) tidak signifikan. Walau bagaimanapun seks remaja telah separa *moderated* hubungan di antara cara mendidik anak-anak dan kesejahteraan remaja. Keseluruhannya, kajian ini membuktikan bahawa *validity* perspektif ekologi termasuk beberapa faktor yang menyumbang kepada hasil developmental remaja di Cameroon serta efek moderasi status ekonomi keluarga ke atas suasana keluarga, ibubapa mendidik anak-anak dan kesejahteraan remaja. Kajian-kajian selanjutnya patut mengandungi perspektif ibubapa dan remaja dalam asasi social dan ibubapa mendidik anak-anak dengan menggunakan penilaian hipotesis yang lebih ketat.

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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 5th April 2007 to conduct the final examination of Galy Mohamadou on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “The Relationship between Family Environment, Parenting Styles and Adolescents’ Well-being in Cameroon” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

GALY MOHAMADOU

Date:



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
DNP	Declaration of national Policy on Population
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
IEC	Information Education and Communication
FLE	Family Life Education
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
GTZ	Coopération Technique allemande
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
IRESKO	Institut de Recherche et des Etudes de Comportements
SES	Socioeconomic Status
ILO	International Labour Office
FES	Family Environment Scale
HSES	Hare Self-esteem Scale
PAQ	Parental Authority Questionnaire
GHQ	General Health Questionnaire
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
MRA	Moderator Regression Analysis
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
GPA	Grade Point Average

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of any human society, whether explicit or implicit is to provide the social and physical contexts, which maximally promote the physical, intellectual, and psychological well-being of its children. Concern for the welfare of children and adolescents is therefore, a priority for many societies. The human being as a universal creature is born, grows up and lives within a family. Therefore, the family is the first and universal institution of human society. The function of the family is the provision of affection and emotional support to all its members, particularly young children (“Cameroon” Encarta.msn, 2006). The parents’ role is to provide children with a safe, secure, nurturing, loving and supportive environment, and one that allows them to have a happy and healthy life. Through their behaviours, parents determine children’s development directly (encouraging their positive behaviours) and indirectly (displaying generosity and kindness towards others) (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2004). In this effort towards nurturing children, many parents hope and believe that they can help mould their children into well-adjusted adults who can control their impulses and express their emotions adequately and appropriately. They also aid children to be reliable and trustworthy and fulfil their obligations, duties and responsibilities in society. Finkenauer, Engels, & Baumeister (2005) have supported this view by reporting that young adults with low levels of problems (emotional and behavioural) perceived their parents to be emotionally supportive and low in psychological control.



An adolescent's social, physical and mental needs are met within the family that constitutes the core of the developmental context. Parents fulfil their responsibilities in meeting these needs through parenting which is a term that summarises usual behaviours employed by a person to raise a child, but does not exclusively refer to the mother or the father. In Cameroon, raising children is not the sole responsibility of the biological parents, rather it is a social and collective enterprise in which grand parents, and older siblings participate (Nsamenang, 2000). In addition, majority of Cameroonian children lives with rural peasant families or urban squatter settlements and these developmental niches are rich with people who interact on mutual support. In addition, the dominant family system prevalent in Cameroon is the extended family system, which provides a child with multiple adult figures who are expected to be involved in the childcare (Nsamenang, 2000) although preliminary empirical evidence on Cameroonian fathers indicates that they are significant to children, even when absent (Nsamenang, 1992). Adolescents in Cameroon live in different family structures (polygamous as opposed to monogamous family contexts), different family environment, and neighbourhoods that influence both the way parents interact with their children and, in turn, the behaviour that they demonstrate in response to such interactions.

In a situation of gradual social mutation where a basically integrated, intact society operates according to long-established cultural norms and social values within a social context, any modification of the context, whether in terms of goals or of the economic and social system, leads to produce gradual changes in childrearing practices (parenting styles) which could be perturbing either to the child or to the culture (Timyan, 1999). Adult's lifestyles are the result of previous environmental