



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR, PEER INFLUENCE,
SELF-CONTROL AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG ADOLESCENTS
IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA***

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FEM 2015 59



**RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR, PEER
INFLUENCE, SELF-CONTROL AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR
AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

By

PUNG PIT WAN

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

January 2015

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

**RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR, PEER INFLUENCE,
SELF-CONTROL AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG ADOLESCENTS
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January 2015

Chair : Siti Nor Binti Yaacob, PhD

Faculty : Human Ecology

Aggressive behaviour might lead to negative consequences for both of the victim and aggressor. Thus, the current study was conducted to determine the relationships between parental behaviour (paternal and maternal involvement, paternal and maternal positive parenting, paternal and maternal poor monitoring, paternal and maternal inconsistent discipline, paternal and maternal corporal punishment), peer influence, self-control and aggressive behaviour among adolescents in Selangor, Malaysia. This study also examined the mediating role of self-control on the relationship between parental behaviour and peer influence with adolescents' aggressive behaviour.

This is a quantitative non-experimental study utilizing correlational research design. The respondents of the study consisted of 413 adolescents from 12 selected secondary schools. They were 186 males and 227 females who were identified by Multistage Cluster Sampling Technique. Instruments used for data collection were Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (Shelton, Frick & Wootton, 1996), Peer Delinquency Scale (Loeber, Farrington, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Van Kammen, 1998), The Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) and Self-Control Scale (Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, & Arneklev, 1993). Descriptive, Pearson correlation test and multiple regression analysis were used in data analysis.

Pearson correlation analysis showed that the parental behaviour (paternal involvement, paternal positive parenting, paternal and maternal poor monitoring, paternal and maternal inconsistent discipline, paternal and maternal corporal punishment), peer influence and self-control were significantly correlated with aggressive behaviour. In addition, the parental behaviour (paternal involvement, paternal and maternal poor monitoring, paternal and maternal inconsistent discipline, paternal and maternal corporal punishment) and peer influence were significantly associated with self-control.

Multiple regression analysis showed that self-control, paternal corporal punishment, maternal educational level, paternal poor monitoring, paternal positive parenting, peer influence and respondent's gender predict adolescents'

aggressive behaviour. Self-control served as the strongest predictor in adolescents' aggressive behaviour. The present study also found that self-control fully mediated the relationship between paternal involvement, maternal corporal punishment, paternal inconsistent discipline, and peer influence with aggressive behaviour. Besides, self-control also partially mediated the relationship between paternal and maternal poor monitoring, paternal corporal punishment, and maternal inconsistent discipline with aggressive behaviour.

The findings of the present study highlighted the importance of parental behaviour, peer influence and self-control in terms of its contribution in aggressive behaviour among adolescents in Selangor, Malaysia. Parent should practise positive parenting in order to prevent adolescents from involving in aggressive behaviour. The issue of adolescents' aggressive behaviour also can be overcome by helping adolescents to develop self-control and be more assertive in refusing negative influence from peers.

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

**PERKAITAN ANTARA TINGKAH LAKU KEIBUBAAPAN, PENGARUH
RAKAN SEBAYA, KAWALAN KENDIRI DAN TINGKAH LAKU LANGSANG
DALAM KALANGAN REMAJA DI SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

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Tingkah laku langsung boleh membawa kepada kesan negatif kepada kedua-dua pihak iaitu mangsa dan pelaku. Oleh itu, kajian ini dijalankan untuk menentukan perkaitan antara tingkah laku keibubapaan (penglibatan ibu dan bapa, keibubapaan positif ibu dan bapa, pengawasan lemah ibu dan bapa, disiplin yang tidak konsisten ibu dan bapa, hukuman dera ibu dan bapa), pengaruh rakan sebaya, dan kawalan sendiri dengan tingkah laku langsung dalam kalangan remaja di Selangor, Malaysia. Kajian ini juga meneliti rol pengantara kawalan sendiri ke atas perkaitan antara tingkah laku keibubapaan dan pengaruh rakan sebaya dengan tingkah laku langsung dalam kalangan remaja.

Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan reka bentuk kajian korelasi. Responden kajian terdiri daripada 413 remaja daripada 12 buah sekolah menengah kebangsaan terpilih di Selangor. Mereka terdiri daripada 186 remaja lelaki dan 227 perempuan yang dikenal pasti melalui teknik persampelan kelompok pelbagai peringkat. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam kajian ini termasuk *Alabama Parenting Questionnaire* (Shelton, Frick & Wootton, 1996), *Peer Delinquency Scale* (Loeber, Farrington, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Van Kammen, 1998), *The Aggression Questionnaire* (Buss & Perry, 1992) dan *Self-Control Scale* (Grasmick, kabar, Bursik, & Arneklev, 1993). Statistik diskriptif, ujian korelasi Pearson dan analisis regresi berganda telah digunakan dalam analisis data.

Hasil ujian korelasi Pearson menunjukkan bahawa tingkah laku keibubapaan (penglibatan bapa, keibubapaan positif bapa, pengawasan lemah ibu dan bapa, disiplin tidak konsisten ibu dan bapa, hukuman dera ibu dan bapa), pengaruh rakan sebaya dan kawalan sendiri mempunyai perkaitan yang signifikan dengan tingkah laku langsung remaja. Di samping itu, tingkah laku keibubapaan (penglibatan bapa, pengawasan lemah ibu dan bapa, disiplin yang tidak konsisten ibu dan bapa, hukuman dera ibu dan bapa) dan pengaruh rakan sebaya mempunyai perkaitan signifikan dengan kawalan sendiri.

Analisis regresi berganda menunjukkan bahawa kawalan sendiri, hukuman dera bapa, tahap pendidikan ibu, pengawasan lemah bapa, keibubapaan positif bapa, pengaruh rakan sebaya dan jantina responden merupakan penyumbang signifikan terhadap tingkah laku langsung remaja. Faktor kawalan sendiri muncul sebagai penyumbang terkuat dalam tingkah laku langsung remaja. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa faktor kawalan sendiri menjadi pengantara penuh terhadap perkaitan antara penglibatan bapa, hukuman dera ibu, disiplin tidak konsisten bapa, dan pengaruh rakan sebaya dengan tingkah laku langsung. Selain itu, kawalan sendiri menjadi pengantara separa terhadap perkaitan antara pengawasan lemah ibu dan bapa, hukuman dera bapa, dan disiplin tidak konsisten ibu dengan tingkah laku langsung remaja.

Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan kepentingan pengaruh tingkah laku keibubapaan, rakan sebaya dan kawalan sendiri dari segi sumbangannya terhadap tingkah laku langsung remaja di Selangor, Malaysia. Ibu bapa patut mengamalkan keibubapaan positif untuk mencegah remaja daripada terlibat dalam tingkah laku langsung. Isu tingkah laku langsung remaja boleh diatasi dengan membantu remaja membina kawalan sendiri dan menjadi lebih tegas dalam menolak pengaruh negatif daripada rakan sebaya.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Siti Nor Binti Yaacob for the continuous support of my Ph.D study. She is patience, enthusiasm, and kind. Her guidance and suggestion helped me in writing of this thesis. I also express my grateful to my committee members, Prof. Dr. Rozumah Binti Baharudin and Dr. Syuhaily Binti Osman for their insightful comments throughout this study. Last but not the least, I would like to thank my parents and husband for supporting me to accomplish my dream.



I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 January 2015 to conduct the final examination of Pung Pit Wan on her thesis entitled "Relationships between Parental Behaviour, Peer Influence, Self-Control and Aggressive Behaviour among Adolescents in Selangor, Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the (insert the name of relevant degree).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. During this period, adolescents go through biological, cognitive and socio-emotional changes (Santrock, 2005). Maladaptation to those changes may lead to various behavioural problems including aggressive behaviour. Aggressive behaviour is seen as a substantial social problem in many societies, and it is one of the problems that adolescents may engage in (Vahedi, Fathiazar, Hosseini-Nasab, Moghaddam & Kiani, 2007). Most of the cases related to aggressive behaviour occur in school setting (Chapman, 2010; Sagayam & Wong, 2010; Veera Pandiyan, 2010). Instances of aggressive behaviour among adolescents include bullying, spreading rumours, hitting and hurting (Michaud, 2009; Sullivan, Farrell & Kliewer, 2006; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Behavioural perspective defines aggressive behaviour as an action that could deliver pain or discomfort to another organism (Shaffer, 2005). However, this definition fails to explain 'aggressive behaviour' accurately as the element of 'intention' should also be considered when defining this term (Shaffer, 2005). As such, aggressive behaviour can then be defined as 'any action that intends to harm or injure another living being who intends to avoid such treatment'. Since the term 'aggressive behaviour refers to behaviours that are intended to harm, accidental harms are not considered as aggressive behaviour (Shaffer, 2005).

The level of aggressive behaviour was found to be especially high during adolescence (Tremblay, Schaal, Boulerice, Arseneault, Soussignan, Paquette, & Laurent, 1998), and this may be due to the negative consequences of transitions experienced during adolescence. For instance, the transition from primary to secondary school may expose adolescents to various types of stress such as stress caused by academic demands, and adolescents may demonstrate their stress through aggressive acts.

The statistics shown by the Social Welfare Department of Malaysia (2013) indicates that from 2008 through 2013, the number of uncontrolled youth has increased and decreased inconsistently. From the year 2008 to 2011, the state of Selangor reported the highest case of uncontrolled youth compares to all other states. This is worrying as the behaviour of uncontrolled youths might lead to aggressive behaviour and crime (Social Welfare Department of Malaysia, 2010; Shortt, 2001). Generally, children become uncontrolled when parents are less concern about them and when they do not supervise their children's behaviour. The behaviours of uncontrolled youths include but not limited to hostility, violation of family rules, vandalism, threatening or harming others, and drug use (Cobalt, 2011; Crier, 2010; York County Nebraska, 2014).

The statistics also shows the trend in the involvement of adolescents in criminal activities in Malaysia. According to the Social Welfare Department of Malaysia (2013), the number of crimes involving juveniles has increased throughout 2009 to 2013. There were a total of 3,862 cases of crimes involving children and

youths in 2009. The total number of cases increased from 2009 to 2012 and decreased in 2013 (Table 1.2). Among the crimes committed include possession of weapons, flouting traffic rules, playing truant, being involved in criminal activities related to the property of others, gambling, substance abuse and trespassing prohibited areas.

Table 1.1 Uncontrolled cases of children and youth by states, 2008-2013

State	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Johor	107	80	80	97	107	58
Kedah	53	39	64	61	109	76
Kelantan	38	28	35	20	43	57
Melaka	52	44	52	38	34	12
Negeri Sembilan	43	30	35	31	17	17
Pahang	57	76	62	40	73	76
Perak	44	71	69	72	60	29
Perlis	12	16	15	27	11	13
Pulau Pinang	43	45	37	26	41	25
Sabah	1	47	39	22	57	44
Sarawak	2	18	55	0	106	102
Selangor	110	163	116	139	108	85
Terengganu	27	47	11	18	28	31
W.P Kuala Lumpur	20	9	24	21	9	10
W. P Labuan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	609	713	694	612	803	635

Source: Social Welfare Department of Malaysia, 2008-2013

Table 1.2 Criminal cases of children and youth involved by states, 2009-2013

State	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Johor	617	655	502	845	805
Kedah	311	440	1818	1,402	694
Kelantan	215	229	175	204	322
Melaka	196	191	208	312	297
Negeri Sembilan	181	214	176	316	293
Pahang	431	368	292	334	334
Perak	264	357	296	297	311
Perlis	158	92	117	202	170
Pulau Pinang	334	332	204	330	277
Sabah	113	269	256	435	440
Sarawak	28	216	294	120	412
Selangor	562	507	532	698	733
Terengganu	242	411	405	193	207
W.P Kuala Lumpur	192	158	257	300	268
W. P Labuan	18	6	15	30	21
Total	3862	4465	5547	6,018	5,584

Source: Social Welfare Department of Malaysia, 2009-2013

Aggressive behaviour among adolescents has become a serious problem that has gained the attention of those in the field of mental health, prevention experts, media and school authorities. Various studies (Proctor, 2006; Moretti, Obsuth, Odgers, & Reebye, 2006; Sheehan & Watson, 2008) conducted in exploring the negative impacts of aggressive behaviours found that aggressive behaviour among adolescents might lead to serious negative consequences both to the victims and the aggressors.

The negative consequences as a result of aggressive behaviour include physical injury, death, low emotional and cognitive well-being as well as social dysfunction (Chee-Leong, 2006). The victims might experience social rejection and isolation by their peers as peers might refrain from interacting with them to avoid being threatened by the aggressors. In addition, the victims may develop psychological and personality disorder (Chee-Leong, 2006). The negative consequences as a result of aggressive behaviour affect the aggressors as well. Majority of them are involved in vandalism, smoking, drinking and fighting (Olweus, 1993 as cited in Chee-Leong, 2006) which clearly violate school rules and regulations, resulting in the aggressors being terminated from school. They may also drop out from school.

Because of the negative impacts of aggressive behaviour on both the aggressors and victims, it is critical to identify the contributing factors of aggressive behaviour especially among adolescents. The contributing factors can be grouped into socio-environmental and personal factors (Rappaport & Thomas, 2004). Socio-environmental factors include the influences of parents, peers and schools while personal factors include the gender, physiological differences and social cognitive maturity. In line with this, the present study examines the contribution of socio-environmental (parental behaviour, peer influence) and personal (self-control) factors towards aggressive behaviours among adolescents.

Substantial evidence supports the link between parental behaviour and children's behaviour (Simons & Conger, 2007; Sheehan & Watson, 2008; Oka & Aslan, 2010). Aggressive children and adolescents were reported to have parents who exhibited less affection and tolerance, and high physical and emotional aggressions (Eldeleklioglu, 2007). In contrast, parents who constantly encouraged pro-social behaviours produced adolescents with low tendency to engage in risky behaviours (Rappaport & Thomas, 2004).

Throughout the adolescence period, the function and importance of peer group are crucial (Harris, 2000; Espelage, 2010). Peers become important for adolescents in socialising with the world outside home (Harris, 2000). However, negative peer influence could cause adolescents to behave in an aggressive way (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003; Padilla-Walker & Bean, 2009; Faris & Ennett, 2012). This is because adolescents would like to gain acceptance and appreciation from their peers. Thus, they would behave similar to their negative peers (Eldeleklioglu, 2007).

Self-control plays an important role in influencing the behaviours of children and adolescents. Past studies (Winstok, 2009; Johnson, 1995; Stuart, 2005) found that there was a significant association between low self-control and problematic behaviours among adolescents. It was found that adolescents with low self-control tended to be more aggressive. They were impulsive, risk seeking, and self-centred (Arneklev, Grasmick, Tittle & Bursik, 1993). They acted aggressively to achieve the desired goals through impulsivity, self-centredness and high temper (Winstok, 2009). Conversely, adolescents with high self-control were able to inhibit socially unacceptable thoughts and behaviours such as aggressive behaviour (Grottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). They preferred long term rewards than immediate gratification.

Past studies also found that personal factors in self-control could play as a mediating role between parental behaviour and peer influence with adolescents' problem behavior (Kim, Namkoong, Ku & Kim, 2008; Gibson, Schreck & Miller, 2004; Perrone, Sullivan, Pratt & Margaryan, 2004). Studies by Beaver, Ferguson, and Lynn-Whaley (2010), Buker (2011) and Winstok (2009) found that self-control mediates the relationship between parental behaviour and aggressive behaviour among adolescents. Quality parental behaviour can strengthen self-control capability of adolescents and indirectly reduce their aggressive behaviour (Finkenauer, Engels & Baumeister, 2005). Parents who monitor their children, recognise problems in the children's behaviour, and practice consistent discipline help adolescents to develop their ability for self-control (Grottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Furthermore, parental acceptance, involvement, closeness and warmth are found to be effective in improving self-control among adolescents (Buker, 2011).

Previous studies have examined the effects of peer influence on self-control and its indirect effects toward aggressive behaviour (Rawn & Vohs, 2011; Fox & Calkins, 2003). These studies indicated that peer group may influence adolescents' ability of control themselves. Adolescents may acquire low self-control through their interactions with the delinquent peer group, and thus, indirectly learn to behave in an aggressive manner. Through the support and acceptance from their delinquent peers, these negative behaviours will be strengthened.

The negative consequences of aggressive behaviours further enhance the importance of identifying the contributing factors to prevent the development of aggressive behaviour among adolescents. Therefore, the present study examined the relationships between parental behaviour (paternal and maternal involvement, paternal and maternal positive parenting, paternal and maternal poor monitoring, paternal and maternal inconsistent discipline, paternal and maternal corporal punishment), peer influence and aggressive behaviour among adolescents. In addition, this study also examined the mediating role of self-control on the relationship between parental behaviour and peer influence with aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

1.2 The Statement of Problem

Cases such as bullying, gangsterism, vandalism, threatening behaviour and fighting are spreading in many societies including in Malaysia (Ok & Aslan, 2010; Farrell & Sullivan, 2004; Reitz, Prinzie, Dekovic, & Buist, 2007; Lee, Chen, & Lee, 2007; Lee, Abdullah, Eliasa, & Uli, 2010). Many cases of aggressive behaviours among adolescents have been recorded in the country such as the case involving a 16-year-old who died after being bullied and physically abused by a 17-year-old adolescent in a camp at the Royal Military College (RMC), Sungai Besi (Veera Pandiyan, 2010). In another case in Rawang, students from a secondary school formed a gang to skip class and loiter, bully other students in the school, and engage in vandalism. (Chapman, 2010; Sagayam & Pek-Mei, 2010). In addition, statistic related to crime among youths shows a 30.8% increase from the year 2009 to 2013. These figures may indicate that children and adolescents are becoming more aggressive.

This issue needs to be addressed since it may lead to negative consequences towards the victims, aggressors and the society. Victims may develop low self-esteem, express their anger and emotion by bullying others, become helpless, show poor academic performance and bleak future career, and experience social rejection (Chee-Leong, 2006). The worst consequence could mean the death of the victims. In short, aggressive behaviours cause harm to individual development and relationship processes (Benson & Buehler, 2012).

The present study examines the contribution of parental behaviour (parental involvement, poor monitoring, positive parenting, inconsistent discipline, corporal punishment), peer influence and self-control on aggressive behaviour among adolescents. Parental behaviour and peer influence are related to misbehaviours among adolescents (Beaver, Ferguson, & Lynn-Whaley, 2010; Perrone, Sullivan, Pratt, & Margaryan, 2004; Yahav, 2006; Lynne, Graber, Nichols, Brooks-Gunn, & Botvin, 2007; Espelage, Holt & Henkel, 2003; Padilla-Walker & Bean, 2009). The support and involvement of parents in adolescents' lives apparently are related to lesser delinquent and aggressive behaviour among adolescents (Kemp; Overbeek, Wied, Engels, & Scholte, 2007). Peer influence was also noted to have a major impact on the development of adolescents (Deptula & Cohen, 2004). Negative peer influence increases production of aggressive solutions among adolescents. As these adolescents learn to value aggressive solutions positively, they will behave aggressively. Self-control has been associated with aggressive behaviour (Ezinga, Weerman, Westenberg & Bijleveld, 2008; Winstok, 2009; Kim, Namkoong, Ku, & Kim, 2008). Having a high self-control is seen to reduce the probability for adolescents to act aggressively. In short, self-control serves as a mechanism that inhibits formation of negative behaviour as it assists people to resist temptations (Ezinga, Weerman, Westenberg & Bijleveld, 2008). On the other hand, those with low self-control tend to be impulsive, are pleasure seekers, show temper, prefer simpler tasks, engage in risky activities and are self-centred. These are the characteristics that may lead to aggressive behaviour.

The study on aggressive behaviour is common in the western countries. In fact, a lot of related studies have been conducted (Megens and Weerman, 2012; Meldrum, Young, & Weerman, 2012; Gault-Sherman, 2011; Beaver, Ferguson & Lynn-Whaley, 2010; Benson, Buehler, & Gerard, 2008). In Malaysia, however, studies on this area are still scarce. Based on online databases (Springerlink, EBSCOhost Academic Collections, Science Direct, SAGES Journal Online, Malaysian Online Databases, and Google scholar) between the year 2001 and 2014, there have been few studies and article reviews related to the documentation of aggressive behaviour among adolescents in Malaysia. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of study that combines parental behaviour, peer influence and self-control together in the examination of their influences on aggressive behaviours among adolescents.

As mentioned earlier, there have been limited studies done locally to identify the variables relating to aggressive behaviours. Parental behaviour may influence the findings pertaining to the aggressive behaviours among adolescents. The present study examined both the paternal and maternal parental behaviours separately. This will provide more accurate information on the role of fathers and mothers respectively rather than assessing parental behaviour as a whole

(Perrone, Sullivan, Pratt, & Margaryan, 2004; Orpinas, Murray, & Kelder, 1999; Borawski, levers-Landis, Lovegreen, & Trapl, 2003).

The present study also examined self-control as the mediator between parental behaviour and peer influence with aggressive behaviours among adolescents. The role of self-control as a mediator on the relationship between parental behaviour and peer influence with aggressive behaviour illustrates that parental behaviour and peer groups influence aggressive behaviour through self-control (Finkenauer, Engels & Baumeister, 2005; Griffin, Scheier, Botvin, Diaz, & Miller, 1999; Rawn & Steinberg, 2005). According to the Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory, positive parental behaviour such as high parental involvement and consistent discipline enhance adolescents' ability for self-control and in turn, prevent the formation of aggressive behaviour. According to Meldrum, Young, and Weerman (2012), negative peer influence causes low self-control among adolescents. Association with delinquent peers inhibit adolescents from developing the ability for self-control and eventually, they tend to be more engaged in aggressive behaviours. This study fills the literature gap in this area and provides valuable evidence on the role of parents, peers and personal factors in aggressive behaviours among adolescents in Malaysia.

The problems stated above clearly indicate the importance of examining the contribution of socio-environmental and personal factors on aggressive behaviours among adolescents. In addition, the present study also determines the mediating role of self-control on the relationships between parental behaviour and peer influence with aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

More specifically, the current study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the unique predictors (parental behaviour, peer influence, self-control) of aggressive behaviour among adolescents?
2. To what extent does self-control mediate the relationship between parental behaviour and aggressive behaviour among adolescents?
3. To what extent does self-control mediate the relationship between peer influence and aggressive behaviour among adolescents?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of the present study is to examine the relationships between parental behaviour, peer influence, self-control and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

Based on the general objective, the specific objectives of the present study are stated as follows:

1. To describe the background of the adolescents and their families, and the key variables of the present study (paternal and maternal

2. involvement, positive parenting, poor monitoring, inconsistent discipline, corporal punishment, peer influence, self-control and aggressive behaviour).
3. To determine the unique predictors (parental behaviour, peer influence, self-control) of aggressive behaviour among adolescents.
4. To determine the mediating effect of self-control on the relationship between parental behaviour and peer influence with aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

1.4 Hypotheses

In line with the specific objectives 2 and 3, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Objective 2: To determine the unique predictors (parental behaviour, peer influence, self-control) of aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 1: All the selected independent variables (parental behaviour, peer influence, self-control) significantly predict aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Objective 3: To determine the mediating effect of self-control on the relationship between parental behaviour and peer influence with aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 2: Self-control mediates the relationship between paternal involvement and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 3: Self-control mediates the relationship between maternal involvement and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 4: Self-control mediates the relationship between paternal positive parenting and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 5: Self-control mediates the relationship between maternal positive parenting and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 6: Self-control mediates the relationship between paternal poor monitoring and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 7: Self-control mediates the relationship between maternal poor monitoring and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 8: Self-control mediates the relationship between between paternal corporal punishment and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 9: Self-control mediates the relationship between maternal corporal punishment and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 10: Self-control mediates the relationship between paternal inconsistent discipline and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 11: Self-control mediates the relationship between maternal inconsistent discipline and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

Ha 12: Self-control mediates the relationship between peer influence and aggressive behaviour among adolescents.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study is significant in term of both knowledge and practical contributions. The findings of the present study may represent the issue at the

local setting and the extent to which it can be generalise to other settings. As there is limited documented study on the aggressive behaviour among adolescents in Malaysia, this study aimed to provide more information on this field. The outcome of the study may contribute to the prevention and intervention programme of aggressive behaviours.

First of all, this study identified the factors that are related to the aggressive behaviour among adolescents. Identifying the contributing factors will help the society in general to have a more in-depth understanding on the issue. The findings of the present study may explain how parental behaviour, peer influence and self-control affect aggressive behaviour among adolescents in Malaysia.

This study also expanded on past research by including self-control as an important mediating factor. Fundamental factors contributing to aggressive behaviours must be identified. However, the 'process' of the occurrence of issue is also important to be examined. Findings of the present study explain how the contributing factors (parental behaviour and peer influence) influence adolescents' self-control and indirectly affect on adolescents' aggressive behaviour.

The finding of this study is expected to enhance existing knowledge in the area and to serve as a basis for a more comprehensive study in the future. Subsequent study can be carried out in the future to identify other significant factors which could contribute to aggressive behaviours among adolescents and involve different groups of participation in the study.

As for the practical contribution, the findings can be a source of input for the development and improvement of policy and programmes for positive adolescent development. First, the findings can benefit those who are working with adolescents with problematic behaviours such as psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors and school teachers. Besides benefiting experts in the field, the findings are also important to help parents to better understand their children. Thus, the findings of this study could provide useful information to the experts in order to improve related parenting programmes and policies aimed at enhancing parenting skills in order to prevent adolescents from forming problematic behaviours.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Aggressive Behaviour

Conceptual : Aggressive behaviour is defined as an intentional act and potential harm committed by an individual who is in an aroused physical state, and the act that they performed is perceived as aversive by the victim as well (Buss & Perry, 1992).

Operational : Aggressive behaviour refers to the respondents' scores on the Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992). Higher score means higher aggressive behaviour adopted by the respondents.

1.6.2 Parental Behaviour:

Conceptual : Parental behaviour is the specific behaviour of parents aimed to socialise children to achieve specific goals (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Operational : Parental behaviour refers to the respondents' scores on the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ- Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996). There are four subscales of APQ, which are parental involvement, parental positive parenting, parental corporal punishment, parental inconsistent discipline, and parental poor monitoring. High score on each subscale of parental behaviour indicates a high level of behaviour in that particular subscale.

Parental Involvement:

Conceptual : Parental involvement is defined as parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children (Jeynes, 2005). Parental involvement includes home-based and school-based involvement.

Operational : Parental involvement refers to the respondents' scores on the parental involvement subscale of Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ- Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996). A high score on the subscale of parental involvement indicates a high level of parental involvement.

Parental Positive Parenting

Conceptual : Parental positive parenting is defined as the parental acts or behaviours that are warmth, sensitive, and responsive to their child (Kawabata, Alink, Tseng, IJzendoorn, & Crick, 2011).

Operational : Parental positive parenting refers to the respondents' scores on the parental positive parenting subscale of Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ- Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996). A high score on the positive parenting subscale indicates a high level of parental positive parenting.

Parental Corporal Punishment

Conceptual : Parental corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force towards an individual for the purpose of control or correction, and as a disciplinary penalty inflicted on the body with the intention of causing some degree of pain or discomfort, however mild (Cashmore & de Haas, 1995 as cited in Holzer & Lamont, 2010). This type of punishment includes hitting, smacking, spanking and belting.

Operational : Parental corporal punishment refers to respondents' scores on the parental corporal punishment subscale of Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ- Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996). A high score on the subscale of parental corporal punishment indicates a high level of parental corporal punishment.

Parental Inconsistent Discipline

Conceptual : Parental inconsistent discipline refers to the unpredictable punishment from parents toward similar child misbehaviours or parent terminates discipline due to lack of energy to response to the child's behaviour (Wojnaroski, 2011).

Operational : Parental behaviour refers to the respondents' scores on the parental inconsistent discipline subscale of Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ- Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996). A high score on the inconsistent discipline subscale indicates a high level of parental inconsistent discipline.

Parental Poor Monitoring

Conceptual : Parental monitoring refers to the initiation of conversations by parents about their children activities and friends (Laird, Pettit, Mize, Brown, & Lindsey, 1994) and the enforcement of a set of rules about where their children may go and with whom they may spend time (Snyder & Patterson, 1987).

Operational : Parental poor monitoring refers to respondents' scores on the parental poor monitoring subscale of Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ- Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996). A high score on this subscale indicates a high level of poor monitoring in parents on their child.

1.6.3 Peer Influence:

Conceptual : Peer influence is defined as having two or more persons who are operating the similar levels of behavioural complexity (Shaffer, 2005). Peer fosters attitudes and beliefs that promote similar behaviour on others, as well as provide opportunities for others to learn and practice these new behaviours (Akers, Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce, & Radosevich, 1979).

Operational : Peer influence refers to respondents' scores on the Peer Delinquency Scale (PDS- Loeber, Farrington, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Van Kammen, 1998). A high score of PDS means that respondents experienced a higher negative peer influence.

1.6.4 Self-control:

Conceptual : Self-control is defined as the capability of a person to override and inhibit socially unacceptable and undesirable impulse, alter and regulate his or her thoughts, behaviours and emotions (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994; Carver & Scheier, 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

Operational : Self-control refers to respondents' scores on the Self-Control Scale (Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, & Arneklev, 1993). The higher the score means the lower is the respondents' self-control.

1.6.5 Adolescent:

Conceptual : A person in the age range of 10-19 (World Health Organisation).

Operational : In the present study, adolescent refers to school-going adolescents aged between 13 and 17 years old.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1973), Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (1979), Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory (1990), and a model by Meldrum, Young and Weerman (2012) were used to explain the rationale of the current study. These theories and perspectives are discussed in relation to aggressive behaviours among adolescents.

1.7.1 Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1973)

Bandura's social learning theory is the first theory to stress cognitive influences on aggression. It also seeks to explain how aggressive behaviours are acquired and maintained (Shaffer, 2005). In short, aggressive behaviour is initially learned from social behaviour, and it is maintained in several ways.

Aggressive behaviour is acquired in two ways: observational learning and direct experience. People learn aggressive behaviour through observation. For instance, adolescents may learn aggressive behaviour after observing the parents carrying out physical punishment on their siblings (Dugan, 2004). Next, aggressive behaviour can also be learned through direct experience. People discover that aggressive behaviour is an effective way to achieve their goals. For instance, an adolescent learns that he can easily take a classmate's belonging simply by overpowering the person.

Aggressive behaviours are maintained if the aggressor values the outcome of negative behaviours. They are confident that aggressive behaviours yield reward and effectively end others' noxious behaviour (Bandura, 1973). Adolescents who exhibit aggressive behaviours may experience the possibility of being rejected by their peers. Therefore, they tend to cluster together in a negative peer group that reinforces further their aggressive behaviours.

The influence of parental behaviour on aggressive behaviours among adolescents can be explained by the Social Learning theory. According to this theory, family context is the most important factor in learning aggressive behaviours (Gavazzi, 2011). Adolescents might learn aggressive behaviours by observing their parents' behaviours. For instance, parents who employ coercive tactics make the children and adolescents learn how to use aggressive behaviours to avoid compliance (Gavazzi, 2011). Aggressive behaviours among adolescents may also be maintained due to parents' permission, resulting in adolescents valuing these negative behaviours as having a positive outcome. According to the integrative function of the Social Learning theory, aggressive behaviours among adolescents can be decreased through parental behaviour such as the employment of consistent discipline and well-monitoring (Rowe, Gomez, & Liddle, 2006).

In addition, adolescents observe and learn the behaviour of their delinquent peers at school. When the aggressive behaviour is seldom punished by a teacher, adolescents may perceive this behaviour as powerful and popular.

Through the friendly and permission of peers and teacher, adolescents' aggressive behaviour is reinforced (Prati, 2012, Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2003).

1.7.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (1979)

The Ecological System Theory emphasises the environmental factors in understanding human behaviour. This theory proposes five environmental systems to explain the development of children and adolescents: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Santrock, MacKenzie-Rivers, Leung & Malcomson, 2003).

Microsystem is the direct layer that children interact with their environment. The most direct social agents that interact with the child are family members, peers, school and neighbours (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Bronfenbrenner, & Devereux, 1961; Santrock, MacKenzie-Rivers, Leung & Malcomson, 2003). Microsystem in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System theory helps explain how parents and peers influence aggressive behaviours among adolescents.

Family is the most important factor that could influence the development of adolescents. The interaction between parents and children may promote or reduce negative behaviours among adolescents. Parental supports, encouragements and conversations were found to have a negative relationship with aggressive behaviours among adolescents (Foney & Cunningham, 2002; Rozumah, Rumaya, SitiNor, Abdullah Al-Hadi, & Rojanah, 2002).

Parental involvement and positive parental behaviours were also found to be factors that could prevent adolescents from engaging in aggressive behaviours (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). According to Bronfenbrenner (1995), the parents' belief system is considered as a maintainer of reciprocal interaction with the children, and the values of the belief system area potent force in influencing the child's future development. This is because supportive parents are more likely to behave in a positive way as they listen to the problems faced by their children, and they teach them about self-discipline and moral behaviours (Foney & Cunningham, 2002). These types of parents also explain the importance of rules to their children in order to help them learn from their own mistakes. According to Foney and Cunningham (2002), parents who practise positive parenting always show concern and transfer positive values to their children. These positive parenting styles may successfully build a quality relationship between the parents and adolescents which in turn helps to prevent aggressive behaviours.

During adolescence, the peer microsystem becomes an important factor in influencing the psychological and behavioural development of adolescents (Luster & Oh, 2001). Peers act as an information source to help adolescents compare the world outside of their family environment (Santrock, 2011). Adolescents with supportive friends gain advantage to their own development as they learn to listen, communicate and show enthusiasm to others (Santrock, 2011). Conversely, those who associated with negative peers display a higher tendency to act aggressively (Luster & Oh, 2001; Foney & Cunningham, 2002; Muuss, 2006). This is because adolescents tend to behave similar to their peers

in order to gain social rewards such as social status, prestige, friendship, popularity and friendship acceptance (Muuss, 2006), and this indicates the important role that peer influence plays on the behaviour of adolescents.

1.7.3 Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory (1990)

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) developed the Self-Control Theory to explain how people get involved in negative behaviour. According to this theory, the concept of self-control is important in explaining problem behaviour. The term 'problem behaviour' refers to crime related behaviours, deviance and violent behaviour.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) proposed that people with low self-control are unable to delay gratification as they are focused on the present. They act impulsively to get what they want immediately and do not consider the consequences of their behaviour. Thus, they will easily get involved in problem behaviour. Adolescents with low self-control also tend to involve in active physical activities and constantly seek excitement. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), people with low self-control are self-centred, insensitive to the needs of others and might bring injury to others, and prefer easy and simple task in gaining gratification. They added that people with low self-control are easy to engage in crime and problem behaviour.

Self-control is not an innate trait. It can be learned from others. Since childhood, infants and toddler are self-centred, impulsive and seek immediate gratification. However, as the infant and child grow up, they may able to control their impulsive thinking and behaviour. This indicates that the ability of self-control can be trained and practised (Simons, Simons & Wallace, 2005).

The Self-Control Theory identifies parents as a crucial factor in influencing a child's self-control. According to the theory, there are three important parental elements that help develop children's self-control ability. These three elements are monitoring of children's behaviour, recognising children's deviant behaviour, and punishing children consistently if they behave defiantly. Parents may recognise aggressive behaviours among adolescents by monitoring their daily activities and behaviours. Then, an effective punishment should be implemented to adolescents who act aggressively. However, punishment which is considered as being too harsh is not encouraged. In addition, the punishment or disciplinary action taken on these adolescents should be consistent as adolescents who are exposed to consistent discipline, are more able to control their own thinking and behaviour. Gradually, they become more supportive to others by controlling their own self-interest and negative expression of emotions. Most of the time, they would follow the rules instead of violating them. In conclusion, self-control prevents adolescents from engaging in aggressive behaviours.

1.7.4 Meldrum, Young and Weerman (2012)

Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control theory (1990) proposed that peer influence has no effect on self-control (as cited in Meldrum, Young & Weerman, 2012). Meldrum, Young and Weerman (2012) contended this proposition, and they supported the notion that peer influence has a significant and direct effect

on self-control among adolescents. The study conducted by Meldrum, Young and Weerman (2012) showed that peer influence shaped self-control among adolescents. Peers act as a socialising agent in the adolescents' friendship network, and adolescents view peers' behaviour as a model on how they should think and behave. As such, negative attitudes and behaviours learned by adolescents may cause them to exhibit low self-control while positive peer influence leads to high self-control in adolescents.

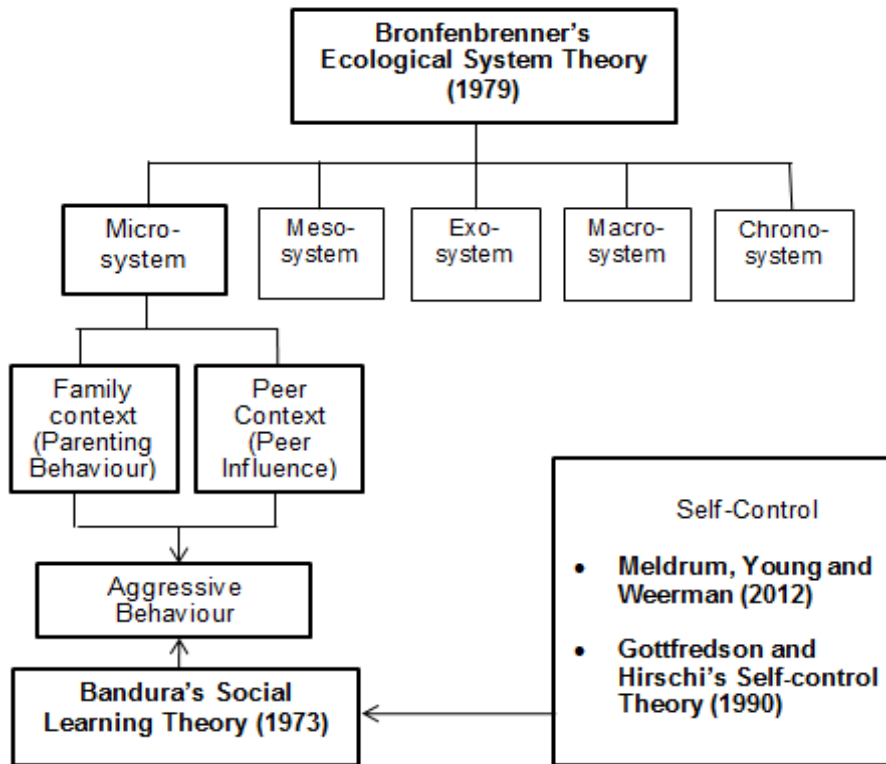


Figure 1.1. Theoretical Frameworks for Study

1.7.5 Integration of Theories

The current study engages and integrates all four theories in describing how parental behaviour, peer influence and self-control influence aggressive behaviours among adolescents (Figure 1.1). The Bandura's Social Learning Theory is used to discuss how aggressive behaviour was acquired and maintained through the social behaviours of others. The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory is used to discuss the importance of positive parental behaviour on the future development of children and adolescents. This theory also suggests that peer influence is a dominant factor in the behavioural development of adolescents (Bandura, 1973 in Foney, & Cunningham, 2002). However, as this theory does not focus on self-control, the elements mentioned

by the Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory is adopted to complement Bronfenbrenner's idea on behavioural development of adolescents.

Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory highlights how self-control contributes to aggressive behaviours among adolescents. According to this theory, the presence of negative behaviours such as aggressive behaviour, delinquency and crimes are due to low self-control. This theory also emphasises how self-control mediates the relationship between parental behaviour and aggressive behaviour among adolescents. According to this theory, parental behaviour is found to be significantly linked to self-control and indirectly contributed to aggressive behaviours among adolescents (Gibbs, Dennis, & Jamie, 1998; Hay, 2001; Finkenauer, Engels, & Baumeister, 2005; Kort-Butler, Tyler, & Melander, 2011).

Meldrum, Young and Weerman (2012) demonstrated that peer influence had a direct contribution on self-control among adolescents while the Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory emphasises on how self-control leads to aggressive behaviour among adolescents. These two theories are integrated in the present study to form a framework of 'self-control mediates the relationship between peer influence and aggressive behaviours among adolescents'. This framework explains that peer influences self-control and indirectly contributes to aggressive behaviours among adolescents. Past studies (Griffin, Scheier, Botvin, Diaz, & Miller, 1999; Fox & Calkins, 2003; Rawn & Steinberg, 2005) also showed that peer influence and aggressive behaviours were mediated by self-control.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.2 presents the conceptual framework of the study entitled "Relationships between parental behaviour, peer influence, self-control and aggressive behaviours among adolescents in Selangor". This conceptual framework was developed based on the Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1973), Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (1979), Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory (1990) and, Meldrum, Young and Weerman's (2012) model. The independent variables in the present study are parental behaviour (paternal and maternal involvement, paternal and maternal positive parenting, paternal and maternal poor monitoring, paternal and maternal inconsistent discipline, paternal and maternal corporal punishment) and peer influence. The dependent variable is aggressive behaviours among adolescents. The role of self-control as a mediator in the relationship between parental behaviour and aggressive behaviour, and in the relationship between peer influence and aggressive behaviour will be determined in this study.

The Social Learning Theory proposes that aggressive behaviours among adolescents are learned and reinforced from others such as the parents, peers, teachers and neighbours. On the other hand, Ecological System Theory (1979) states that parental behaviour (parental involvement, parental positive parenting, parental poor monitoring, parental inconsistent discipline, and parental corporal punishment) prevents aggressive behaviours among adolescents. According to this theory, adolescents who have high involvements with their parents tend to be more prosocial and considerate towards others while adolescents with poor

parental monitoring, inconsistent discipline and are subjected to corporal punishment, are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviours. Parents' lack of concern on the daily activities and behaviours of adolescents may cause these adolescents to develop problem behaviours. In addition, inconsistent disciplinary practices by parents may not be effective in reducing aggressive behaviours among adolescents. This is due to the adolescents' inability to differentiate acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. They may view corporal punishment as a model, and thus, develop aggressive behaviours.

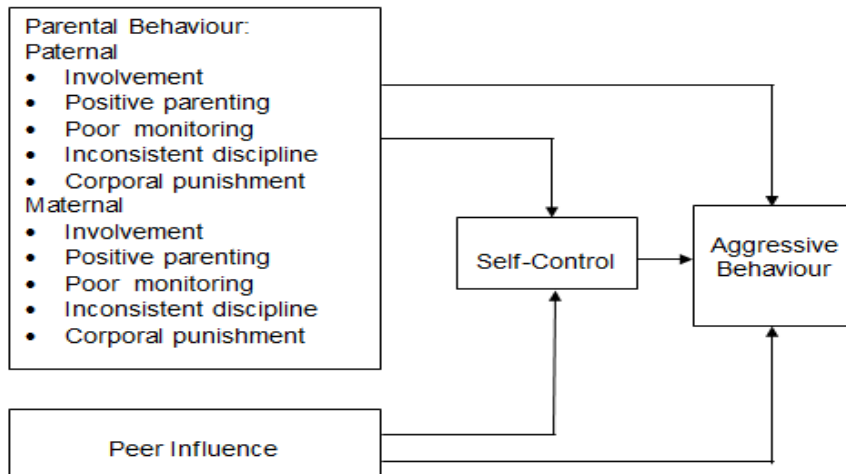


Figure 1.2. Conceptual Framework for a Study on “Relationships between Parental Behaviour, Peer Influence, Self-Control and Aggressive Behaviour among Adolescents in Selangor, Malaysia.”

According to the Ecological System Theory, peers have a direct influence on aggressive behaviours among adolescents as they play a very important role in the adolescents' social world. Thus, in order to gain peer conformity, adolescents tend to imitate the behaviour of their peers (Santrock, 2005; Frick, Cornell, Bodin, Dane, Barry, & Loney, 2003).

Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory (1990) emphasises on the role of self-control in aggressive behaviours. Low self-control appears to be significantly related to certain delinquencies such as aggressive behaviours among adolescents (Chapple, 2005; Polakowski, 1994). This theory basically states that people with low self-control are more likely to adopt certain characteristics: impulsivity, risk seeking tendency, temper, preference for simple tasks, tendency to engage in risky activities and being self-centred. These are the characteristics that have been identified to generate aggressive behaviours (Barlow, 1991; Grasmick, Title, & Bursik, 1993).

Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory (1990) also highlights that parental behaviour enhances self-control and indirectly reduces aggressive behaviours among adolescents (Perrone, Sullivan, Pratt, & Margaryan, 2004). Previous study by Gibbs, Giever, & Higgins (2003), Benda (2002), and

Polakowski (1994) examined the family's indirect effects through self-control on crime and negative behaviours. In line with Hirschi (2004), it described that poor parental supervision, lack of discipline and lack of affection as factors that help to predict offending behaviours of children who did not exhibit self-control (as cited in Vazsonyi & Belliston, 2007).

The framework of 'self-control mediates the relationship between peer influence and aggressive behaviours among adolescents' is formed in the present study, and it aims to examine the indirect contribution of peer influence on aggressive behaviours among adolescents through self-control. Meldrum, Young, and Weerman (2012) outlined that peer factor is as influential as the parents. Since school-going adolescents spend most of their time at school, peers serve as an important social agent for them. Consequently, peer thinking and behaviours would undoubtedly influence the self-control of these adolescents. Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-Control Theory claimed that the self-control factor is the dominant factor in influencing aggressive behaviours among adolescents. Having a high capability of self-control prevents adolescents from thinking and behaving impulsively. Thus, it prevents adolescents from getting involved in aggressive behaviours (Gottfredson and Hirschi's, 1990; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004; Buker, 2011).

1.9 Limitations of Study

There are a few limitations in the present study. First, this study is limited to secondary school students aged between 13 and 17 years old. Thus, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other population such as children and adults. Second, data in the study were collected using self-report questionnaires. Due to the number of questions asked in the questionnaire, some respondents lost interest in completing the questionnaires, and this has an influence on the findings of the study. Third, the present study studied only a specific number of contributing factors on aggressive behaviours. As the nature of aggressive behaviours is complicated, it is suggested that future research focus on other factors such as stress, coping skills, personality and school of the adolescents. Finally, the present study is a cross-sectional study. Data were collected in one-point time; therefore, the findings are less applicable compared to a longitudinal study.

1.10 Summary

First of all, this chapter provides background introduction to aggressive behaviour among adolescents by highlighting the negative consequences of aggressive behaviours and the importance of identifying the factors contributing to aggressive behaviours. It then discusses the statement of problem as well as stating the objectives and hypotheses of the present study. This is followed by the discussion on the significance of study in both knowledge and practical contributions. It also outlines the definition of each examined variables. This study was supported by the Social Learning Theory, Ecological System Theory, Self-Control Theory, and model by Meldrum, Young and Weerman (2012). The conceptual framework is then discussed and finally, this chapter lists out the limitations of the study.

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