



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MATERNAL BEHAVIOR, MATERNAL ATTACHMENT, ACCULTURATION, LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG IRANIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

SARA HASHEMPOUR

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By

SARA HASHEMPOUR

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

December 2016

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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 MATERNAL BEHAVIORS, MATERNAL ATTACHMENT, ACCULTURATION, LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG IRANIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

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December 2016

Chairman : Associate Professor Mariani Bte Mansor, PhD
Faculty : Human Ecology

In recent decades, social anxiety among children has become considerably more common phenomenon in behavioural science research. Numerous studies have investigated the underlying factors of social anxiety among children. Nonetheless, very few researches have focused on this problem among immigrants' children. This study examined the effect of maternal behaviours (support, behavioural control, and psychological control) and maternal attachments on child social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. The study also examined the mediating role of locus of control in the relationships between maternal behaviours and maternal attachment with social anxiety. As this study is among Iranian children who came temporarily to foreign country, acculturation of these children in new country as well as background information such as age, gender, number of sibling and length of stay in Malaysia have been considered.

This study is a quantitative study on 227 female and male primary school children aged between 9 and 12 years old selected through systematic random sampling technique. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire such as Child Report of Parenting Behavior Inventory (CRPBI-30), by Schludermann and Schludermann (1988), Parent and Peer Attachment-Revised IPPA-R (Gullone & Robinson, 2005), Children's Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, by Nowicki & Strickland (1973), the Social Anxiety Scale for Children - Revised (SASC-R) (La Greca & Stone, 1993) and Iranian (Persian) Self Identity Scale by Khanideh (2007). All the instruments used in this study were highly reliable. Descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, and regression analysis were conducted; while the mediating effect was estimated using Barron and Kenny (1986) approach.

The result of independent sample t-test showed that female respondents demonstrated higher social anxiety than male. The result of multiple linear regression analysis showed

that almost all variables in regression model, except maternal support were significant predictor of social anxiety. The result also showed that, locus of control partially mediated the relationships between maternal behavioural control, maternal psychological control and maternal attachment with social anxiety. However, the relationship between maternal support and social anxiety was not mediated by locus of control.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study revealed the importance of mothers in enhancing locus of control and preventing social anxiety of primary school children in Malaysia. The nature of relationships between independent variables and social anxiety implied that social anxiety is prevalent among children abroad. Reasonable control and secure attachment may have a significant effect on child's locus of control and reducing their social anxiety.

The finding of this study can help mothers to monitor their own behaviors while living abroad in order to enhance the quality of their children's life. Also, the present results have significant recommendation for future research and practice. However, this study is limited to primary school children in Malaysia, aged between 9 and 12 years old. Thus, the researcher recommends further study in other region and difference age group to enhance the generalizability.

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

**HUBUNGAN ANTARA TINGKAH LAKU IBU, KEAKRABAN IBU,
PEMBUDAYAAN, LOKUS KAWALAN DAN KEBIMBANGAN SOSIAL DI
KALANGAN KANAK-KANAK SEKOLAH RENDAH WARGA IRAN DI
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

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Dalam dekad kebelakangan ini, kebimbangan sosial dalam kalangan kanak-kanak merupakan fenomena yang biasa dalam penyelidikan sains tingkah laku. Banyak kajian telah dibuat untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor kebimbangan sosial dalam kalangan kanak-kanak. Namun, sangat sedikit kajian telah memberi tumpuan kepada masalah ini dalam kalangan kanak-kanak warga asing. Kajian ini mengkaji kesan tingkah laku ibu (sokongan, kawalan tingkah laku, dan kawalan psikologi) dan perapatan ibu keatas kebimbangan sosial dalam kalangan kanak-kanak Iran di sekolah rendah di Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Kajian ini juga mengkaji peranan pengantara lokus kawalan dalam hubungan antara tingkah laku dan perapatan ibu dengan kebimbangan sosial. Oleh kerana kajian ini dibuat dalam kalangan kanak-kanak Iran yang datang sementara ke negara asing, faktor alkaturasi kanak-kanak di negara baru serta maklumat latar belakang seperti umur, jantina, bilangan adik-beradik dan tempoh penginapan di Malaysia telah dipertimbangkan.

Kajian ini merupakan kajian kuantitatif keatas 227 kanak-kanak perempuan dan lelaki rendah berusia antara 9 dan 12 tahun berdasarkan teknik persampelan rawak sistematik. Data dikumpul melalui borang soal selidik yang ditadbir sendiri seperti *Child Report of Parenting Behavior Inventory* (CRPBI-30), by Schludermann and Schludermann (1988), *Parent and Peer Attachment-Revised IPPA-R* (Gullone & Robinson, 2005), *Children's Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Locus of Control Scale*, by Nowicki & Strickland (1973), *the Social Anxiety Scale for Children - Revised* (SASC-R) (La Greca & Stone, 1993) and *Iranian (Persian) Self Identity Scale* by Khanideh (2007). Semua instrumen yang digunakan dalam kajian ini mempunyai nilai Cronbach yang baik. Statistik deskriptif, sampel ujian-t bebas, dan analisis regresi telah dijalankan; manakala kesan pengantara telah menggunakan pendekatan Barron dan Kenny (1986).

Hasil sampel ujian-t bebas menunjukkan bahawa responden perempuan menunjukkan tahap kebimbangan sosial yang lebih tinggi daripada lelaki. Hasil analisis regresi linear menunjukkan bahawa hampir semua pembolehubah dalam model regresi tersebut kecuali sokongan ibu, adalah peramal yang signifikan kebimbangan sosial. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa, lokus kawalan merupakan pengantara bagi hubungan kawalan tingkah laku ibu dan kawalan psikologi ibu dan perapatan ibu dengan kebimbangan sosial. Namun perkaitan di antara sokongan ibu dan kebimbangan social tidak dipengaruhi faktor lokus kawalan.

Kesimpulannya, dapatan kajian ini mendedahkan kepentingan ibu dalam meningkatkan lokus kawalan dan mencegah kebimbangan sosial kanak-kanak ibu dalam sekolah rendah Iran di Malaysia. Sifat perkaitan antara pembolehubah bebas dan kebimbangan sosial menunjukkan wujud kebimbangan sosial dalam kalangan kanak-kanak yang tinggal di luar negara. Kawalan yang munasabah dan perapatan berpotensi mempunyai kesan yang besar ke atas lokus kawalan kanak-kanak dan mengurangkan kebimbangan sosial mereka.

Dapatan kajian ini dapat membantu ibu-ibu untuk memantau tingkah laku mereka sendiri ketika tinggal di luar negeri untuk meningkatkan kualiti hidup anak-anak mereka. Selain itu, dapatan kajian ini menyarankan beberapa cadangan bermakna bagi penyelidikan akan datang. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ini adalah terhad kepada kanak-kanak sekolah rendah di Malaysia yang berusia di antara 9 dan 12 tahun. Oleh itu, pengkaji mencadangkan kajian lanjut dijalankan di tempat-tempat lain dan pada umur yang berbeza bagi meningkatkan generalisasi.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 20 December 2016 to conduct the final examination of Sara Hashempour on her thesis entitled "Relationships between Maternal Behavior, Maternal Attachment, Acculturation, Locus of Control and Social Anxiety among Iranian Primary School Children in Kuala Lumpur, 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 Doctor of Philosophy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The introductory part gives the general background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, conceptual and operational definition of relevant terms, and organization of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Almost every individual, whether an adult or a child, face a certain degree of anxiety in his or her daily life. As most of individuals do experience mild anxiety however, some individuals experience extreme levels of anxiety in certain social situations (Rork & Morris, 2009). The type of anxiety focused in this study is the social anxiety which is defined by American Psychological Association (2013) as a fear of social and performance situations in which embarrassment or humiliation may occur. Social anxiety is the 3rd largest mental health problem in the world and among the most widespread and common condition among children, (Kley, Heinrichs, Bender, & Tuschen-Caffier, 2012; Workman, 2009).

As far as children are concerned, social anxiety is a debilitating and chronic disorder which can negatively impact child development and refers to child fear and anxiety of being judged, rejection, criticism and evaluated by other people in social situations but the child is otherwise usually fine when alone (Beidel, Turner, 2007; Costello, Egger, & Angold, 2005; Reijntjes, Dekovic, & Telch, 2007; Talepasand & Nokani, 2010; Workman, 2009).

These children during exposition to social situations experience intense anxiety that substantially affects their normal childhood activities. For example, ordinary social interactions, such as starting or joining conversation, and performances, such as playing sports can made significant distress for these children. Their anxiety and avoidance may lead to decrease child quality of life and raising the future diagnosis of social anxiety disorder (Al-Naggar, 2013; Hajiamini, Mohamadi, Ebadi, Fathi-Ashtiani, Tavousi, & Montazeri, 2012). Similarly, according to Alidoost (2011) and Borges, Zamora, García, Orozco, Cherpitel, Zemore, & Breslau (2015) children living abroad, due to isolation or distance from their relatives, family members, and friends may likely experience anxiety in social situations.

In line with these arguments, this study aimed to examine social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. Most of these children accompanied their parents to Malaysia for the purpose of study and parents as one of the environmental factors impacting on child's life defined as the most important part of the child's life and one of the main sources which have a direct effect on child development (Spencer, 2006; Ballash, Leyfer, Buckley, & Woodruff-Borden, 2006). In this regard, this study focused on how maternal factors such as psychological control, behavioural control, maternal support and maternal attachment can influence on social anxiety. Hence, mothers have a special place in children's lives because of the natural bond that starts from pregnancy and develops through childhood, adolescence and then adulthood. According to Soleymanifard, Khaghanizade and Khademolhoseyni (2014) a mother-child involvement is a unique tie because of the strong emotional and social bonding existing between them and if mother-child relationship is disturbed, it can lead to mental disorder and subsequent psychological suffering for child.

Meanwhile many researchers have stressed the importance of particular maternal rearing behaviors; attachment researchers have emphasized that disturbances in early mother-child interactions promote the development psychological problems in children such as social anxiety (Brumariu & Kerns, 2008). So, this study focused on both maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control) as well as maternal attachment, which have been consistently associated with child well-being and optimal functioning and recognized as the most important environmental factors in child socialization (Bean, Barber, & Crane, 2006).

The mothers also have the potential to directly influence the perceptions of controllability children hold and these feeling of control are postulated to play a central role in child social anxiety (Barlow, 2002; Rapee, 2001, Ceyhan & Ceyhan, 2009). Thus, like maternal parenting, the construct of locus of control is thought to play an important role in the expression and development of negative emotions such as social anxiety (Chorpita, 2001). In addition, as this study is among Iranian children who came temporarily to foreign country, acculturation of these children in new country is supposed to influence their social anxiety (Okazaki, 1997; Kleinknecht, Dinnel, Kleinknecht, Hiruma, & Harada, 1997; Hsu, Woody, Lee, Peng, Zhou, & Ryder, 2012).

Thus, the current study attempts to provide a deeper understanding on relationships between maternal behaviors, maternal attachment, locus of control acculturation and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. And it is assumed that maternal behaviors with high support and logic control as well as more securely attached mother-child relationship and emotionally available mothers, would lead to lower social anxiety in children; meanwhile, higher acculturated children are supposed to have lower level of social anxiety.

Therefore, this study aimed to examine the relation between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment and acculturation with social anxiety symptoms among Iranian primary school children in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia between the ages 9–12. Moreover, the study also examined the mediating role

of locus of control in the relationships between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment and social anxiety.

1.3 Statement of Problem

Throughout the world, the number of children diagnosed with social anxiety is on increase (Fombonne, 2009), and the prevalence rate of impairing levels of social anxiety among young children has been estimated to range from 10% to 40% among school-aged children (Roy, Kristensen, & Groholt, 2009) which indicated that, social anxiety is among the most prevalence psychopathological problem among children (Kley, Heinrichs, Bender, & Tuschen-Caffier, 2012).

Zarafshan, Mohammadi, and Salmanian (2015) argued that, 8 – 23.5% of Iranian population are suffering from social anxiety disorder, among which 21% of these numbers are primary school children (Hajiamini et al., 2012). Which is under category of pre-adolescent's era (9-14) in which viewed by developmental psychologists as a time of change in the way children view themselves, and try to come to a deeper understanding of themselves and others around them. Children who do not have confidence in themselves at this time, feel socially isolated which may foster social anxiety (Hitchcock, Chavira, & Stein, 2009; Erikson, 1993).

children with social anxiety are more frequently perceive threats and make negative interpretations of ambiguous social situations (Bögels & Zigterman, 2001; Scaini, Belotti, Ogliari & Battaglia, 2016). These children tend to be excessively self-conscious, focus on physiological arousal, easily notice indication of negative evaluation and underestimate their control over environment (Kearney, 2006; Li & Chung, 2009). That situation eventually increased their social isolation, social fears, social interactions and interpersonal difficulties, loneliness, school refusal and reduce their productive learning, causes disability and general fear which subsequently leads to reduction in child quality of life (Al-Naggar, 2013; Brook & Schmidt, 2008).

One factor that can help these children is familiarity of faces and environment so immigration may cause their problem worse since they experience the breaking of ties to family and friends in their country of origin, thus resulting in feelings of loss and a reduction in coping resources and finally difficulties in adjusting to a new culture may lead to emotional or psychological problems (Hovey & Magaña; 2000; Inam, Mahjabeen, & Abiodullah, 2012b). However, there is no study of social anxiety that focus on Iranian immigrant children; thus, in line with this and with considering vulnerability of these children toward social anxiety, the present study extended on the existing works by focusing on social anxiety among Iranian immigrant children in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia between the ages 9-12.

Family is a socio-cultural arrangement that exerts significant influence on children's behavior and the development of their characters (Baumrind, 1991). In this term,

maternal parenting is a factor that play a significant role on children's psychopathology, as any problem on the part of mother-child relationship may lead to unwanted damaging effects on children's growth and thereafter may create psychopathological problems (such as social anxiety) in children (Talib, Abdullah & Mansor, 2011; Baumrind, 1978). On the other hand, earlier transition to abroad and acculturation process is a stressful time for children and maternal accurate behaviors and secure attachment is seriously needed. Hence, at that time children want protection from mothers and unsecure mother-child attachment may lead to social anxiety by influencing the child's interpretation of other's behavior in social bids (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 2015). In this regard, this study considered maternal behaviors and maternal attachment as another potential etiological factors for child social anxiety (Cassidy, Lichtenstein-Phelps, Sibrava, Thomas, & Borkovec, 2009).

Mothers also have the potential to directly influence the perceptions of controllability children hold and in a critical situation of living in a new environment while trying to adjust, child sense of control can play a significant role, in which children who utilize high level of locus of control may better scrimmage with unfamiliar situations, manage those situations and less likely to be overwhelmed with social anxiety. Because locus of control has been identified as one of the social-cognitive factors that play important roles during childhood due to its influences on child's levels of adaptive functioning (Dallaire & Weinraub, 2005).

Even though, no much attention has been given on mediating role of cognitive factor (locus of control) on the relationship between maternal behaviors (i.e. support, behavioural control, and psychological control) and child social anxiety. In order to bridge this gap, this study in addition to examining the influence of both maternal behaviors and maternal attachment on social anxiety; also, examined the mediating role of locus of control on the relationships between dimensions of maternal behaviors and maternal attachment with social anxiety. In addition, although various researches have been conducted on social anxiety, the coverage on background information is still limited especially in terms of age, gender, number of sibling and length of stay in foreign country. Thus, due to limited study regarding these issues this study also examined the relationship between background information such as age, gender, number of sibling and length of stay in Malaysia with social anxiety. Therefore, based on these issues outlined in the problem statement the researcher posed the following research questions.

1.4 Research Question

The research questions of this study are as follow:

1. What is the level of maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment, acculturation, locus of control and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia?

2. Is there any difference in social anxiety between male and female Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia?
3. Is there any relationship between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment, acculturation, locus of control, age, number of siblings, length of stay in Malaysia and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia?
4. What are the unique predictors of social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia?
5. Does locus of control mediate the relationship between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia?

1.5 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationships between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment, acculturation, locus of control and social anxiety.

The specific objectives are as follow:

1. To describe the level of maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment, acculturation, locus of control and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.
2. To compare the difference in social anxiety between male and female Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.
3. To determine the relationship between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment, acculturation, locus of control, age, number of siblings, length of stay in Malaysia and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.
4. To determine the unique predictors of social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

5. To examine the mediating effect of locus of control on the relationship between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control) maternal attachment and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The following are the proposed hypotheses based on the objectives of the study:

Objective 2: To compare the difference in social anxiety between male and female Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Ho1. There is no significant difference in social anxiety between male and female Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Objective 3: To determine the relationship between maternal behaviors (support, psychological control, behavioral control) maternal attachment, acculturation, locus of control, age, number of siblings, length of stay in Malaysia and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Ho2. There is no significant relationship between maternal support and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia.

Ho3. There is no significant relationship between maternal psychological control and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia.

Ho4. There is no significant relationship between maternal behavioural control and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia.

Ho5. There is no significant relationship between maternal attachment and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia.

Ho6. There is no significant relationship between locus of control and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia.

Ho7. There is no significant relationship between acculturation and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia.

Ho8. There is no significant relationship between age and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia.

Ho9. There is no significant relationship between number of siblings and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia

Ho10. There is no significant relationship between length of stay in Malaysia and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children in Malaysia.

Objective 4: To determine the unique predictors of social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Ho11. All selected independent variables (maternal support, psychological control, behavioural control, maternal attachment, locus of control, age, gender, and acculturation) the regression coefficients are not significant when regressed against the dependent variable (social anxiety).

Objective 5: To examine the mediating effect of locus of control on the relationship between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control) maternal attachment and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Ho12: Locus of control does not mediate the relationship between maternal support and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Ho13: Locus of control does not mediate the relationship between maternal psychological control and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Ho14: Locus of control does not mediate the relationship between maternal behavioral control and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Ho15: Locus of control does not mediate the relationship between maternal attachment and social anxiety among Iranian primary school children living in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

1.7 Significance of Study

The result of this study will add to the body of knowledge based on the variable's effects involved in child social anxiety and demonstrating how they interplay and develop during childhood, help to better understanding of the prevention of social anxiety specifically between Iranian immigrant primary school children and also contributes to the body of knowledge on social anxiety in general and to the Iranian children in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia in particular.

The finding of this research also can improve prevention and intervention maternal programs to enhance children locus of control and decrease their social anxiety and help mothers to implement suitable behaviors in order to raise their child feeling of control in difficult and unfamiliar situation and protect them from having social anxiety.

This study by better understanding of the relationship between maternal behaviors, maternal attachment, acculturation, locus of control and social anxiety among children in abroad may be useful for those who are involved in helping these children as counsellors, educators and administrators and help them to generate appropriate assessment, prevention and intervention method for at risk trouble children, meanwhile, by raising knowledge in this issue, children who are at high-risk for developing social anxiety can be recognized sooner and do prevention efforts to reduce the chances of child's social anxiety reaching to clinical level. In addition, as far as cognitive behavioral therapy has been shown to be highly effective in treating childhood social anxiety (Brook & Schmidt, 2008), the results of this study would be helpful to understand the importance of focus on confidence building in order to increase a child's sense of control and mastery over events in his or her life, and may enhance the therapy's effectiveness.

Finally, this study has the potential to contribute to the growing body of literature by suggesting a more comprehensive and precise model of the relationships between the mediating effects of locus of control between maternal behaviors (support, behavioural control, and psychological control), maternal attachment and child specific type of anxiety (social anxiety).

1.8 Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Social Anxiety

Conceptual Definition

A persistent fear of one or more social or performance situations in which the person is exposed to unfamiliar people or to possible scrutiny by others. The individual fears that

he or she will act in a way (or show anxiety symptoms) that will be embarrassing and humiliating (Beidel, 1991).

Operational Definition

The Social Anxiety Scales for Children Revised (SASC-R; La Greca & Lopez, 1998), has been used to assess levels of social anxiety which is a self-report inventory, designed to measure children's subjective feelings of social anxiety. The instrument consists of 22 items that are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (all the time). Scores greater than 50 are indicated as high levels of social anxiety (La Greca & Lopez, 1998).

Maternal Behaviours

Conceptual Definition

Maternal behaviors were defined by Schludermann and Schludermann (1988) as the variations in the mother's behavioral characteristics of control, responsiveness, and warmth toward child which categorized to three separate measures of support, psychological control and behavioral control.

Operational Definition

Maternal behaviours was assessed by the revised version of Children's Report of Parent Behavior Inventory (CRPBI-30) by Schludermann and Schludermann (1988) that is useful tool for assessing perceptions of mother's three parenting behaviors; each 10 questions associated with one of the core dimensions of maternal behaviors and this questionnaire includes a reliable measure of each of the three maternal behavioural dimensions. High scores in each demotion indicated the predominant type of maternal behaviour implicated.

Maternal Attachment

Conceptual Definition

Mother-child attachment is defined by Bowlby (1973) the emotional bond between child and caregiver characterized by mutual affection and a desire to maintain proximity that making the child feel safe, secure and protected.

Operational Definition

Maternal attachment type of children has been assessed through Parent and Peer Attachment- Revised (IPPA-R) for Children that is the useful tool for the assessment of mother's attachment in youth aged between 9 and 15 years. higher score represents higher secure attachment in this scale (Gullone & Robinson, 2005).

Locus of Control

Conceptual Definition

Locus of control is a generalized belief concerning who or what influences things along a bipolar dimension from internal to external control. Internal control is the term used to describe the belief that control of future outcomes resides primarily in oneself while external control refers to the expectancy that control is outside of oneself, either in the hands of powerful other people or due to fate or chance (Rotter, 1966).

Operational Definition

Locus of control was obtained from the respondent's score on the Children's Nowicki-Strickl and Internal-External Control Scale which is a 40-item questionnaire with a yes or no response format for children and adolescents in grades 3 through 12. The score is the total number of answered in an externally controlled direction so lower scores in this scale reflects greater internal locus of control (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973).

Acculturation

Conceptual Definition

Berry (2007) defined acculturation as "the process by which individual change both being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes underway in their own culture".

Operational Definition

Iranian (Persian) Self Identity Scale

Iranian (Persian) Self Identity Scale is the modified version of the Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA; Suinn, 1987) that measures acculturation for Iranians. This scale contains 21 items providing an independent way of measuring individual's acculturation. Low score of acculturation is reflective of individuals' high Iranian identification meanwhile, high score of acculturation is reflective of low Iranian identification.

1.9 Conceptual Research Framework

Based on the theoretical background, the conceptual framework of the present study was developed. In line with this, the researcher attempt to show the interconnectivity between concepts of maternal support, maternal behavioural control, maternal psychological control, maternal attachment, child acculturation, locus of control and social anxiety. Figure 1.1 below illustrates the antecedent, dependents, independents and mediating variables for the study. Therefore, socio-demographic variables represent the antecedent variables namely, age, gender, number of sibling and length of stay in Malaysia. Moreover, maternal support, maternal behavioural control, maternal psychological control, maternal attachment and child acculturation are the independent variables. While locus of control serve as the mediating variable and finally, social anxiety stands for the dependent variables. Figure 1.1 below depicts the diagrammatic presentation of the conceptual framework.

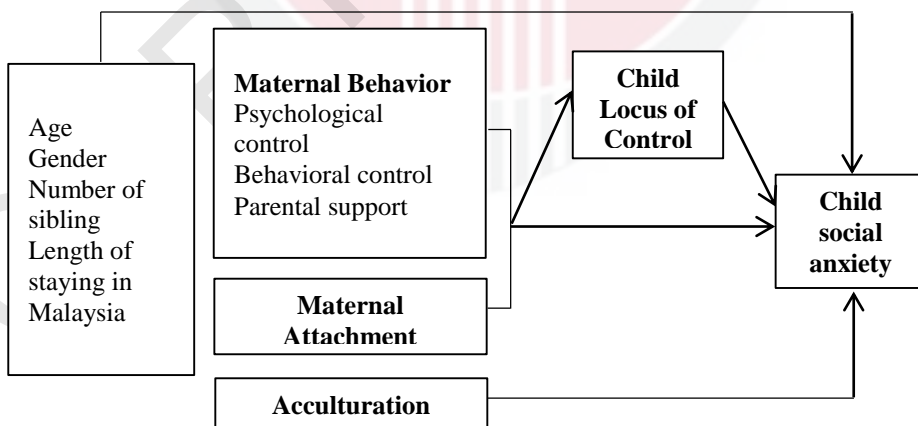


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

1.10 Limitation of Study

The findings of this study should be interpreted in relation to the limitations of the study. First, all participants in this study were Iranian children females and males of primary school age (9-12 years old) in Malaysia. Thus, the findings should not be generalized beyond this population. Secondly, this study is cross-sectional and correlational in nature; therefore, the findings cannot demonstrate causal relations between the variables and cannot determine the long-term effect of maternal behaviours (support, behavioural control, psychological control) and maternal attachment factors on child social anxiety. Finally, the findings of this study were based on self-report data which may result in some kind of bias.



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