



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM, PARENT-CHILD
RELATIONSHIP, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG
IRANIAN ADOLESCENTS IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA***

AYDA AZHARKAMANDI

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By

AYDA AZHARKAMANDI

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

January 2018

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

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January 2018

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In recent decades, Positive Psychology especially Life Satisfaction among adolescent has become considerably more common phenomenon in behavioral science research. According to the statistics and reports, more than half of adolescents reported feelings of dissatisfaction of their life and the rate of life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents living abroad is two times less in comparison with others. Numerous studies have investigated the underlying factors of life satisfaction among adolescent. Nonetheless, very few researches have focused on satisfaction of life among adolescent living in foreign countries. This study examined the effect of self-esteem, parent-child relationship (father-child relationship, mother-child relationship) and social support on life satisfaction among Iranian adolescent living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The study also examined the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationships between social support and parent-child relationship with life satisfaction separately. As this study is among Iranian children who came temporarily to foreign country, background information such as age, gender, length of stay in Malaysia, number of sibling, and family income have been considered.

This study is a quantitative study which employs a cross-sectional research design. A total of 175 respondents (90 female and 85 male) aged between 12 to 18 years old that were available during the study period, involved in the study. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire such as Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), Parent-Child Relationship Survey (PCRS) (Fine, Worley & Schwebel, 1985), self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and Multidimensional scale of perceived social support (MSPSS) (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988). All the instruments used in this study were highly reliable. Descriptive statistics, independent

sample t-test, correlation and regression analysis were conducted; while the mediating effect was analysed using Sobel test (Barron and Kenny approach, 1986).

Findings showed that male respondents demonstrated higher life satisfaction than females. Results of correlation analysis showed a significant relationships between all predictor variables with life satisfaction except on age. Results illustrated that almost all variables in regression model were significant predictor of life satisfaction. Finally, results also presented that, self-esteem mediated partially the relationships between social support, father-child relationship, and mother-child relationship with life satisfaction.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study revealed the importance of parents in enhancing self-esteem and life satisfaction of Iranian adolescent living in Malaysia. The nature of relationships between independent variables and life satisfaction implied that life satisfaction is important issue among adolescent abroad. Reasonable support from society and warmth and positive relationship from parents may have a significant effect on child's self-esteem and increasing their life satisfaction.

The finding of current study advances the understanding of the importance of self-esteem as an influencing factor against life satisfaction of adolescents. It also contributes towards increased understanding of the importance of external factors such as parent-child relationships and perceived social support as an effective factors in life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents. The findings of the current study may be useful for therapists, parents, adolescents, counsellors, and policy makers in preventing dissatisfaction in adolescence period, which can lead to some difficulties such as academic failure.

However, this study is limited to Iranian adolescent (secondary schoolers and high schoolers) living in Malaysia, aged between 12 and 18 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

**PERKAITAN ANTARA ESTIM DIRI, HUBUNGAN IBU BAPA-ANAK,
SOKONGAN SOSIAL DAN KEPUASAN HIDUP DALAM KALANGAN
REMAJA IRAN DI KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

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Dalam dekad kebelakangan ini, Psikologi Positif terutamanya Kepuasan Hidup dalam kalangan remaja menjadi satu fenomena lumrah dalam kajian sains tingkah laku. Mengikut statistik dan laporan, lebih separuh daripada bilangan remaja melaporkan perasaan tidak puas hati dalam kehidupan mereka dan kadar kepuasan hidup dalam kalangan remaja Iran yang tinggal di luar negara adalah kurang dua kali ganda berbanding dengan yang lain. Banyak kajian telah mengkaji tentang faktor-faktor kepuasan hidup di kalangan remaja. Namun demikian, hanya segelintir pengkaji menjurus kepada kepuasan hidup dalam kalangan remaja yang tinggal di luar negara. Kajian ini melihat kepada kesan estim diri, perhubungan ibu bapa-anak, dan sokongan sosial ke atas kepuasan hidup dalam kalangan remaja Iran yang menetap di Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Kajian juga mengkaji peranan perantara estim diri dalam perhubungan di antara sokongan sosial dan perhubungan ibu bapa-anak dengan kepuasan hidup secara berasingan. Oleh kerana kajian ini adalah di antara kanak-kanak Iran yang menetap sementara di luar negara, maklumat latar-belakang seperti umur, jantina, tempoh menetap di Malaysia, bilangan adik-beradik dan pendapatan keluarga turut dipertimbangkan.

Kajian ini adalah kajian kuantitatif yang menggunakan reka bentuk kajian rentas. Sejumlah 175 orang responden (90 perempuan dan 85 lelaki) yang berusia di antara 12 dan 18 tahun, yang boleh didapati dalam tempoh kajian, terlibat dalam kajian ini. Data dikumpul menggunakan borang soal selidik yang dikendalikan sendiri seperti *Satisfaction of Life Scale* (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), *Parent-Child Relationship Survey* (PCRS) (Fine, Worley & Schwebel, 1985), *Self-Esteem Scale* (Rosenberg, 1965), dan *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support* (MSPSS) (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988). Kesemua instrumen yang

digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah sangat boleh dipercayai. Statistik deskriptif, ujian-t sampel bebas, analisis korelasi dan regresi telah dijalankan; sementara kesan perantara dianalisis menggunakan ujian Sobel (Pendekatan Barron dan Kenny, 1986).

Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa responden lelaki mempamerkan kepuasan hidup yang lebih tinggi daripada wanita. Keputusan analisis korelasi menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan di antara semua pembolehubah peramal dengan kepuasan hidup kecuali usia. Keputusan menunjukkan lagi bahawa hampir semua pembolehubah dalam model regresi menjadi peramal signifikan kepuasan hidup. Akhirnya, keputusan juga menunjukkan bahawa nilai diri menjadi sedikit perantara perhubungan di antara sokongan sosial, perhubungan bapa-anak, dan perhubungan ibu-anak dengan kepuasan hidup.

Kesimpulannya, dapatan kajian semasa ini menunjukkan kepentingan ibu bapa dalam meningkatkan estim diri dan kepuasan hidup remaja Iran yang tinggal di Malaysia. Keadaan perhubungan di antara pembolehubah bebas dan kepuasan hidup membayangkan bahawa kepuasan hidup adalah satu isu penting dalam kalangan remaja yang merantau ke negara orang. Sokongan yang wajar daripada masyarakat dan perhubungan yang mesra dan positif daripada ibu bapa boleh memberi kesan yang signifikan ke atas estim diri anak dan meningkatkan lagi kepuasan hidupnya.

Dapatan kajian semasa ini juga menekankan pentingnya estim diri sebagai satu faktor yang mempengaruhi kepuasan hidup remaja. Ia juga menyumbang kepada kefahaman yang semakin meningkat tentang kepentingan faktor luaran seperti perhubungan ibu bapa-anak dan persepsi sokongan sosial sebagai faktor yang efektif dalam kepuasan hidup dalam kalangan remaja Iran. Dapatan kajian ini mungkin bermanfaat kepada pakar terapi, ibu bapa, remaja, kaunselor dan penggubal dasar dalam menghalang ketidakpuasan hati remaja dalam fasa keremajaan, dan ini boleh menimbulkan beberapa masalah seperti kegagalan akademik.

Namun begitu, kajian ini terbatas kepada remaja Iran (pelajar sekolah menengah dan sekolah tinggi) yang tinggal di Malaysia, berusia di antara 12 dan 18 tahun. Oleh itu, pengkaji mencadangkan agar satu kajian lanjutan dibuat di kawasan-kawasan lain dan ke atas kumpulan usia yang berbeza untuk meningkatkan lagi kebolehgeneralisasinya.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

As we endeavor to enter new and modern millennium, adolescent growth has become a major zone of psychological investigation and exploration. Adolescence is a crucial developmental and growth period branded by noteworthy alterations in brain development, feelings, cognition, manners, interpersonal and social relationships. It is a period that is characterized by the increasing importance of social contexts beyond the home (Arnett, 2007; Santrock, 2008).

Although considering and investigating adolescence and its related issues seem essential, some scholars and researchers have extended their focus to include other factors such as attempting to modify research, positive indicators of well-being, policy-making and public discussion struggles toward the promotion of ideal levels of adolescent health (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). It is mentioned that SWB as an umbrella term is concerned with the evaluation of an adolescents' life and is an imperative concept for comprehending well-being and psychological health of the teenagers (E. Deiner & M. Deiner, 2009; Proctor, Landsverk, Aarons, Chambers, Glisson, & Mittman, 2009). That is to say, SWB embraces either cognitive judgments, like satisfaction in life, or emotional reactions to events, like feeling positive emotions in adolescence (Deiner, 2009).

As a cognitive judgment, perceived value of our life or life satisfaction is a very expansive concept that covers the complete variety of functioning from "very low" toward "OK" to "very high", and established growing consideration as an optimal functioning sign amongst adolescents (Fergusson et al., 2015). This concept is directly associated with the meaning of health as delivered in the WHO (World Health Organization, 2014). It is associated positively with happiness, achievement of a "good life", and negatively related with anxiety and depression (Proctor et al., 2009). Life satisfaction among adolescent lead to decrease and reduction of psychotic indications such as suicide, and however, we do not have an adequate understanding of the influences of life satisfaction amongst the youngsters (Abubakar, Van de Vijver, Suryani, Handayani, & Pandia, 2015; Tomlinson, Keyfitz, Rawana, & Lumley, 2016).

In line with these arguments, the present study attempted to inspect life satisfaction among Iranian adolescent in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Iranian adolescent living in Malaysia which are temporary residents, experience less acculturative stress than immigrants. Because they are only provisionally staying in their host country. Thus, staying in Malaysia temporary, functions as a protecting element touching acculturative stress. (Roley, et. al., 2014). Most of these adolescents accompanied their parents in Malaysia for the purpose of education; in this case, parents are considered

as one of the environmental factors impacting 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 (Ramsey & Gentzler, 2015).

Child learns everything from family, which plays an essential role throughout the progression of identity formation (Cox & Harter, 2003). Diverse types of relationships between parent and child can affect the growth and improvement of adolescents in different directions. The relationship between parent and child is an excessive basis to regulate the character and psychosocial growth of children (Matheen, 2011; Ritchie & Buchanan, 2011). According to Arslan (2017), the parent-child connection has been connected with a widespread variety of child outcomes comprising social competence, self-esteem and subjective well-being.

Social support is another important factor in adolescents' life satisfaction. It is argued that perceived support and backing from school, family, and peers have all been documented to play serious roles in the social functioning and well-being of adolescents (Barth, Schnieder, & Von Kanel, 2010). Specifically, the association between perceived social support and life satisfaction has been illustrated in a number of studies with adolescents (Kong & You, 2013; Siddall & Huebner, 2013; Tian, Liu, Huang, & Huebner, 2013).

The parent-child relationship and social support are considered as some exterior factors which generate a positive effect in life satisfaction of adolescents. However, self-esteem is an internal and personal factor that effect adolescents' life satisfaction. According to the research studies that attempt to describe an impact of self-esteem on life satisfaction, there exists an association concerning self-esteem and life satisfaction (Bozoglan, Demirer, & Sahin, 2013; Kapikiran, 2013). Self-esteem is one of the greatest surveyed predictor variables of life satisfaction in addition to social interactions and demographic characteristics (Kong & You, 2013; Kong, Zhao, & You, 2012; Steiger, Forman, & Burger, 2011; Ziegler-hill & Bassar, 2011; Zhang & Leung, 2002). Conversely, life satisfaction requires people to feel satisfied about his "self as the most fundamental component of this life". Therefore, self-esteem implicating self- acceptance, self-worth, self- respect, and acknowledging insufficiencies is in agreement with the overhead conception.

Although relationships between parent-child relationship, social support, self-esteem and life satisfaction have been individually considered in the earlier researches (Harris, et al., 2015; Jiang, Huebner, & Hills, 2013 ; Marshall, Parker, Ciarrochi, & Heaven, 2014; Moksnes & Espnes, 2013), the current study attempts to provide a deeper understanding on interplay of these variables among Iranian adolescent (ages 12-18) living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In spite of investigating in detail, the number of studies that investigate a mediating role of self-esteem are scarce. Lack of enough research in the related literature is addressed by this thesis that attempts to investigate the relationship between the parent-child relationship and social support; here social support and parents' interaction are considered as features affecting life

satisfaction. Furthermore, the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between parent-child relationships, social support and life satisfaction were examined thoroughly in the current thesis.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Levels of life satisfaction amid youngsters have been changed throughout the world. Garcia and Moradi (2013) asserted that even in times of relative prosperity and success, more than half of adolescents reported feelings of unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Behzadfar et al. (2017) argued that, 10 – 25% of Iranian population are feeling dissatisfied of their life, among which 15% of these numbers are in adolescence period in which viewed by developmental psychologists as a time of change in the way adolescent view themselves, and try to come to a deeper understanding of themselves and others around them. A diversity of stressors exclusive to this developmental and evolving era (e.g., academic stresses, growing independence from parents) could lead to such responses. Jafari, Baharlou and Mathias (2010) declared that the two most common reasons that motivate Iranian adolescents to go to counselling centre are symptoms of stress and anxiety and feeling alien and reclude and prevalence rate of impairing levels of stress and anxiety among adolescent has been estimated to range from 20% to 40% (Sladek, Doane, Luecken, & Eisenberg, 2016).

Although there is no accurate statistics regarding the satisfaction of life rate among the population of Middle Eastern adolescents specially Iranian adolescents living abroad, Kelishadi et al. (2016) declared that the rate of life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents living abroad is two times less in comparison with others and the low rate of satisfaction of life among Iranian adolescents living abroad has become an alarming issue (Hoseinzadeh & Tavakoli, 2014). According to Jafari et al. (2010), most adolescents' problems are relatively new and just started after they travel abroad for living and studying in other countries.

Adolescent living in another country will typically experience more pressure on arrival in a different environment (Hovey & Magana, 2000; Inam, Mahnabeen, & Abiodullah, 2012) and necessitate better support than local students (Andrede, 2006; Sawir, Marginsan, Duemert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008). They also encounter challenging individual challenges, comprising high parental anticipations of their academic and professional accomplishment (Tang, 2002), language barriers (Yeh & Inose 2002) and developmental concerns (Skokauskas, Dunne, Gallogly, & Clark, 2010).

In the current study, Iranian students living in Malaysia have been considered as non-immigrant groups those who assimilate (i.e., value positive associations and place more prominence is on attaching to the host and new culture but are not very involved with preserving their homeland culture because they do not live in Malaysia permanently) into the host culture are not very risky for difficulties in sociocultural

and psychological adjustment throughout impermanent placements in foreign countries. (Church, 1982). These adjustment difficulties have been suggested to associate with engagement in academic issues or feeling satisfied of their life (Mori, 2000; Mumford, 1998).

Adolescents who have high levels of life satisfaction get the highest scores on measures that evaluate self-esteem, social acceptance, academic achievement, academic aspirations, interpersonal and intrapersonal functioning (Fogle, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2002; Gilman & Huebner, 2006). Relationship between adolescents and their parent can effect on adolescents' life satisfaction. Any problem on the part of father-child or mother-child relationship especially among adolescent living in another country may lead to annoying destructive effects on children's growth and experiencing more stress and depression (Feinberg, et al., 2016; Galvin & Braithwaite, 2015; Noller & Callan, 2015). Also levels of perceiving social support is most fundamental factors helping human beings in coping and overcoming, boosting self-esteem, declining of aggressive behavior and is a direct participation in consolidation of life satisfaction of adolescents and is a central (Folkman, 2008; Fredrickson, 2003; Keyes, 2013; Ronen and Rosenbaum, 2010; Umberson, Williams, Thomas, Li, & Thomeer, 2014 ; Vohs & Finkel, 2011).

Contrariwise, an impact of self-esteem in satisfaction of life is very beneficial because it can serve role as a protecting factor and coping source in that characters with high self-esteem reveal more confident managing and improved alteration concerning confrontational life happenings (Frey & Stutzer, 2010). In the current research, (Kong & You, 2013; Yarcheski et. al., 2001), self-esteem is postulated as an imperative mediator since persons with exceptionally low social support and weak parent-child relationship would hardly be pleased with themselves and possibly end in low self-esteem that would significantly worsen their subjective well-being. Mediating effect of self-esteem on life satisfaction have been separately studies in the earlier researches (Chen, et al., 2017; Kapıkıran, 2013; Zhao, Wang, & Kong 2014).

Beside personal factors and environmental factors, according to previous research works by Bjarnason et al. (2012) Bradburn (1969), Diener (2000), Kapıkıran (2013), Piko & Hamvai (2010), Levin & Currie (2010) , demographic variables also have effect on life satisfaction during adolescence. Adolescent vary in their life satisfaction depending on their demographic conditions and the current study considered and examined effect of Age, gender, family income, number of sibling and length of staying in another country for adolescent who are living abroad on life satisfaction.

In sum, there have not been well-established studies revealing the predictors of life satisfaction amongst Iranian adolescent, particularly the ones living and studying in foreign countries. Feeling dissatisfied in life among adolescent studying and living in foreign countries is a challenging matter that can be related to families and also the Iranian government (Ganbari Hashemabadi & Kadkhodazadeh, 2008; Mohammadi & Joukar, 2010). It is worth noting that numerous studies have been conducted about

satisfaction with life among adults, but so far, there was not enough attention to the satisfaction with life of adolescents (Matud, Bethencourt., & Ibáñez, 2014; Rey., & Extremera, 2015). Do not pay much attention had been given on mediating role of self-esteem on the connection between parent-child relationship, social support and adolescents' life satisfaction and also influence of both social support and parent-child relationship on adolescent's life satisfaction; In order to bridge this gap, the current study investigates relation between variables and the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between parent-child association (father-child interaction and mother-child interaction) and social support and life satisfaction. Furthermore, although various studies have inspected life satisfaction, the coverage on background information is still limited especially in terms of age, gender, number of sibling, family income and length of staying in Malaysia. Thus, due to limited number of studies regarding these issues, this study tries to observe the relationship between above background information and life satisfaction. Therefore, based on these outlined issues in the problem statement, the researcher posed the subsequent research question.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the levels of parent-child relationship (father-child relationship and mother-child relationship), social support, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia?
2. Are there any differences in the life satisfaction between the genders of respondents among Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia?
3. Are there any relationship between father-child relationship, mother-child relationship, social support, self-esteem, family income, age of respondents, length of stay in Malaysia and number of sibling, and life satisfaction of the Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia?
4. What are the distinctive predictors for life satisfaction amongst Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia?
5. Does self-esteem mediate the relationship between parent-child relationship (father-child relationship and mother-child relationship), social support, and life satisfaction of the Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia?

1.4 Research Objectives

The general objective and aim of this study is to inspect the relationship between parent-child relationship (father-child relationship and mother-child relationship), social support, self-esteem, and life satisfaction amongst Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The specific objectives of the study are presented in the following section:

1. To describe the levels of parent-child relationship (father-child relationship and mother-child relationship), social support, self-esteem and life satisfaction amongst Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2. To compare the differences in life satisfaction between gender of the adolescents among Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
3. To determine the relationship between life satisfaction and father-child relationship, mother-child relationship, social support, self-esteem, family income, age of respondents, length of stay in Malaysia, and number of sibling amongst the Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
4. To determine the distinctive predictors of life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
5. To examine the mediating role of self-esteem on the relationships between parent-child relationship (father-child relationship and mother-child relationship), and social support with adolescent's life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

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

Objective 2 : To compare the difference in level of life satisfaction between the gender of the Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ha₁: Male adolescents are more satisfied in their life compare the female Iranian adolescents.

Objective 3 : To determine the relationship between life satisfaction and father-child relationship, mother-child relationship, social support, self-esteem, family income, age of respondents, length of stay in Malaysia and number of sibling among the Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur ,Malaysia.

Ha₂: Iranian adolescents with positive relationship with their father tends to be more satisfied in their life.

Ha₃: Iranian adolescents with positive relationship with their mother tends to be more satisfied in their life.

Ha₄: Iranian adolescents with higher social support tends to be more satisfied in their life.

- Ha₅: Iranian adolescents with higher self-esteem tends to be more satisfied in their life.
- Ha₆: Iranian adolescents with higher family income tends to be more satisfied in their life.
- Ha₇: Younger Iranian adolescents are more satisfied in their life.
- Ha₈: Iranian adolescents who stayed longer in Malaysia tend to be more satisfied in their life.
- Ha₉: Iranian adolescents with less number of children tend to be more satisfied in their life.

Objective 4 : To determine the significant distinctive predictors of life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- Ha₁₀: The standardized beta coefficients for selected variables do not equal zero when regressed against Iranian adolescents' life satisfaction.

Objective 5 : To determine the mediating role of self-esteem on the relationship between parent-child relationship and social support among Iranian adolescents living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- Ha₁₁: Self-esteem significantly mediate the relationship between father-child relationship and life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents.
- Ha₁₂: Self-esteem significantly mediate the relationship between mother-child relationship and life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents.
- Ha₁₃: Self-esteem significantly mediate the relationship between social support and life satisfaction among Iranian adolescents.

1.6 Significant of the Study

The present thesis aims to determine the factors (social support, parent-child relationship and self-esteem) that predict life satisfaction among a sample consisting of Iranian adolescent living in Malaysia. This study contributes towards the enrichment of knowledge, especially in the context of environmental and personal aspect of adolescent to better understand the nature of their difficulties and problems in facing with a new environment that affect their level of life satisfaction. The relationships between the variables of social support, parent-child relationship, self-esteem, and life satisfaction have been studied widely in different countries

(Nickerson & Nagle, 2004; Ronen et al., 2016; Kong & you, 2013) however, similar studies in Malaysia and among Iranian adolescent are still scarce. Therefore, it is necessary to examine these issues from the context of adolescent who are living in another country. This would also help to fill the existing gap in these types of studies in Malaysia. Furthermore, this study will illustrate the specific factors and how they affect life satisfaction Iranian adolescent in Malaysia.

Additionally, this research aims at investigating the self-esteem as a mediator in these relationships. Marshall and Rossman (2011), explained that a study is expected to be reflected as significant and it needs to be conducted in the case that it contributes to knowledge and meaningfulness and usefulness for the policymakers. The upcoming researchers can benefit from the finding of this research regarding the factors influencing life satisfaction among adolescents. The important information concerning the predictors of life satisfaction and the mediating role of self-esteem could be expanded by the finding of the current thesis.

Substantial systematic info attained by the study about the important predictors of life satisfaction amongst adolescents will improve the role of parent-child relationship and social support by fascinating psychologists and consultants' attention to develop better intervention courses to improve life satisfaction of individuals. It can be argued that the outcome obtained from this study can provide important implications and practical value for mental health professionals, educationalists and parents since they can use the findings in order to create parenting education programs by providing parents with the necessary parenting skills. These skills are effective in fostering positive interactions, social support and self-esteem in children in order to increase their satisfaction of life.

Furthermore, developing the understanding of life satisfaction in adolescence is essential since it permits scholars to relate subjective well-being to critical coexistent developmental characteristics, such as social adjustment, mental health, and school performance. The policymakers and administrators will concentrate more on the adolescents having low level of satisfaction of life by achieving a useful information from this research. Subsequently a mediating role of self-esteem on life satisfaction was examined in this study, counselors, social workers, and other mental health professionals who are involved with teenagers can gain some scientific info by considering indirect and direct effects of social support and parent-child relationship as the vital resources for their therapeutic works in increasing satisfaction of life among adolescents.

So far, this study is the first of its kind survey that has examined an influence of parent-child relationship and social support on life satisfaction of adolescents according to mediating effect of self-esteem. Hence, the coming studies can have unlimited opportunities from the finding of the study. This study is also significant in determining the extent the assumptions of the Bottom –up theory by Diener (1984) and the Sociometer theory by Leary & Baumeister (1995) reinforced by its

conclusions. According to these theories, internal factors and environmental factors and influence life satisfaction among the adolescent.

1.7 Conceptual and Operational Definitions

In this section, conceptual and operational definition of key variables and terms in this study are given. These variables include adolescents, parent-child relationship, social support, self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Adolescents

Conceptual Definition

Adolescents are people in the transitional period between puberty and adulthood in a human development and they are between 12-18 years old (Sigelman & Rider, 2014).

Operational Definition

In this study, adolescents considered as Iranian scholars between 12 to 18 years who are studying in Iranian schools in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Life Satisfaction

Conceptual Definition

Diener defined Life Satisfaction of adolescent as a form of well-being and a cognitive aspect of happiness and a cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole and/or of specific life domains the specific domains include interpersonal relationship with family, friendship, school experiences, and perception of self as well as in a living. (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffen, 1985).

Operational Definition

Life Satisfaction was assessed through Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, & Larsen, 1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was developed as cognitive judgmental process, rather as a measurement of specific satisfaction areas (e.g., health, energy). The SWLS has been comprehensively used and is found to be applicable for assessing life satisfaction both in adult (Pavot & Diener, 2008) and in adolescent samples (Proctor et al., 2009). According to the scoring of satisfaction with life scale, Diener (SWLS) classified life satisfaction in five levels: extremely dissatisfied, dissatisfied, lightly below average, average satisfied, high satisfied and very high satisfied. The lowest score shows extremely dissatisfaction and the highest score shows very high satisfaction among adolescents.

Social Support

Conceptual Definition

Perceived social support is social interactions or social relationships which denotes a person's beliefs about being supported by friends, family, and others to provide love, caring and presence of others, or the resources provided by them, prior to, during, and following a stressful event in social context (Dahlem & Zimet, 1991).

Operational Definition

For measuring social support in the current study, Social Support Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was used which considered to measure perceived social support from three sources (subscales): family, friends, and a significant other (Zimet, Dahlem Zimet, & Farley, 1988). According to the scoring of the MSPSS scale, social support is categorized to the three levels, high, average and low. Higher score indicate higher social support and lower score mean lower social support.

Parent- child relationship

Conceptual Definition

Parent-child relationship refers to the frequency and intensity of communication patterns between children and their parents (Fine, Moreland, & Schwebe, 1983).

Operational Definition

In the current study for assessing relationship between parent and child, the Parent-Child Relationship Survey (PCRS) was used to measure adolescents' and adults' perceptions of their parent-child relationship. It arises two forms: one for measuring the child's relationship with the mother and one for measuring the child's relationship with the father. (Fine, Moreland, & Schwebe, 1983). According to the scoring of the PCRS scale, higher score indicate positive relationship between parents and adolescents and lower scores mean negative and weak relationship.

Self-esteem

Conceptual Definition

Self-esteem reveals a person's general subjective emotional appraisal of his or her own value. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem embraces beliefs and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride, and shame (Rosenberg, 1965).

Operational Definition

In the current study, operational definition of self-esteem is explained through assessing self-esteem among adolescents by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale with (Rosenberg, 1965), which extensively used as a self-report instrument for estimating individuals' self-esteem and was explored by using item response theory. According to the scoring by the scale, Rosenberg considered three levels for self-esteem, high, average and low level. A higher score indicates higher self-esteem in a person and lower scores mean less self-esteem.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

Theories used in this study served as a framework for the entire study, an organizing model for the research questions or hypotheses for the data collection procedure (Creswell, 1994). The Bottom-up theory (Diener, 1984) and Sociometer theory (Leary & Baumeister, 2000) were used as a theoretical basis in explaining the concept of self-esteem, parent-child relationship, social support and life satisfaction. These two theories have given the theoretical underpinning to justify the conceptual evidence for choosing the above-mentioned concepts as variables of the study.

1.8.1 Bottom – Up theory (Diener 1984)

This research in general, is based within a “bottom-up” approach which posits that life satisfaction is derived from subordinate elements. Bottom-up theory suggests that life satisfaction is derived from a summation of pleasurable and unpleasurable moments, experiences and relationships. Put simply, a satisfied individual is happy precisely because he or she experiences many happy moments. (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976).

Diener et al. (1999) described bottom-up factors as external events, situations, and demographics which leads to satisfaction of life. As stated in the bottom up theory, it is believed that external life circumstances (e.g. relationships and life events) exert influence on the subjective experience of people. According to bottom-up theory, precedent factors have important effect in explaining of life satisfaction. Most of researches and the results of their findings demonstrated that in some circumstances, demographic factors have a strong and long-term effect on the life satisfaction of individuals. (Brief, Butcher, George, & Link, 1993; Feist, Bodner, Jacobs, Miles, & Tan, 1995). For example, when life conditions get under standard level and a minimum level of satisfaction like financial problems and family income (Veenhoven, 1996) and when regular variations in life satisfaction are observed between genders, these demographic variables have effect on the levels of life satisfaction (Farid & Lazarus, 2008; Inglehart & Klingemann, 2000).

In the Bottom-up theory, life satisfaction is a dependent variable. The theory suggests that an adolescent's perception of satisfaction of important life domains and their emotional response to life domains determines their life satisfaction (Meyer et al., 1989). There are several predictors of life satisfaction, and it mostly constant throughout life, but can fluctuate at times (Brief et al., 1993). By using the bottom-up theory, it allows for a central role of one's control over the important life domains as a predictor of life satisfaction. This takes the position that one's life satisfaction can be assessed from the amount of control individual's possess in their life domains. Therefore, the bottom-up position asserts that individuals construct their own level of satisfaction via their behavior and relationships and thoughts in a particular social context. (Lent, 2004; Singley, Sheu, & Liang, 2004).

In sum, the bottom-up model postulates that an adolescent assesses different life domains distinctly, and that these precise evaluations can effect one's overall life satisfaction. In other words, overall life satisfaction can be hypothesized as the collection of multiple domain satisfaction ratings (Diener 1984). Prominently, if the bottom-up model is correct, then the trajectories for the individual domains may be rather dissimilar than the trajectory for the global judgment (Diener 1984). However, if life satisfaction does follow a bottom-up theory, we should see that the trajectory for the aggregate of the important domains in an adolescent's life such as relationships and perceived support from the social, matches the global life satisfaction trajectory.

Most scholars who investigate personality and social psychology assume that self-esteem is related to a bottom-up fashion (Brown, 2014; Kwan & McGee, 2012; Taylor, Lam., & Pratt, 2015). The bottom-up theory claims that evaluative feedback (e.g., success or failure, interpersonal relationships and acceptance or rejection), impacts self-evaluations, and that self-evaluations regulate feelings of self-worth and global self-esteem. In other words, it is called bottom-up model since it assumes that global self-esteem is founded on more elemental beliefs about one's particular qualities. If you think you have positive and warmth relationship with your parents, and IF you think you perceive enough support from your family and friends, THEN you will have high self-esteem. (Brown & Marshall, 2006).

1.8.2 Sociometer Theory (Leary & Baumeister, 1995)

Sociometer theory which was first presented by Mark Leary and colleagues (1995) is a theory of self-esteem from an evolutionary psychological standpoint that suggests that self-esteem is a gauge (or sociometer) of interpersonal relationships. In Leary's research, the idea of self-esteem as a sociometer is discussed in depth. This theory was shaped as a response to social emotions, inter- and intra- personal behaviors, self-serving biases, and reactions to rejection. Based on this theory (Leary, 2005), self-esteem is a measure of effectiveness in social relations and interactions that monitors acceptance and/or rejection from others confirmed by various studies and research (Anthony, Wood, & Holmes, 2007; Srivastava & Beer, 2005). If a person is deemed

having relational value and positive relationship with others and perceive enough support from the society, they are more likely to have higher self-esteem.

In his sociometer theory of self-esteem Leary (2000) contended that people's self-esteem is a creation of believing and accepting that others perceive them as an appreciated interpersonal partner (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Contrariwise, people who feel constantly excluded and ignored by others tend to develop low self-esteem (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Self-esteem is closely tied to affective processes and involves how people feel about themselves; high self-esteem "feels" good, whereas low self-esteem does not (Brown, 1993; Scheff, Retzinger, & Ryan, 1989). It is for this reason that some of the best evidence for changes in self-esteem can be inferred from self-reports of mood and feeling positive or negative about life and level of satisfaction (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). For example, if parents frequently nag or criticize their child, or if they withdraw from their child, it could be viewed as rejection.

Therefore, people high in self-esteem (HSEs), feel that they were, are, and will be valued by others, and perceived enough support from them, whereas people low in self-esteem (LSEs) doubt their value, and project these doubts onto future relationships (Leary et al., 1995; Murray, Holmes, & Grynn, 2000). This theory is supported by research on attachment insecurity and weak relationships with parents (Bellavia & Murray, 2003; Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005; Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes, & Kusche, 2002), and low and inadequate social support which are associated with low self-esteem (Murray, 2005; Pickett et al., 2004).

In concordance with the sociometer theory most of the researches such as Murray, Holmes, & Griffin (2000) converge on the idea that high self-esteem can boost the relationship between close and supportive relationships (particularly with parents) and their life satisfaction. Also, sociometer theory suggest that self-esteem facilitate directly the quality of the parent-child relationship (Sroufe, 2002; Thompson, 2006). Through consistent, warm, and supportive interactions with a parent, adolescent are thought to develop an internal working model that consists of positive views of the self; that is, the adolescent will develop a view of self as important and worthy of love which all have effect on level of life satisfaction. (Thompson, 2006). The sociometer theory has been considered in most of the researches as a theoretical framework for justification effect of social support and parent-child relationship on life satisfaction and mediating effect of self-esteem in the relationship between these variables (DeHart et al., 2003; Denissen et al., 2008; Marshal et al, 2014; Kong, Zao, & you 2012).

General approach to both theories

As the present study focused on investigating the relationship between social support and parent-child relationship, self-esteem and life satisfaction ; Bottom-up theory of Diener (1984) offer an appropriate general theoretical background in which this study

can rely upon., Diener 's theoretical model pointed that positive external events have strong effect on adolescent's life satisfaction and this is accomplished by providing adolescence with more supports and positive relationships over their environment. (Diener & Diener 1995).

Being that the study focus on self-esteem as a mediating factor in the relationship between social support and parent-child relationship among Iranian adolescents in Malaysia, Sociometer theory (Leary & Baumeister, 1995) highlighted that, self-esteem as an important factor can boost and effect of the relationship between parent-child relationship and social support and with life satisfaction by feeling of acceptance by others via perceived social support and positive relationships with others (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995; Zhang et al., 2014).

Bottom- up theory (Diener, 1984) in concordance with Sociometer theory (Leary & Baumeister, 1995) considered life satisfaction as an adolescent's perception of satisfaction of important life domains and their emotional response to life domains. According to the current research, positive relationship between adolescent with the parents and feeling positive about having enough support from society, influences their self-evaluations, and that self-evaluations which is a product of believing that others see them as a valuable relational partner that were explained by Sociometer theory (Leary & Baumeister, 1995), determine feelings of self-worth and global self-esteem. According to the both theories, it embraces that global self-esteem is based on more elemental beliefs about one's particular qualities.

With regard to this theoretical background the researcher perceived that, the above-mentioned theories are enough to explain parent-child relationship, social support, self-esteem, adolescents' life satisfaction which are choose as the variables of study. The theoretical framework of the present study is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

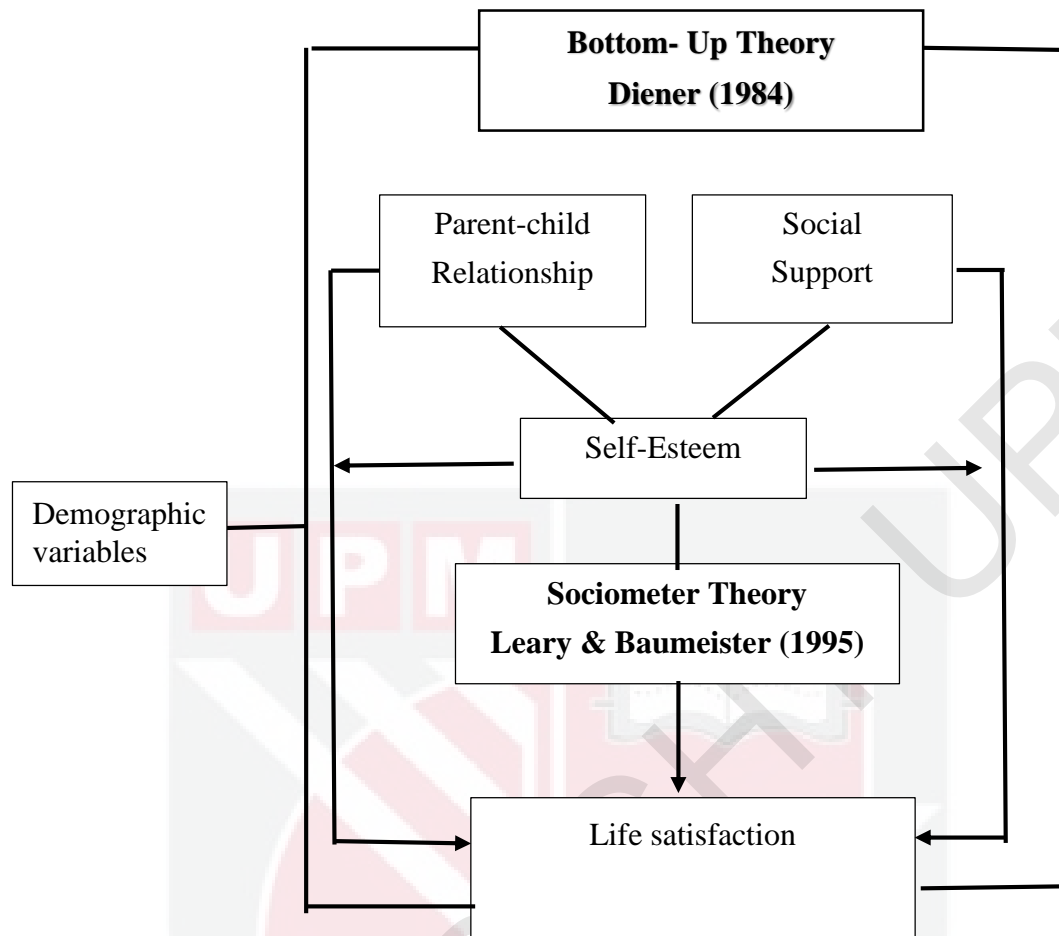


Figure 1.1 : Theoretical Framework of the Study

1.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the current study was developed based on the theoretical background. In line with this, the researcher attempted to show the interconnectivity between concepts of parent-child relationships, social support, self-esteem and life satisfaction. Figure 1.2 illustrates the demographics, dependents, independents and mediating variables for the study demographic variables represent the antecedent variables namely age, gender, number of sibling, family income and length of stay in Malaysia. Moreover, parent-child relationship and social support are the independent variables. Self-esteem serve as the mediating variable and life satisfaction stands for the dependent variable.

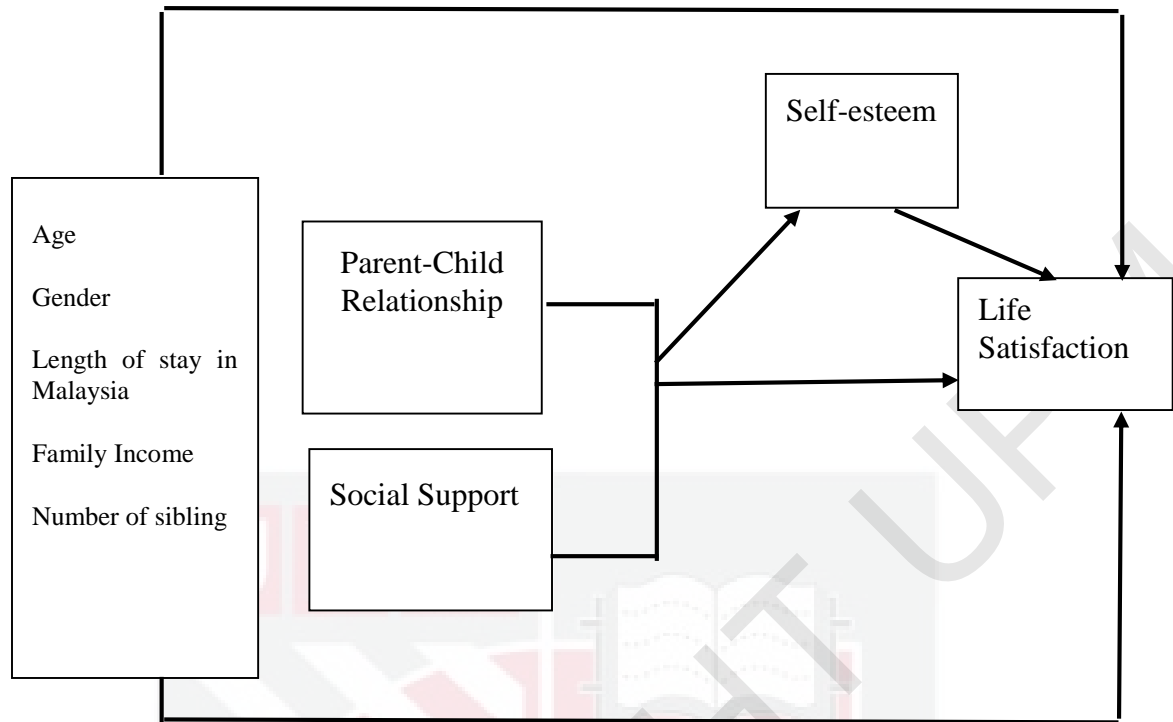


Figure 1.2 : Conceptual Framework of the study

1.10 Limitation of the Study

The findings of this study should be interpreted in relation to the limitations of the study. Foremost, all participants in this study were Iranian female and males adolescents between 12 to 18 years old in Malaysia. Thus, the findings cannot be generalized beyond this population. Secondly, this study is cross-sectional and correlational in nature; consequently, the conclusions cannot determine causal relationships between the variables and cannot regulate the long-term influence of social support and parent-child relationship and self-esteem on adolescent's life satisfaction. Finally, the outcomes of this thesis are collected using self-administered questionnaire, in which reliability and validity of the information obtained depended exclusively on the honesty of respondents in answering the questionnaire. Self-biasness might impact the accuracy of the information given by respondents.

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