

# **UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

PREDICTORS OF DEPRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

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# PREDICTORS OF DEPRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

By

ANG CHUN EE

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

November 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 Master of Science

#### PREDICTORS OF DEPRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

By

#### ANG CHUN EE

#### November 2015

#### Chairman: Zarinah binti Arshat, PhD Faculty : Human Ecology

Depressive and disciplinary violation symptoms are commonly found among adolescents. This study aimed to determine predictors of depression among adolescents with disciplinary problems in Selangor. The predictors are parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship and adolescent disclosure. A total of 354 secondary school students with disciplinary problems from Sabak Bernam, Petaling and Kuala Langat participated in the present study. Parental Solicitation Questionnaire, Parental Control Questionnaire, Family Attachment and Family Bonding Scale, Adolescent Disclosure Questionnaire and Children Depression Inventory (CDI) were used to measure the key variables in the study.

The results of present study indicated that there were significant positive relationships between parental solicitation, parental control and parent-child relationship with adolescent disclosure among adolescents with disciplinary problems. There were also significant negative relationships found for parental control, parent-child relationship and adolescent disclosure with depression among adolescents with disciplinary problems. Disclosure to father was found to be the strongest unique predictor of adolescent depression. The mediation effect of adolescent disclosure was found to be significant in the relationship between paternal control and adolescent depression as well as the relationship between parent-child relationship and adolescent depression.

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The present study found that 37% of adolescents with disciplinary problems experienced moderate to high levels of depression. Hence, there is the need to address the emotional development of adolescents with disciplinary problems in Malaysia. The study concludes that depression in adolescents was associated with the interaction between parents and adolescents. In addition, parental behaviours may indirectly be influenced by the adolescent's disclosure to parents. The findings also imply that efforts to alleviate depression among adolescent's willingness in disclosing themselves to parents.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

#### PERAMAL KEPADA KEMURUNGAN DALAM KALANGAN REMAJA YANG BERMASALAH DISIPLIN DI SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

Oleh

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#### Pengerusi: Zarinah binti Arshat, PhD Fakulti : Ekologi Manusia

Gejala kemurungan dan pelanggaran disiplin seing berlaku dalam kalangan remaja. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan peramal bagi kemurungan dalam kalangan remaja yang bermasalah disiplin di Selangor. Peramal yang diukur dalam kajian adalah solisitasi ibu bapa, kawalan ibu bapa, hubungan ibu bapa-anak dan pendedahan remaja. Sejumlah 354 orang pelajar sekolah menengah yang bermasalah disiplin dari Sabak Bernam, Petaling dan Kuala Langat mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Soal selidik solisitasi ibu bapa, soal selidik kawalan ibu bapa, skala pertalian kekeluargaan dan ikatan kekeluargaan, soal selidik pendedahan remaja dan inventori kemurungan kanak-kanak digunakan untuk mengukur variabel-variabel utama dalam kajian ini.

Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan hubungan positif yang signifikan antara solisitasi ibu bapa, kawalan ibu bapa dan hubungan dengan ibu bapa dengan pendedahan dalam kalangan remaja yang bermasalah disiplin. Hubungan negatif yang signifikan pula berlaku pada kawalan ibu bapa, hubungan ibu bapa-anak dan pendedahan dengan kemurungan dalam kalangan remaja yang bermasalah disiplin. Pendedahan remaja kepada bapa didapati berperanan sebagai peramal yang paling kuat bagi kemurungan remaja. Kesan pengantaraan pendedahan didapati signifikan dalam hubungan antara kawalan ibu bapa dan kemurungan remaja, hubungan antara hubungan ibu bapa-anak dan kemurungan remaja.

Hasil kajian ini mendapati bahawa 37% remaja yang bermasalah disiplin mengalami kemurungan pada tahap sederhana hingga tinggi. Oleh itu, wujud keperluan bagi menangani perkembangan emosi dalam kalangan remaja yang bermasalah disiplin di Malaysia. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa kemurungan remaja dikaitkan dengan interaksi antara ibu bapa dan remaja. Selain itu, tingkah laku ibu bapa secara tidak langsung dapat mempengaruhi remaja melalui pendedahan remaja kepada ibu bapa. Hasil kajian ini memberi implikasi bahawa usaha untuk mengurangkan kemurungan remaja yang bermasalah disiplin perlu memfokuskan kepada tingkah laku ibu bapa atau kesanggupan remaja mendedahkan masalah mereka kepada ibu bapa.

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Last but not the least, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late grandfather, Ang Wan Toon (1928-2015), who was a constant source of inspiration. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of these several special people, thanks again.

Ang Chun Ee, November 2015

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 November 2015 to conduct the final examination of Ang Chun Ee on her thesis entitled "Predictors of Depression among Adolescents with Disciplinary Problems 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 Master of Science.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOE	Ministry of Education Malaysia
SSSM	Sistem Salahlaku Disiplin Murid Berasaskan Web
DSM V	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Version 5
JPS	Selangor State Education Department
CDI	Children's Depression Inventory
EDA	Exploratory Data Analysis
SPSS	Statistical Package Social Science

#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

The adolescent stage can be especially turbulent as it is a dynamic development period. It is the stage of developmental crisis, dilemmas and expectation from parents and society; thus adolescents are prone to face a myriad of psychosocial challenges (Santrock, 2012). Psychosocial challenges, internalizing and externalizing problems resulted in the adolescent's poor adjustment as well as impairment which will affect later development (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005; Rhodes, Lewinsohn & Seeley, 1994) and remit greatly during adulthood (Lewinsohn et al., 1995).

Emotional development is at its peak during adolescence or rather, there is no emotional stability in general during this stage of life's development (Casey, Jones & Hare, 2008). Adolescent experienced mood swings known as storm and stress (Arnett, 1999). The mood swing could be normal as it is a temporary reaction during adolescence. Emotional inconsistency is nothing unusual, thus it often goes unnoticed and mistreated as transient nature (Santrock, 2012). However, not only severe or clinical levels of depression have negative outcomes, less least severe depression is also associated with distress dysfunction as well as a risk for future disorder.

Previous studies indicated that behavioral problem is another major problem among adolescents (Naicker et al., 2013; Arnett, 1999). Behavioural problem in adolescent is viewed as a serious social issue due to its destructive influences. Behavioural problem, known as externalizing problem brings negative impact to others and the social environment (Hann, 2002). In addition, the Royal Malaysia Police (2014) reported that the number of adolescents involved in crime had increased. The statistics showed that the number of juvenile cases involving adolescent had climbed from 951 to 2483 between 2012 and 2013. Although the rise had to be considered, the findings of the juvenile offender sample could not be transferred to community sample even at risk group (Vermeiren, 2003) referred to here as adolescent disciplinary problems.

Disciplinary problem remains a major problem encountered by adolescents (2013).

Disciplinary problem is different from juvenile and delinquent acts such as breaking school rules. It is not categorized as an offence in the penal code even though it is still a serious social problem (Bates & Pettit, 2007). Adolescents' behaviours are driven by emotions. For instance, the inability of adolescents to control their negative thought processes can influence their behaviour. Emotional problems often go unnoticed. But it co-occurs with those who exhibit behavioural problem. This is because emotion has a less concrete structure. Moreover, the overt presentation of behavioural problem conceal the depressive symptom which is the least recognized (Thompson, 2012, Beyers & Loeber, 2003; Carlson & Cantwell, 1980). The prevalence of those who were identified with behavioural problem first, and then found to have depression is lower

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than those who were identified with depression and later found to exhibit other behavioural problems (Angold & Costello, 1993).

The unabated increase in both adolescent depression and behavioural problem raised many red flags. It has provided the impetus for this present study to look into depressive symptoms of adolescents with disciplinary problem to find out more about the co-occurrence of depressive symptom in behavioural problem in the Malaysian context. In Malaysia, the prevalence of depression was high at 2.5%, affecting 116,674 adolescents between the ages of 16 and 24 (Institute for Public Health, 2011). It is worth to take note that the sharp rise in the onset of depression happens during adolescence, especially with extensive evidences reported that depression increased with the frequent externalizing problem (Vermeiren, 2003; Ryan & Redding, 2004). Unrevealed depression symptoms from one who exhibited behavioural problem require optimal treatment as it is vital for intervention to suit remedy on case-to-case basis. It could be the result of the lack of understanding as well as ways to deal with co-occurring depression and behavioural problems. The fact suggested that more extensive work should be done to know more about depression and behavioural problems.

Family factors are one of the possible risk factors. Adolescent is part of society, as an active and a passive agent. Hence, adolescents' related issue cannot be understood in isolation from the parents. Parents are early social agent of adolescents. Insecure attachment in infancy (Cota-Robles & Gamble, 2006), parental substance use (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005), parental involvement in criminal activities (Kandel & Wu, 1995) and low level of parental supervision (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005) are possible parents-related factors contributing to adolescents' depression. Parent-adolescent relationship is also a factor leading to depression. Kerns, Keplac and Cole (1996) found that parent-child relationship during adolescent focused on parental availability, open communication as well as consistent trust and support. Greater bonding between parents and child resulted in lesser depressive symptoms (Heaven et al., 2004) and also associated with a decrease in externalizing problems (Briere, Archambault & Janosz, 2013).

The interaction between adolescents and parents is dynamic and changes across the developmental stages. Adolescents start to detach from their parents as they want more autonomy. When the time spent with parents becomes less, parents become less informed about adolescents' where-about. Adolescent is the source of information to parents (Crouter & Head, 2002). Parents were predicted to solicit more as the time adolescents spent with family became lesser compared to their childhood (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). In addition, parents applied control on their adolescents to know about their adolescents where-about and to keep them informed as parents had no time with their adolescents (Stattin & Kerr, 2000).

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Although parental solicitation and control are done with good intentions, the adolescent might perceived them differently. Parents' effort to know about adolescents did not result in the way parents would like it to be. Parents' effort to get updated about adolescents' where-about could be done through parental solicitation and parental control. Adolescents' willingness to disclose to parents was influenced by positive parental behaviour, such as support and concern or the adolescent (Hazen et al., 2008).

Hence, it is suggested to consider the role of a mediator for adolescent disclosure on the relationship between predictors of adolescent depression and disciplinary problems.

#### 1.2 Statement of Problem

Depression related symptoms vary in frequency and severity (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Even though the experienced symptoms did not meet the criteria for DSM V major depressive disorder, but it still reflected more or less impaired functioning in daily life. Prevalence of depression is still rising steadily. Depression has been recorded to be the predominant mental illness among boys and girls aged 10 to 19 years old globally. More than half of the individuals who developed mental disorders have the first symptoms by age 14 (World Health Organization, 2014).

Depression among adolescents in Malaysia had been recognized as a major mental health issue. National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) of Malaysia conducted a survey about Malaysian children aged between 5 and 15 years old every 10 years. The survey was then conducted every 5 years since 2006. The result of NHMS in year 2011 was the latest survey in reporting prevalence of Malaysian children mental health. According to NHMS 2011, there was an increase of 20 per cent of children aged between 5 and 15 years old who suffered from stress, anxiety and depression (Institute for Public Health, 2011). Knowledge about care, correlation and problem of depression were well established.

Adolescents are emotionally driven. Adolescents' behaviours are influenced by emotional problem and the inability to control their turbulent thoughts. The Ministry of Education recorded 3.43% of discipline problem in the total number of secondary student enrolments in the year 2013. Ministry of Education in Malaysia (MOE) had developed a system in the year 2008, namely Sistem Salahlaku Disiplin Murid Berasaskan Web (SSSM) to record secondary school students' disciplinary problem. The disciplinary problems listed in the system include criminal acts, substance use, bullying, smoking, truancy, pornographic related behaviour, impolite act, vandalism, integrity issue and naughtiness. The system records the details of disciplinary violation of student and actions taken on the student, such as the number of warning letters issued, parent-teacher meetings as well as counselling sessions. These efforts indicated that the Malaysian school authority took students' disciplinary violation issues seriously.

Malaysian adolescents who have juvenile record shared similar depressive symptoms (Mohamad & Mohamad, 2014). Malaysian juvenile adolescents shared that they felt "been feeling sad in life," "a lot of sadness," "no light in life" and "there's no hope anymore, it is sad when think about it all". These evidences warranted the assumption that in Malaysia, adolescents with disciplinary problem also experienced depression at the same time. It is easy to overlook depression in adolescents with disciplinary problem. Thus, the aim of the present study is to help provide clearer evidence to comprehend depression among adolescents with disciplinary problem in Selangor which could reduce undetected depression among adolescent with disciplinary problem.

The Selangor State Education Department (JPS) (2014) reported 41.67% of secondary school students with disciplinary problem background received help in dealing with the problem. This is less than half of secondary school students with disciplinary problem who received counseling in school. It suggested that the concern for adolescent development has not been dealt with and the possibility that depression is concurrent with other problems, such as disciplinary problem has been identical (Imbach et al., 2013). Hence, depression among adolescents in Malaysia and related symptoms should be addressed despite varying in frequency and severity.

Children are especially susceptible to parental influences since early childhood and develop the groundwork for later lifelong development. Numerous studies have identified the influence of parental roles in adolescents' depression (Frojd, Kaltiala-Heino & Rimpela, 2007; Yu at al., 2006; Dobson & Dozois, 2011; Boughton & Lumley, 2011; Sheeber et al., 2007). For instance, parental solicitation, parental control as well as parent-child relationship are possible variables predicting depression symptoms in adolescent with disciplinary problems (Imbach at al., 2013; Pettit et al., 2001). Parental solicitation is a way for parents to convey concern and provide support to their adolescence (Froid, Kaltiala- Heino & Rimpela, 2007). Similarly, bonding between parents and their adolescent provides supportive foundation for the adolescent to develop (Stice, Ragan & Randall, 2004). Malaysia is a collectivist country. Parents in Malaysia teach their adolescent to inhibit his or her own need and conform to the group by behaving in socially acceptable manner and obeying the rules (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). Thus, depression among adolescent with disciplinsry problem in Malaysia is an interesting topic as seen from the different values held by parents in Malaysia.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

A number of factors emphasize the significance of the present study. Firstly, parental monitoring in promoting adolescence well-being was frequently mentioned in previous research (Frojd, Kaltiala-Heino, & Rimpletta, 2007; Jacobson & Crockett, 2000; Kim & Ge, 2000; Steinberg et al., 1991; Yu et al., 2006). This had suggests the role of parental solicitation and control in preparing adolescence to develop positively. Besides, adolescents' development thrives under the circumstance of positive parent-child relationship. Thus, the valuable resources based on previous findings provide an overview for the parents on effective parental monitoring and maintenance of close parent-child relationship in promoting adolescents' positive development outcomes. As a result, parents could benefit from the findings by applying the parental solicitation, parental control and parent-child relationship in dealing with depression symptoms of their adolescent children with disciplinary problem.

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Secondly, the present study may be helpful in overcoming the challenges that arise from depressive adolescents with disciplinary problem. Depression is commonly viewed as one of the serious mental health problems which lead to impairments in cognitive, social-emotional and behavioural domains (Essau & Ollendick, 2009). However, the findings from previous studies indicate that the situation could to be improving (Gil-Rivas et al., 2004; Klein & Forehand, 2000). For instance, the present study considers the influences of adequate parental solicitation and control on

adolescents' depression with disciplinary problem. Therefore, adolescents are not being left helpless with their depressive symptoms as parents and other authority agencies are optimistic to work together on adolescents' depression issue.

Furthermore, the passionate educators and other authorities who are concerned on adolescents' well-being may perhaps work out a valuable intervention plan or programmes by using the findings of this present study. The process of the intervention planning is likely to be encouraging as there are supportive data to refer to. For instances, the effort of parental solicitation, control and parent-child relationship in figuring out depression in adolescents as well as depression in adolescents involved within disciplinary problems can be considered.

In addition, the present study looked into the mediating effect of adolescents' voluntary disclosure in the relationship between parental solicitation and control and depression. This assumption was made based on the finding that adolescence voluntary disclosure was a mediator between parental knowledge and adolescence internalizing problems (Kerr & Stattin, 2000). Findings from the present study indicated the active role that adolescents play in the process and that voluntary disclosure could potentially mediate adolescents' depression. The Ministry of Education Malaysia could make use of it to encourage adolescence voluntarily disclosure through counselling sessions in dealing with adolescence depression. Parents can learn from the findings and make efforts to create an atmosphere which could promote voluntarily disclosure from adolescents. It was noted that parents learned to know about their adolescence where-about through adolescence disclosure, which later contributed to reducing depressive symptoms among adolescent disciplinary problem as parents became aware of what their adolescents were doing.

Last but not least, multidimensional consideration is necessary in order to develop comprehensive prevention and treatment programmes for adolescent depression (Galambos, Leadbeater & Barker, 2004). The present study is also a part of understanding about Malaysian adolescence depression among those who are involved in disciplinary problems. However, the findings are valuable to be used as references for extended future studies in order to gained in-depth understanding on depression among Malaysian adolescents.

#### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

#### 1.4.1 General Objective

The aim of this study was to determine the relationships between parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship, disclosure and depression among adolescents with disciplinary problem in Selangor.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

Referring to the general objective above, the specific objectives of the present study are as follows:

- 1. To describe the pattern of adolescent characteristics (age, sex and number of siblings), family characteristics (parents' age, parents' education level and family monthly income), parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship, adolescent disclosure and depression.
- 2. To explore the relationships between adolescent characteristics (age, sex and number of siblings) and family characteristics (parents' age, parents' education level and family monthly income) with parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship and depression.
- 3. To determine the relationships between parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship, adolescent disclosure and depression.
- 4. To determine the unique predictor of adolescent depression.
- 5. To determine the mediating effect of adolescent disclosure in the relationships between parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship and depression.

#### **1.5 Hypotheses of the Study**

In line with the above specific objectives, there are several null hypotheses formulated in the present study. Null hypotheses were formed to reserve the possibility that results occurred by chances when accepting the null hypotheses. However, alternative hypotheses would be accepted when null hypotheses were rejected. The hypotheses are listed as the following:

Objective 3: To determine the relationships between parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship, adolescent disclosure and depression.

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between paternal solicitation and adolescent disclosure to father.
- $H_{02}$ : There is no significant relationship between maternal solicitation and adolescent disclosure to mother.
- $H_{03}$ : There is no significant relationship between paternal control and adolescent disclosure to father.
- $H_{04}$ : There is no significant relationship between maternal control and adolescent disclosure to mother.
- $H_{05}$ : There is no significant relationship between father-child relationship and adolescent disclosure to father.
- $H_{06}$ : There is no significant relationship between mother-child relationship and adolescent disclosure to mother.

- $H_{07}$ : There is no significant relationship between paternal solicitation and adolescent depression.
- $H_{08}$ : There is no significant relationship between maternal solicitation and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>09</sub>: There is no significant relationship between paternal control and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>10</sub>: There is no significant relationship between maternal control and adolescent depression.
- $H_{11}$ : There is no significant relationship between father-child relationship and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>12</sub>: There is no significant relationship between mother-child relationship and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>13</sub>: There is no significant relationship between adolescent disclosure to father and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>14</sub>: There is no significant relationship between adolescent disclosure to mother and adolescent depression.
- Objective 4: To determine the unique predictor of adolescent depression.
- H<sub>15</sub>: Adolescent characteristics (age, sex and number of siblings), family characteristics (parents' age, parents' education level and family monthly income), parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship and adolescent disclosure do not significantly predict adolescent depression.

Objective 5: To determine the mediating effect of adolescent disclosure in the relationships between parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship and depression.

- H<sub>16</sub>: There is no significant mediating effect of adolescent disclosure to father in the relationship between paternal solicitation and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>17</sub>: There is no significant mediating effect of adolescent disclosure to father in the relationship between paternal control and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>18</sub>: There is no significant mediating effect of adolescent disclosure to father in the relationship between father-child relationship and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>19</sub>: There is no significant mediating effect of adolescent disclosure to mother in the relationship between maternal solicitation and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>20</sub>: There is no significant mediating effect of adolescent disclosure to mother in the relationship between maternal control and adolescent depression.
- H<sub>21</sub>: There is no significant mediating effect of adolescent disclosure to mother in the relationship between mother-child relationship and adolescent depression.

#### 1.6 Theoretical Background of the Study

A number of identified vulnerabilities to depression have been identified. It can be genetically vulnerable or personality, biological, cognitive as well as interpersonal vulnerabilities (Hankin, 2006). The present study presumed that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from one another. Adolescents' characteristics are not the only pointer to their depressive symptoms that developed later. However, a comprehensive picture of adolescents' self and their interaction with their environmental settings should be addressed in the research study on adolescents' depression.

The present study used the Social Cognition Theory and Ecological System Theory. Social Cognition Theory has been applied to explain human functioning mental health, including depression. Social Cognition Theory was developed by Bandura (1967) that emphasizes on triadic reciprocal determinism. The reciprocal determinism is the product of interacting dynamics among behaviour, environment and cognition or person. The three key factors operate interactively. In other words, the environment can influence one's behaviour and vice versa one's behaviour can influence his or her cognition and the cognition can influence one's behaviour. On top of the same concept, the environmental influence on one's cognition and cognition influences on the environment as well.

The developmental outcome of adolescents can be enhanced from the dynamics of positive social environment. The environment is a social context that provides opportunity for one to observe and learn from agents in the environment. For example, parent-child relationship could reduce the tendency of negative developmental outcome of adolescents through the influences on adolescent's behaviour and cognition. Considering the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory, human development is influenced by five environmental systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Individuals encountered different environments or systems through their life span and the interaction within the environments or systems influenced their behaviour. Each system influences one's development in different ways. For instance, microsystem refers to the influences an individual has in direct contact with family, peer and school. Mesosystem involves the interaction between two or more microsystems of the individual. In addition, an individual does not play active role in exosystem. The individual is indirectly influenced by the microsystems which the individual comes into contact with. Macrosystem is norm-related system. It refers to cultural influences, such as religion, belief and cultural value. Last but not least, chronosystem is about the influences from on-going life changes.

The present study focused on the interaction of adolescent within his or her microsystem. To be specific, the focus will be on adolescents' family system. Family system is an important social context for adolescent to learn throughout their development. Because adolescents spend longer time in the family system, parents become the adolescents' earlier social agents that interact with them. For adolescents who have close bonding with their parents, their depressive moods could be lessened if the parents respond with warmth and cohesiveness. The parental behaviours such as solicitation and control are ways for parents to express affection to their adolescent.

The triadic reciprocal determinism in family system was addressed in this study. Parents' behaviours such as solicitation and control influence on their adolescents' developmental outcome. Next is solicitation associated with low level of depression among adolescents. Parents solicit in order to get to know about their adolescents' where-about. The solicitation effort could be in the forms of asking directly, involving in their adolescents' activities or asking their adolescents' friends. Parents can help when they discovered their adolescents were facing problems. It is a hard move for adolescents to reach out for help as they do not want to be viewed as helpless. Some of them are not even aware that they are facing emotional problem such as depression. Hence, parents' solicitation would be a welcomed relief for adolescents to reach out for help as parents for them to develop, resulting in less depression. This is the influence of environment on adolescents' cognition.

Moreover, adolescents' cognition and behaviour are influenced by the environment too. Adolescents who are involved in disciplinary problem demand their parents' attention. Parents would change their adolescents' behaviour by recreating a positive environment for them. This is parents' effort to help mitigate negative and depressed feeling through a supportive environment in a family system. It influences on adolescents' behaviours as well as caring parents are associated with lesser adolescents' disciplinary problem. The framework used in present study based on Social Cognition Theory and Ecological System Theory will discussed in detail later.

#### 1.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Emotional development is an important area of adolescent development. Among all, family is the most influential system as adolescents spend most of their time with family (Giordano, 2003). Family system is the foundation for adolescents' development as family is the setting where adolescents have the most interaction. Parents are adolescent's early social agents. Figure 1.1 below show an overview of the conceptual framework for the present study. It outlines the relationships among predictor variables for depression. The conceptual framework was developed based on Social Cognition Theory and Ecological System Theory.

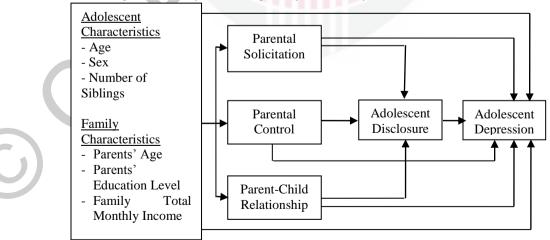


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework: Predictors of Depression among Adolescents with Disciplinary Problems in Selangor, Malaysia

Social Cognition Theory's triadic reciprocal determinism model works to determine depression among adolescents with disciplinary problem. The variables to be considered in understanding depression among adolescent with disciplinary problem are the three key factors proposed in Social Cognition Theory: parental solicitation, parental control and parent-child relationship (environment resulted from parental behaviours), adolescent's disclosure (behaviour) and depression (cognition). Other characteristics, such as adolescents' age, sex, number of siblings, parents' age, parents' education level and family monthly income were included in the framework.

According to the Ecological System Theory, an individual is influenced by the five environment systems proposed (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As stated, the present study focused on the family system of adolescents to determine the predictors of depression among adolescents with disciplinary problem. Parents are the main social agents who interact with adolescents the most in the family system. The interaction between parents and adolescents on reducing depression among adolescents with disciplinary problem could be explained through Social Cognition Theory.

In the theory, one's developmental outcome is the reciprocal influences from environment, cognition and behaviour (Bandura, 1967). In the present study, adolescents with disciplinary problem are less likely to let their parents know about it. Adolescents are afraid that their parents will be angry with them and this reduce their willingness to disclose to their parents about their where-about.

As adolescents disclose more about their where-about to their parents, this causes their parents to respond to them with warmth. The environment created by the parents is to encourage adolescents' willingness to disclose to them. The act that parents performed to encourage adolescents' disclose could be parental solicitation (Hamza & Willoughby, 2011; Keijsers et al., 2010), parental control (Soenens et al., 2007; Stattin and Kerr, 2000) and parent-child relationship (Purcell, 2012; Smetana and Metzger, 2008).

Adolescents hold the key to access to their where-about. Therefore, parents need to put effort in encouraging adolescents to disclose in order to allow parents to show their concern and guidance as if they were informed about the adolescents' where-about. Adolescents who received care and concern from the environment would be less likely to develop negative thoughts. This could reduce depression among adolescents with disciplinary problem. Parental behaviour also determines adolescents' cognition. Rumination is one of the vulnerabilities that determines depression. Rumination is a negative cognition pattern, characterized by adolescents' tendency to blame themselves for the problems they encountered. As parents create a supportive environment for adolescents, it would change the adolescents' cognition pattern which could reduce their depressive symptoms.

Moreover, the present study observed that adolescent disclosure could explain how parental solicitation, parental control and parent-child relationship predict on adolescent depression. This assumption was made upon the active participation of an adolescent in his or her life. Adolescents hold their information which no one has access to unless they are willing to disclose (Kerr & Stattin, 2000). No matter how hard the parents solicit, nurture a positive relationship with adolescents, or even if the parents tried to control the adolescent behaviour by restricting their activities, there is still limitation in accessing adolescents' where-about as adolescents are the primary sources of information (Kerr et al., 1999). Therefore, adolescent disclosure was assigned as the role of mediator in the framework for the present study and used to examine its mediating effect in the relationship between parental solicitation, parental control and parent-child relationship with adolescent depression.

#### 1.8 Definition of Terminology

This part describes the conceptual and operational definitions for the variables used in this study.

#### **1.8.1 Adolescent Characteristics**

Conceptual definition

Adolescent characteristics refer to the profile of individual aged ranging from 10 to 19 years old in the period of human growth (World Health Organization, 2014).

Operational definition

In the present study, adolescent characteristics refer to adolescent's age, sex and number of siblings.

#### **1.8.2 Family Characteristics**

Conceptual definition

Family characteristics refer to the profile of inter-relationship system formed by biological members who relate themselves as father, mother and child (Smith, 2015).

Operational definition

In the present study, family characteristics refer to parents' age, parents' education level and family monthly income.

### **1.8.3 Parental Solicitation**

Conceptual definition

Parental solicitation is defined as adolescents' perception of parents' acts in obtaining information through asking, active participating as long as it leads to acknowledgement of parents regarding adolescents' where-about (Waizenhofen et al., 2004).

#### Operational definition

Parental solicitation refers to respondents' score in Parental Solicitation Questionnaire (Kerr & Stattin, 2000) on both father and mother. Higher score indicates higher level of adolescents' perception towards the parents' effort to obtain information.

#### **1.8.4 Parental Control**

Conceptual definition

Parental control is characterized as perceived amount of supervision and rules asserted by parents towards the adolescents (Amato, 1990).

Operational definition

Parental control refers to the scoring in Parental Control Questionnaire (Kerr & Stattin, 2000) on both father and mother. Higher score indicates higher level of adolescents' perception towards the parents' authoritative implementation over them.

#### **1.8.5 Parent-Child Relationship**

Conceptual definition

Parent-child relationship is described as the connectivity and bonding qualities, including closeness, influences, attachment and investment of parent and their children (Hinde, 1997).

Operational definition

Parent-child relationship refers to respondents' score on Family Attachment and Family Bonding Scale (Michael, 2002) on both father and mother. Higher score indicates stronger bonding between parents and their adolescents.

#### **1.8.6 Adolescent Disclosure**

Conceptual definition

Adolescent disclosure is expressed through adolescents' willingness to share their information on where-about, activities involved (Smetana et al., 2006) and private thoughts with their parents (Berndt & Hanna, 1995).

Operational definition

Adolescent disclosure refers to the scoring in Adolescent Disclosure Questionnaire (Smetana, 2000) on both father and mother. Higher score indicates higher level of adolescents' willingness to share personal information with parents.

#### **1.8.7 Adolescent Depression**

#### Conceptual definition

Adolescent depression is the prolonged yet persistent feelings of despondency and dejection, which is typically accompanied by loss of interest in life activities (Rashid & Heider, 2008).

Operational definition

Adolescent depression refers to the scoring in Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) (Kovac, 1985). Higher score indicates higher level of sadness and gloominess experienced by adolescents.

#### 1.9 Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted among secondary students in Selangor, specifically targeting only on adolescents who have disciplinary problems in schools. Thus, the results reported reflect only on this particular population and the findings could not be generalized to the general population.

In addition, it depends solely on the adolescents' response to the set of questionnaire. The validity and reliability of the data collected relied highly upon the genuineness of the respondents. Thus, trustworthiness of this present study is limited due to the possibility that adolescents answer the questionnaire dishonestly to illustrate characteristics they intended to reflect which do not truly reflect themselves.

The present study examined both father and mother for the following variables: parental solicitation, parental control, parent-child relationship and disclosure to parents. A comprehensive examination for both father and mother has provided the present study with a clearer picture of the problem. However, the limitation encountered here was the lack of data on the father figure, especially in the parenting related field to enrich the literature reviews for the present study.

Last but not least, there might be other potential factors that would contribute to adolescents' depression besides those employed in the present study. For instance, unpleasant life experiences or a bully incident could contribute to one's depression. Comparing depression symptoms across urban and rural areas might be significant too. Hence, multi-factors should be taken into consideration for future studies.

#### **1.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter starts with the background of the study. It was then followed by statement of problem, significance of the study, objectives of the study, research hypotheses, theoretical background of the study, conceptual framework and definitions of terminology. It ended with the limitations of the study. The next chapter will be literature review which will discuss previous related studies related to the present study.

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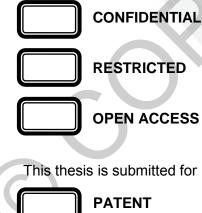
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