PARENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTROL AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN SCHOOL OF MALAYSIAN ADOLESCENTS: SOCIAL COMPETENCE AS A MEDIATOR

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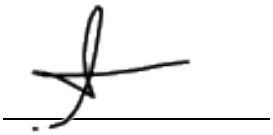
APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled "Parental Psychological Control and Subjective Well-Being in School of Malaysian Adolescents: Social Competence as a Mediator" prepared and submitted by Bernicia Gilbert Tan Ze San, Daphne Kho Wei Qian, and Teh Chai Horng in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Psychology is hereby accepted.



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Abstract

Adolescence represents a critical developmental phase in which parenting practices and social functioning significantly influence overall well-being. Parental psychological control (PPC) is frequently associated with adverse outcomes; however, its impact may differ based on cultural context and the social resources available to adolescents. Hence, this study investigated the mediating role of social competence (SC) in the relationship between PPC and adolescents' subjective well-being in school (SWBS) in Malaysia. A quantitative, correlational, and longitudinal design was employed, with self-administered questionnaires administered in two phases. Multistage cluster random sampling produced a final sample of 277 Malaysian secondary school students (M = 14.84 years, SD = .74; 46.2% males, 53.8% females) from five states in Malaysia. Instruments included the Parental Psychological Control Scale-Youth Self-Report, the Perceived Social Competence Scale, and the Brief Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being in School Scale. Results indicated that PPC did not directly predict SWBS but was positively associated with SC, which in turn positively predicted SWBS. Mediation analysis confirmed that SC fully mediated the PPC and SWBS relationship, suggesting that PPC influenced adolescents' SWBS only indirectly through its effect on SC. These findings contribute to the growing literature by extending the understanding of PPC and adolescents' SWBS in the Malaysian cultural context. Practical implications include integrating social-emotional learning programs in schools, guiding parents toward less controlling strategies, and fostering family-school partnerships to enhance adolescents' well-being in the Malaysian context.

***Keywords**:* Parental Psychological Control, Social Competence, Subjective Well-Being, Adolescents, Malaysia

Subject Area: HQ793-799.2 Youth. Adolescents. Teenagers

DECLARATION

We declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of our own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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Abbreviations

1.	APA	-	American Psychological Association
2.	ASEAN	-	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
3.	BASWBSS	-	Brief Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being in School Scale
4.	CI	-	Confidence Interval
5.	IPH	-	Institute for Public Health
6.	JPN	-	Jabatan Pendidikan Malaysia
7.	KPM	-	Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia
8.	K–S test	-	Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test
9.	NHMS	-	National Health Morbidity Survey
10.	PCS-YSR	-	Parental Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report
11.	PPC	-	Parental Psychological Control
12.	PSCS	-	Perceived Social Competence Scale
13.	SC	-	Social Competence
14.	SDT	-	Self-Determination Theory
15.	SERC	-	The Scientific and Ethical Review Committee
16.	SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
17.	SWBS	-	Subjective Well-Being in School
18.	VIF	-	Variance Inflation Factor

Chapter I

Introduction

Background of the Study

Adolescence represents the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, characterized by adolescents' ongoing mental, physical, and psychological changes (Hashmi & Fayyaz, 2022; Cunsolo, 2017). This period also serves as an opportunity to cultivate knowledge and skills, learn to navigate emotions and relationships, and acquire the attributes and abilities essential for fully engaging in the lives of adolescents (World Health Organization, 2020). According to Backes and Bonnie (2019), personal relationships and settings transform during this period, with peers and romantic partners assuming greater significance. Thus, during the adolescent stage, social development is instrumental in influencing an individual's identity, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being, as this phase is characterised by substantial transformations in social interactions and the cultivation of essential social skills (Sedona Sky Academy, 2024). Consequently, social competence constitutes a fundamental element in the development of mental health (Romppanen et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to investigate the matter of social competence in adolescents.

The significance of social development in adolescence is especially relevant in Malaysia, where declining fertility rates, ranking as the third lowest in the ASEAN region, have shaped family dynamics and parenting expectations (The Straits Times, 2024). According to The Star (2024), the total fertility rate among Malaysians has experienced a significant decrease, falling from 2.1 children per female in 2010 to 1.6 children per female in 2022. Consequently, contemporary parents frequently seek out teachable moments, and numerous opportunities are available (Crawford, 2021). As a result, parents often establish excessively high educational expectations for their children, engage in inappropriate educational practices, impose significant psychological pressure, and may contribute to the

development of behavioural disorders or depression (Chen et al., 2022). While engaged parenting contributes positively to the development of children's cognitive and emotional skills, excessive parental direction may, in certain instances, be counterproductive (Crawford, 2021). This is because parental control primarily focuses on the imposition of parents' thoughts and emotions upon children, thereby restricting the psychological and behavioural autonomy of the adolescent (Nie et al., 2022). Therefore, as teenagers' demands for independence and privacy significantly escalate during adolescence (Hutchinson & Ellis, 2024), issues arise when parents attempt to control their children's actions, not only through established rules but also through manipulation (Norton, 2020). With that being said, parental psychological control behaviours, which include over-intervention, excessive expectations, and emotional manipulation, adversely affect adolescents' self-control. This limitation not only hinders the development of autonomy in adolescents but may also result in diminished coping abilities and adaptability when confronted with challenges (Lin & Li, 2024). Hence, it is crucial to examine the issues surrounding parental psychological control.

Besides, the subjective well-being of adolescents in schools has emerged as a significant global issue, with numerous practitioners and scholars highlighting its critical importance in light of the increasing challenges associated with school-related issues, including bullying, academic pressures, and parental influences. These challenges are particularly pronounced in Malaysia, where the incidence of bullying remains alarmingly high. Between 2021 and October 2023, there were 9,207 recorded cases of bullying in schools across Malaysia (Nor Ain, 2023). As reported by the Institute for Public Health (IPH, 2022), 8.6% of adolescents indicated that they had experienced bullying within the preceding 30 days. Therefore, bullying in Malaysian schools remains a considerable issue (Azalea & Shauqi, 2024). According to Chai (2018), bullying can lead to lasting consequences, as adolescents who are involved, whether as victims, perpetrators, or witnesses, may encounter

anxiety and depression that, if not addressed, can extend into adulthood. This may also be accompanied by heightened risks of behavioural problems, physical health issues, and suicidal thoughts (Sabramani et al., 2021). Hence, it is crucial to acknowledge that bullying is one of the contributing factors to adolescent suicide attempts (Liew et al., 2023). According to the Institute for Public Health (IPH) (2022), the prevalence of suicidal ideation, planning, and attempts among adolescents was found to be 13.1%, 10.0%, and 9.5%, respectively.

Building upon the challenges faced in schools, academic pressure further compounds the subjective well-being issues for Malaysian adolescents. A significant volume of homework is mandated for school children aged seven to 17 (Raveen, 2024), contributing to this increasing pressure. According to Mohd (2023), the prevailing educational system, characterised by a significant focus on academic achievement, has unintentionally imposed an excessive burden on young students. Consequently, many students regard their school experience as both unengaging and demanding. Moreover, as school children are generally expected to achieve specific goals, the continuous pressure to attain increasingly superior outcomes can be particularly challenging, often resulting in elevated levels of anxiety and stress due to the expectations for high academic performance (Free Malaysia Today, 2021; Rebecca, 2023). According to the Institute for Public Health (IPH, 2022), 26.9% of adolescents in Malaysia indicated experiencing symptoms of depression. Thus, it is both significant and pressing to examine the subjective well-being of Malaysian adolescents within the school context. Taken together, these concerns highlight the need to investigate the relationship between social competence, parental psychological control, and adolescents' subjective well-being in Malaysian schools.

Problem Statement

Practical Knowledge

Over the past 30 years, Malaysia has witnessed a striking decrease in fertility rates,

which have fallen from 4.9 births per woman in 1970 to 1.8 in 2018 (Jegasothy et al., 2020). Consequently, this demographic shift indicates that parents might be increasingly emphasising and exerting pressure on their children, which could lead to a heightened level of parental psychological control. Ultimately, leading to higher educational achievement and societal success, parents may exert greater control over their children's academic and social activities, frequently utilising psychological control methods (Chen et al., 2024).

Simultaneously, the National Health Morbidity Survey (NHMS) has indicated an alarming rise in the incidence of mental health disorders among adolescents in Malaysia, with prevalence rates having doubled since 2019, now standing at 16.5%. Adolescent's poor mental health has been linked to several negative outcomes, including low academic performance (Agnafors et al., 2020), suicidal thoughts and behaviours (Jones, 2022), absenteeism (Heyne et al., 2022), and diminished future prospects, such as reduced employment opportunities and ongoing mental health challenges in adulthood (López-López et al., 2020). This significant impact underscores the importance of addressing the factors that influence adolescents' mental health, including parent-child interactions, which play a vital role in the risk of developing mental health problems (Fegert et al., 2020). Therefore, this study will examine the growing concern of parental psychological control as a predictor of subjective well-being in school among adolescents in Malaysia.

Knowledge Gaps

Based on available evidence, the existing literature does not directly investigate parental psychological control as a predictor of subjective well-being in school among adolescents, and there is a notable absence of studies that explore social competence as a mediator in understanding the impact of parental psychological control on subjective well-being in school. Research indicates that parental psychological control adversely affects adolescents' autonomy and emotional well-being, frequently resulting in increased anxiety

and depression (Bai et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2024). Such negative impacts hinder adolescents' ability to proficiently navigate academic and social challenges, thereby diminishing their subjective well-being in school.

In a similar vein, social competence has emerged as an essential component in promoting emotional regulation and the development of relationships, both of which are linked to improved well-being outcomes (Rockhill et al., 2009; Wang, 2009). Nevertheless, these studies rarely investigate the potential mediating role of social competence in the relationship between parental psychological control and subjective well-being in school, especially in the context of adolescents' academic lives. The existing body of literature mainly examines relevant constructs in isolation, disregarding the interconnected pathways that indicate parental psychological control may impact subjective well-being in school through social competence. Therefore, this study aims to enhance the existing literature by linking the three variables and evaluating the role of social competence as a mediating factor.

Moreover, the existing literature concerning parental psychological control has predominantly focused on particular cultural contexts, resulting in a lack of exploration of multi-ethnic adolescents in Malaysia. Most research regarding parental psychological control has been conducted among monoculture-dominated countries such as China (Bai et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2024; Deng et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2020) as well as in Western countries (Ingoglia et al., 2021; Rodger & Kealy, 2024; Teuber et al., 2021; Williams & McKinney, 2023). As established by prior literature, limited or no published studies have addressed multi-ethnic adolescents, especially within the Malaysian context, indicating a significant gap in the literature. Therefore, the findings may not be entirely generalisable to Malaysian culture due to significant variations in social norms and cultural expectations across countries. Considering Malaysia's distinct multi-ethnic structure, it is essential to investigate how parental psychological control operates within this diverse

cultural framework and its effects on adolescents' subjective well-being in school and social competence.

Furthermore, current research often utilises cross-sectional designs, highlighting the need for longitudinal studies to capture developmental trajectories and determine causality over time effectively (Bai et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Salgado et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2020). The conclusions derived from these designs do not establish a definitive causal relationship among parental psychological control, social competence, and subjective well-being in the school context. For example, although parental psychological control may be associated with lower subjective well-being, it is also possible that adolescents' subjective well-being and social competence affect their understanding of parental behaviours. The intricacies highlighted here emphasise the necessity for longitudinal studies to enhance a better understanding of the long-term effects and interactions at play.

Therefore, this research aimed to fill in this gap by tackling the question of whether parental psychological control negatively predicts the subjective well-being in school and social competence of adolescents in Malaysia and whether social competence positively predicts the subjective well-being in school among adolescents in Malaysia. This study will also examine the potential mediating effect of social competence in the relationship between parental psychological control and subjective well-being in school among adolescents in Malaysia.

Research Question

1. Does parental psychological control (time 1) negatively predict the subjective well-being in school (time 2) of adolescents in Malaysia?
2. Does parental psychological control (time 1) negatively predict the social competence (time 1) of adolescents in Malaysia?

3. Does social competence (time 1) positively predict the subjective well-being in school (time 2) of adolescents in Malaysia?
4. Is there a mediating effect of social competence (time 1) in the relationship between parental psychological control (time 1) and subjective well-being in school (time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia?

Research Objectives

Main Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of social competence (time 1) in the relationship between parental psychological control (time 1) and subjective well-being in school (time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the relationship between parental psychological control (time 1) and subjective well-being in school (time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.
2. To identify the relationship between parental psychological control (time 1) and social competence (time 1) among adolescents in Malaysia.
3. To identify the relationship between social competence (time 1) and subjective well-being in school (time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.
4. To examine the mediating role of social competence (time 1) in the relationship between parental psychological control (time 1) and subjective well-being in school (time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.

Hypotheses

H_1: Parental psychological control (time 1) negatively predicts subjective well-being in school (time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.

H_2: Parental psychological control (time 1) negatively predicts social competence (time 1) among adolescents in Malaysia.

H_3: Social competence (time 1) positively predicts subjective well-being in school (time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.

H_4: Social competence significantly mediates the relationship between parental psychological control (time 1) and subjective well-being in school (time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.

Significance of Study

This study has important implications for improving adolescents' subjective well-being in schools, especially within the Malaysian context. There are limited recent studies exploring the linkage between the influence of parental psychological control on adolescents' subjective well-being in schools, particularly regarding its underlying mechanism via social competence. Therefore, this study seeks to address the research gap by examining similar relationships within a Malaysian sample. The findings of this study have the potential to strengthen previous research while also introducing fresh perspectives for discussion regarding the links between parental psychological control, subjective well-being in school, and social competence as a mediator.

By addressing this gap, the study provides valuable insights for parents and educators, highlighting the critical role of parental psychological control in influencing adolescents' social competence and subjective well-being in school. By acknowledging these impacts, parents can self-reflect on their behaviours and modify their parenting strategies to more effectively nurture their children's emotional and social growth, thereby promoting healthier relationships between parents and children. Therefore, the research holds significant importance for educators and policymakers, including the Ministry of Education, as it offers crucial insights for them in promoting positive parenting practices and enhancing adolescent's subjective well-being.

Moreover, the scarcity of research focused on parental psychological control in Malaysia, as mentioned in the problem statement, highlights the necessity for culturally

sensitive interventions that are specifically designed for the country's diverse ethnic landscape. Current research primarily focused on Chinese and Western populations may not adequately reflect the dynamics present within Malaysian families, thereby constraining the generalisability of these findings. It is crucial to address this gap, as it offers culturally specific insights into the effect of parental psychological control on adolescents in Malaysian society. These findings are essential in enhancing the comprehension of cross-cultural parenting dynamics, thus contributing to the global knowledge surrounding adolescent development.

Additionally, the reliance on cross-sectional research within this domain limits the comprehension of the causal relationships among parental psychological control, social competence, and subjective well-being in school. The research highlights the importance of longitudinal studies in effectively establishing causal relationships among parental psychological control, social competence and subjective well-being in schools among adolescents. This research contributes to the existing body of literature by offering empirical evidence regarding the influence of parental psychological control on adolescents' developmental outcomes over time, thereby affirming its significance in relation to social competence and subjective well-being in school. Additionally, the findings of this study not only address a significant gap in the current literature but also enhance the broader academic discourse surrounding parenting dynamics and adolescent development.

Definition of Terms

Parental Psychological Control

Conceptual definition. Parental psychological control refers to the parenting behaviours that intrude upon the thoughts and feelings of children (Barber, 1996). This form of control is characterised by parents who employ manipulative techniques excessively, including guilt induction, shaming, and withdrawal of affection (Bleys et al., 2018; Lin & Li,

2024). Psychological control is defined by subtle strategies that include invalidating emotions and establishing a context in which parental approval is contingent upon the children's behaviour, employing both coercive and passive-aggressive methods (Barber et al., 1994; Nanda et al., 2011). This control interferes with the satisfaction of adolescents' fundamental psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, thereby affecting their overall subjective well-being (Lin & Li, 2024; Romm & Metzger, 2018).

Operational definition. The Parental Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR) developed by Tian et al., (2014) will be used to measure the extent of psychological control exerted by parents over their children. This scale focuses on aspects of parental behaviour that undermine the child's psychological and emotional autonomy, such as inducing guilt, withdrawing love, and using psychological manipulation. Higher scores indicate greater perceived parental psychological control.

Social Competence

Conceptual Definition. Social competence is the ability to navigate interpersonal relationships and social situations effectively and skilfully (APA, 2023). It involves forming and maintaining positive relationships, adapting to various social contexts, and demonstrating skills such as problem-solving, emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication (Orpinas, 2010; Owens & S. Johnston-Rodriguez, 2010). For adolescents, social competence is expressed through effective engagement with peers and adults, reflecting their emotional regulation and interpersonal skills during social interactions (Junge et al., 2020). According to Gresham (1988), its key components include adaptive behaviours (e.g., language development and functional independence), interpersonal skills (e.g., cooperation and play), self-perception (e.g., ethical actions), and task engagement (e.g., problem-solving and focus). Therefore, social competence constitutes a fundamental aspect of positive development in adolescents, playing a crucial role in their psychosocial adjustment and mental health.

Operational Definition. Social competence will be measured using the Perceived Social Competence Scale (PSCS; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2007). The PSCS assesses social competence skills and prosocial behaviour in children and young adults. Higher scores in this assessment would indicate greater levels of perceived social competence.

Subjective Well-Being in School (SWBS)

Conceptual Definition. Subjective well-being in school (SWBS) refers to students' personal evaluations and emotional experiences related to their school lives (Tian et al., 2014). It consists of three distinct but interconnected components: school satisfaction, positive affect in school, and negative affect in school. School satisfaction refers to a student's subjective evaluation of their school life, based on internal standards across various domains such as academic performance and teacher-student relationships. Positive affect in school describes the frequency of positive emotions, such as happiness and joy, that students experience during their school days. In contrast, negative affect in school refers to the frequency of negative emotions, such as sadness and frustration, that students feel in the school environment (Tian et al., 2014).

Operational Definition. Brief Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being in School Scale (BASWBSS, Barber, 1996) will be used to measure subjective well-being (SWB) in school among adolescents, focusing on two components: cognitive (school satisfaction) and affective (positive and negative affect in school). Higher composite scores obtained by summing the scores of the school satisfaction and affect in school subscales indicate greater subjective well-being in school.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Upon reviewing the existing literature, it is essential to acknowledge that most studies do not directly investigate the particular relationships among the variables pertinent to this research. Currently, there is an absence of comprehensive studies that connect parental psychological control, social competence, and subjective well-being in school. As a result, insights have been obtained from closely related constructs.

Parental psychological control (PPC) is frequently examined through concepts such as authoritarian parenting, controlling parenting, and helicopter parenting, each of which encapsulates various aspects of over-involvement and restrictive parenting practices. Similarly, social competence (SC) is evaluated through an array of interconnected concepts, encompassing social skills, interpersonal competence, social outcomes, and behaviours that signify deficiencies in social competence, such as internalising and externalising problems, social avoidance, and poor peer relationships. Ultimately, subjective well-being in school (SWBS) is examined by utilising constructs that bear analogous meanings, including subjective well-being, satisfaction with school experiences, psychological well-being, and overall life satisfaction.

Subjective Well-being in School

SWBS reflects students' self-assessment of their school experiences, encompassing both cognitive evaluations (e.g., satisfaction with school) and emotional experiences (e.g., positive and negative emotions) (Tian et al., 2014). Students with high SWBS report greater satisfaction with their academic life, learning experiences, and relationships with classmates and teachers. This holistic perspective extends beyond academic performance to include interpersonal relationships, leading to greater overall life satisfaction and lower stress levels (Corominas et al., 2021).

Past studies have highlighted the critical role of SWBS in adolescents' overall development. Academically, SWBS predicts greater adaptability, higher academic achievement, academic focus and fosters positive attitudes toward learning by enhancing performance, perseverance, and adaptability (Altıntaş & Nur, 2024; Putwain et al., 2020). Socially, SWBS promotes stronger interpersonal relationships, stronger social support, acceptance, mutual respect, and successful adaptation in diverse educational settings (Altıntaş and Nur, 2024; Avedissian & Alayan, 2021; Putwain et al., 2020).

Psychologically, SWBS helps reduce stress and anxiety, building resilience against challenges such as stereotype threats and discrimination (Altıntaş & Nur, 2024; Anser et al., 2021). High SWB in students correlates with better mental health and enhanced creativity, whereas low SWB is linked to poorer mental health and diminished quality of life (Avedissian & Alayan, 2021; Engel de Abreu et al., 2021; Salavera et al., 2020). Moreover, adolescent well-being fosters a balance between mind, body, and spirit, promoting resilience and self-fulfilment. This balance allows adolescents to make autonomous decisions, avoid risk-taking, and pursue a higher quality of life. The outcomes include greater hope, meaning, and a healthier future, potentially leading to eudaimonia—the pursuit of personal growth and life's true meaning (Avedissian & Alayan, 2021).

In conclusion, SWBS is vital for adolescents' development, impacting their academic, psychological, and social outcomes. High SWBS enhances academic performance, adaptability, and positive learning attitudes, while also reducing stress and promoting resilience. It strengthens social relationships, fostering acceptance and respect in diverse environments. Hence, it is important to investigate variables that affect SWBS in order to understand the factors that contribute to adolescents' overall well-being and development, particularly in academic, psychological, and social contexts.

Parental Psychological Control and Subjective Well-being in School

Deng et al. (2024) revealed that the relationship between psychological control and adolescents' subjective well-being is characterised by a dynamic and bidirectional nature. High degrees of PPC were found to be associated with diminished subjective well-being among adolescents (Deng et al., 2024; Manindjo et al., 2023). Adolescents who experience high levels of psychological control frequently report feeling forced into conforming to their parents' expectations, leading to a sense of autonomy frustration that negatively impacts their overall well-being (Manindjo et al., 2023).

Authoritarian parenting, closely linked to psychological control in parenting (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020), diminishes cognitive flexibility, thereby constraining adolescents' capacity to manage stress effectively (Wu et al., 2020). This dynamic results in elevated levels of negative affect and lowered subjective well-being (Li et al., 2019). Similarly, Manindjo et al. (2023) found that elevated levels of psychological control, characterised by tactics such as guilt induction and love withdrawal, frequently lead to psychological distress, reduced autonomy, and a heightened risk of depression and anxiety in adolescents. The results highlight the detrimental effects of authoritarian and controlling parenting styles on the mental health and overall life satisfaction of adolescents.

Helicopter parenting, characterised by overprotective and controlling behaviours, is conceptually associated with PPC because both highlight an excessive degree of parental involvement and control over children's autonomy (Zhang et al., 2020). Srivastav and Lal Mathur (2020) emphasise the detrimental effects of helicopter parenting on adolescent subjective well-being, noting that such parenting styles restrict adolescents' capacity to confront developmentally suitable challenges, which in turn fosters dysfunctional coping mechanisms. The absence of autonomy leads to increased anxiety and diminished well-being. Consequently, these outcomes adversely affect satisfaction related to school experiences. Another study conducted by Güler Öztekin et al. (2024) underscores the association between

helicopter parenting and negative outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and lowered life satisfaction, which, in consequence, adversely affects subjective well-being in educational settings. The observed effects arise from its negative effect on adolescents' internal locus of control, resulting in a diminished sense of efficacy in handling academic and social obligations.

In conclusion, this review highlights the negative influence of PPC on adolescents' SWBS. The presence of high PPC is associated with a reduction in autonomy, an increase in psychological distress, and a rise in anxiety and depression, all of which may further hinder coping strategies and cognitive flexibility. These behaviours collectively lower adolescents' life satisfaction and their capacity to manage academic and social responsibilities effectively. Furthermore, although there exists a substantial body of literature concerning parenting styles and their impact on adolescent well-being, there is a scarcity of direct research that connects PPC with SWBS in the academic context. Hence, this study investigates the potential negative impact between PPC and SWBS.

Social Competence and Subjective Well-being in School

SC significantly predicts psychological well-being (Demirci, 2020; Gómez-López et al., 2022; Holopainen et al., 2011). Therefore, it is essential for adolescents to possess SC in order to attain higher levels of psychological well-being (Gómez-López et al., 2022). This is because social competencies, including sharing, cooperation, understanding others' perspectives, and inhibiting impulsive and disruptive behaviours, can significantly enhance adolescents' capacity for effective participation and engagement in learning environments (Holopainen et al., 2011). Thus, it enables adolescents to cultivate significant relationships and leverage social resources (Calmeiro et al., 2018). Consequently, SC can facilitate the development of individuals. According to Holopainen et al. (2011), the significance of cooperative skills in relation to SC has been demonstrated to play a crucial role in forecasting

an individual's psychological well-being. Cooperation skills are the abilities required to engage and operate effectively within diverse contexts, including collaborative learning and the pursuit of shared objectives. Hence, the development of cooperation skills may serve as a crucial factor in facilitating individuals' adaptation to evolving circumstances.

Furthermore, Ayllón-Salas and Fernández-Martín (2024) indicate a robust positive correlation between social competencies and life satisfaction. Individuals possessing elevated social competencies demonstrate improved capacities to understand the behaviours and emotions of others, thereby enabling them to make more precise evaluations of their environments. As a result, these individuals skilfully manage and navigate their own emotions, resulting in a greater frequency of positive emotional experiences. This, in turn, enhances their overall life satisfaction. Besides, a notable correlation between SC and happiness was identified. SC plays a crucial role in enhancing interpersonal relationships; consequently, the ability to effectively engage with others emerges as a significant determinant of happiness (Backman-Nord et al., 2021).

Moreover, a positive correlation exists between social skills and subjective well-being (Gralla, 2022; Leme et al., 2015; Pongutta & Vithayarungruangsri, 2023). According to Gralla (2022), social skills contribute to an individual's well-being by cultivating a social support system and fostering positive relationships, as they are correlated with elevated self-esteem and perceived social support, both of which are associated with enhanced well-being. Social skills also play a significant role in an individual's capacity to adapt to their social environment, which can ultimately influence personal and societal well-being. Therefore, individuals possessing strong social skills are likely to cultivate healthy and productive relationships, earn respect and acceptance from their peers, achieve success in both educational and professional endeavours, and experience elevated levels of life satisfaction (Pongutta & Vithayarungruangsri, 2023). Besides, social skills such as self-control, civility,

social resourcefulness, and an effective approach can enhance affectionate, positive, and reciprocal interactions between parents and children, thereby fostering psychological well-being (Leme et al., 2015). Consequently, it has been demonstrated that social skills can positively impact subjective well-being.

According to Baytemir (2016), interpersonal competence is a predictor of adolescents' subjective well-being. Adolescents with higher levels of interpersonal competence are likely to encounter fewer life challenges, which facilitates improved life management and contributes to enhanced happiness. In addition, cultivating appropriate and effective relationships with peers, educators, and others further augment their sense of happiness. Furthermore, Baytemir (2019) posits that interpersonal competence serves as a predictor of adolescents' happiness. Adolescents possessing interpersonal competence are more skilled at dealing with their developmental processes, contributing to enhanced happiness. As individuals' interpersonal competence improves, they tend to view their educational experiences in a more favourable light, thereby increasing their overall happiness. Additionally, effective peer communication enhances success, facilitates learning, and increases enjoyment, whereas solid relationships with friends and teachers promote positive emotions and contribute to overall life satisfaction. Consequently, these interpersonal competencies contribute to the overall happiness of adolescents.

In summary, SC is significantly linked to multiple dimensions of SWBS. Existing literature indicates that SC may play a significant role in adolescents' capacity to establish positive relationships and interact effectively within social contexts, potentially enhancing their overall well-being. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the literature examined did not directly address the role of S in predicting SWBS. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between SC and SWBS, thereby contributing more convincing evidence pertinent to this particular context.

Parental Psychological Control and Social Competence

PPC is manifested through various intrusive behaviours that undermine children's psychological autonomy and competency. Research shows that different parenting approaches, particularly those characterised by high control, can negatively influence children's adjustment and predict their well-being in domains of SC (S.M. Yasir et al., 2020; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2019).

Among these approaches, authoritarian parenting, which emphasises strict obedience and psychological dominance, is highly associated with the use of psychological control (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020). These controlling behaviours typically involve manipulation, criticism, or guilt induction to enforce compliance (Garcia et al., 2020; Gugliandolo et al., 2019), which is generally associated with negative psychological and social outcomes in children (S.M. Yasir et al., 2020). According to S.M. Yasir et al. (2020), authoritarian homes typically lack open dialogue, limiting the development of SC — a key factor for forming successful relationships and navigating social situations effectively. Children raised in these environments often display anxiety, withdrawal, lack of self-reliance, and dependence on authority figures for decision-making (S.M. Yasir et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2024).

Additionally, a positive association has been found between PPC and internalising (Flamant et al., 2020) and externalising behaviours (Bai et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2024; Flamant et al., 2020), which reflects deficits in SC (Hukkelberg et al., 2019). Studies show that when parents exert high psychological control, their children are at a greater risk of developing poor peer relationships (Chen et al., 2024). Specifically, high levels of psychological control are linked to increased social avoidance, which in turn significantly predicts externalising behaviours such as antisocial behaviour, peer rejection, and aggression (Chen et al., 2024; Hukkelberg et al., 2019). These behaviours are negative manifestations of

SC, as they signal difficulties navigating social situations and engaging in adaptive peer interactions (Hukkelberg et al., 2019).

In short, PPC, common in authoritarian parenting, can harm an adolescent's ability to develop SC. Using tactics like manipulation and guilt, this parenting style limits open communication and emotional growth. This often results in social anxiety, avoidance, poor peer relationships, and difficulties such as aggression and conflict with others. However, as far as we are aware, no study to date has directly examined the relationship between PPC and SC. While prior research has shown that psychological control negatively impacts various areas of child development, its specific effect on SC as an independent domain remains unclear. Therefore, this study explores whether a PPC negatively predicts SC.

Social Competence as a Mediator

Limited to no existing studies investigated the mediating role of SC in the association between PPC and SWBS among adolescents. Building upon the theoretical support of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this study seeks to address this gap. SDT offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the impact of external influences, such as parenting behaviours, on human motivation, personality, and well-being. Specifically, SDT posits that individuals have three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Environments that satisfy these needs foster intrinsic motivation, persistence, and creativity, whereas those that thwart these needs lead to diminished well-being and maladaptive behaviours (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In the context of the current study, adolescents often experience a lack of autonomy due to overbearing parental expectations or controlling behaviours. PPC children feel pressured to conform to their parent's expectations, leading to controlled motivation. Thus, children may engage in behaviours to avoid punishment or seek approval rather than acting out of intrinsic interest. This controlled environment suppresses their ability to act out of

intrinsic interest, reducing their sense of competence and undermining relatedness. As SDT's organismic-dialectical perspective suggests, such social contexts thwart the natural tendencies of adolescents to engage actively and develop a coherent sense of self, resulting in suboptimal psychological and social functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Hence, this explanation supported the framework development of this study guided by SDT.

To better understand the potential mediating role of SC in the relationship between PPC and adolescents' SWBS, it is helpful to examine existing research that explores SC as a mediator in related contexts. For example, a study conducted by Wang (2009) proved that positive perceptions of school climate enhance adolescents' SC, which subsequently promotes better regulation of negative emotions and stronger social problem-solving skills, protecting them from depression and deviant behaviours. Another study by Rockhill et al. (2009) also highlighted the central role of SC as a mediator in the relationship between comorbid psychiatric symptoms like depression and conduct problems and functional outcomes, such as low grades and global functioning. Furthermore, Holt (2014) also underscores how SC significantly mediated the relationship between parental attachment and first-year college students' social adjustment. The results proved that students with secure parental attachment demonstrated greater SC, facilitating their ability to form meaningful social connections and adjust to the new environment.

Despite the strong empirical evidence highlighting the detrimental effects of high PPC on adolescents' subjective well-being and SC, no study to date has explicitly examined the mediating role of SC in this relationship. This gap in the literature is significant given that high levels of PPC have a profound impact on adolescents' subjective well-being, primarily by undermining their autonomy and heightening psychological distress (Deng et al., 2024; Manindjo et al., 2023). Parenting styles that involve high PPC, such as authoritarian approaches, are closely linked to diminished cognitive flexibility and weakened coping

mechanisms (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). As a result, adolescents subjected to high PPC often feel excessive pressure to meet parental expectations, leading to frustration, a diminished sense of autonomy, and a negative impact on their overall well-being (Manindjo et al., 2023). These factors collectively contribute to poorer mental health outcomes and lower life satisfaction (Li et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2020). Given the significant impact of high PPC on adolescents' well-being, it is plausible that SC could serve as a mediator in this relationship. Since PPC often undermines adolescents' autonomy and their ability to cope with stress, it may also hinder the development of essential social skills needed for healthy peer relationships.

Therefore, to fully understand the impact of PPC on adolescents, it is essential to explore the potential mediating role of SC in how parent's controlling behaviours affect both subjective well-being and social development. This is said so as controlling behaviours, such as manipulation and guilt induction, will restrict open communication and hinder the development of essential social skills, ultimately leading to heightened anxiety, social withdrawal, and increased dependence on authority figures (S.M. Yasir et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2024; Garcia et al., 2020). These limitations in social interaction further exacerbate difficulties in forming and maintaining healthy peer relationships, as high PPC is strongly associated with social avoidance and externalizing behaviours, both of which reflect significant deficits in SC (Bai et al., 2020; Flamant et al., 2020; Hukkelberg et al., 2019). These patterns underscore the importance of exploring SC as a mediator, as it plays a critical role in adolescents' ability to navigate social and emotional challenges posed by PPC.

Given the significant role of SC in adolescent development, understanding its relationship with subjective well-being is crucial. The development of strong social skills is crucial for adolescents' overall well-being, as it influences their ability to manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and navigate social environments. Adolescents with high SC,

including cooperation, empathy, and emotional regulation, are better equipped to manage emotions and engage effectively in social interactions, which significantly enhances their well-being (Ayllón-Salas & Fernández-Martín, 2024; Backman-Nord et al., 2021). Furthermore, SC positively impacts life satisfaction and happiness by helping adolescents navigate social environments and fostering self-esteem and social support, both of which are vital for maintaining subjective well-being (Gralla, 2022; Pongutta & Vithayarungruangsri, 2023).

The above research provides strong empirical support for the bivariate association between the three variables, enabling us to hypothesise that SC mediates the relationship between PPC and SWBS. Specifically, PPC weakens SC, which subsequently lowers SWBS. Framed within the context of SDT, this relationship highlights how PPC undermines the fulfilment of core psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness, ultimately resulting in controlled motivation and psychological distress. In consequence, the lack of SC would ultimately hinder adolescents' ability to build healthy relationships and navigate social environments effectively, thereby amplifying internalising and externalising behaviours and further eroding SWBS.

Hence, SC is hypothesised to mediate the relationship between PPC and SWBS. PPC hinders SC, which in turn would reduce SWBS. To the best of our knowledge, the literature lacks direct research examining SC as a mediator between PPC and SWBS. Even in a similar vein, research on SC as mediators is also outdated. Therefore, the study aims to address this literature gap by investigating the mediating role of SC in the relationship between PPC and SWBS among adolescents in Malaysia.

Theoretical Framework

Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000) provides a framework for understanding the relationship between PPC, SC, and SWBS. According to SDT, healthy

development and well-being are contingent on fulfilling three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the ability to take initiative and feel ownership of one's actions, which is supported by experiences of interest and value, but it is undermined by external controls such as rewards or punishments. Competence involves a sense of mastery and growth, which is fostered by environments that offer optimal challenges, positive feedback, and opportunities for development. Relatedness is the sense of belonging and connection, nurtured through respect and care. When any of these needs are thwarted, it can damage an individual's motivation and well-being, whereas when they are satisfied, intrinsic motivation, personal growth, and subjective well-being are more likely to flourish (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

In the context of SDT, PPC disrupts adolescents' sense of relatedness by fostering emotional distance, which strains the parent–child relationship and inhibits the development of supportive connections with family and peers. This emotional disconnection increases the likelihood of social alienation (Ingoglia et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2022). PPC also limits adolescents' autonomy and relatedness, further compromising their ability to achieve subjective well-being, as they are unable to satisfy their basic psychological needs. Specifically, PPC undermines adolescents' autonomy by restricting self-expression and initiative through external controls, such as monitoring personal thoughts or emotions, resulting in feelings of constraint and diminished autonomy (Ingoglia et al., 2021). This pressure to conform to parental expectations also erodes adolescents' sense of competence, fostering insecurity and doubts about their abilities (Wei et al., 2022).

Diminished SC would lead to adverse impacts, as SC is a key predictor of adolescents' overall well-being (Demirci, 2020; Gómez-López et al., 2022). SC helps adolescents build meaningful relationships and effectively engage in social environments, which would enhance their emotional and psychological well-being (Calmeiro et al., 2018; Holopainen et

al., 2011). However, high levels of PPC hinder the development of essential social skills such as communication, empathy, and problem-solving (S.M. Yasir et al., 2020; Junge et al., 2020), which would negatively impact subjective well-being (Chen et al., 2024; Flamant et al., 2020). Low SC, which contributes to poor relationships with peers or teachers, further exacerbates the issue. Conversely, supportive relationships with friends or family have been shown to enhance SWBS. (Kiuru et al., 2020). In essence, social support plays a crucial role in mitigating psychological vulnerability and strengthening adolescents' ability to evaluate their well-being, ultimately improving their overall subjective well-being (Hu et al., 2022).

To sum it up, SDT supports this mediating framework by highlighting that restricting autonomy through PPC impairs the development of SC, which, in turn, undermines adolescents' SWBS. When PPC is high, adolescents often struggle to fulfil their fundamental needs for relatedness and autonomy. The controlling nature of PPC restricts their ability to build authentic relationships and make self-determined choices, leading to poor conflict resolution and difficulties in managing social interactions. As a result, this would disrupt their SC, which encompasses the skills necessary for forming and maintaining meaningful social connections. This decline in SC further hinders the satisfaction of relatedness and competence needs, both of which are vital for their SWBS. Ultimately, adolescents with lower SC may encounter challenges in peer interactions, feel a diminished sense of belonging, and lack the confidence to navigate social dynamics effectively, thereby compromising their subjective well-being. In other words, adolescents who experience high levels of PPC are more likely to exhibit lower SC, leading to lower levels of SWBS (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Conceptual Framework

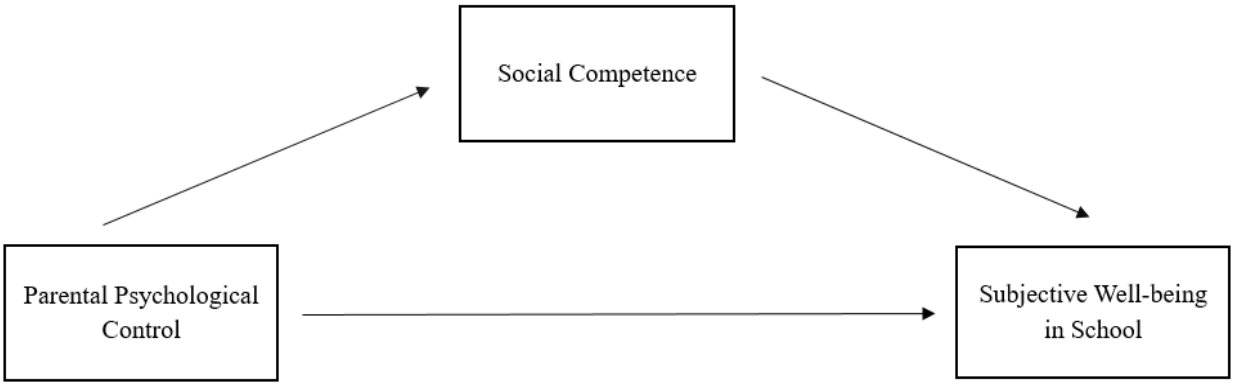
This study investigates the relationship between PPC (independent variable) and SWBS (dependent variable), as shown in Figure 1. The framework uses a single-headed

arrow to illustrate the direct effect of PPC on SWBS, with SC included as a mediating variable. Furthermore, this study also assessed the relationship between PPC and SC, as well as the relationship between SC and SWBS.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of this study, with the relationships between variables indicated based on previous empirical research. Therefore, we hypothesised that PPC negatively predicts SWBS and SC among adolescents in Malaysia, SC positively predicts SWBS among adolescents in Malaysia, and SC significantly mediates the relationship between PPC and SWBS among adolescents in Malaysia.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Mediating Role of Social Competence between Parental Psychological Control and Subjective Well-being in School



Chapter III

Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative research design, using self-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaires to collect data from participants. The questionnaires gathered information on parental psychological control, social competence, subjective well-being in school and demographic information. A quantitative approach, characterised by the systematic investigation of a defined research problem through the collection of quantifiable data and the application of statistical analyses, was chosen for its ability to provide precise representations of reality and robust evidence to support research hypotheses (Kittur, 2023; McCaffrey, 2023). Additionally, a correlational design was adopted to examine the relationships among variables without manipulating any independent variable. This design enabled the identification of associations between variables and was valued for its simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency in data collection (Curtis et al., 2016; Ghanad, 2023; Price et al., 2017).

Moreover, this study employed a longitudinal design, providing a comprehensive framework for examining the direction and magnitude of change over time through repeated measurements of the same individuals, allowing for the monitoring of developments in their social competence, peer relationships, and well-being (Caruana et al., 2015; Rajulton, 2001). Self-administered questionnaires were used as the primary data collection method. Survey-based research involves presenting structured questions to participants, enabling researchers to generalise findings from a sample to the broader population (Goodfellow, 2023). In this study, the questionnaires were designed for independent completion by respondents and were administered in a paper-and-pencil format, which promoted consistent and unbiased responses (Bourque & Fielder, 2003). The integration of a longitudinal and correlational design with structured self-administered questionnaires allowed the study to systematically investigate relationships among variables while capturing changes over time.

Population, Sample, Sample Size, and Sampling Method

Population

The population of this study consisted of Malaysian adolescents. According to UNICEF

(2015), adolescence is defined as the period of life between 10 and 19.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of Malaysian secondary school students from schools in five states: Melaka, Selangor, Pulau Pinang, Kedah and Sarawak. These states were selected randomly to guarantee geographical diversity and provide a representative cross-section of Malaysian adolescents. To be eligible for participation, the students had to fulfil the following inclusion criteria: (1) Students were enrolled as secondary school students in schools located within the randomly selected districts, (2) Students had acquired parental consent to participate in the study, (3) Students fell within the adolescent age range of 10–19 years, and (4) Students demonstrated sufficient proficiency in the language used for the study (e.g., Bahasa Malaysia, English or Chinese) to ensure comprehension of the questionnaire.

Participants were excluded from this study if they did not meet any of the following criteria: (1) Students who had transferred to other schools or withdrawn during the data collection period, (2) Students who failed to obtain parental consent for participation, (3) Students outside the age range of 10–19 years, (4) Students who explicitly declined to participate or did not respond to the study invitation, and (5) Students who lacked sufficient language proficiency to ensure comprehension of the questionnaire.

Sample Size Calculation

The Monte Carlo power analysis was performed to determine the necessary sample size to attain a statistical power of .80 for the indirect effect within a single mediator model, wherein X denoted the predictor (parental psychological control), M signified the mediator (social competence), and Y represented the outcome variable (subjective well-being in school). Using correlations between variables and their corresponding standard deviations as inputs, the analysis, based on 10,000 replications and 2,000 Monte Carlo draws per replication, determined that a sample size of 100 participants was needed to attain 80% power at a 95% confidence level (CI).

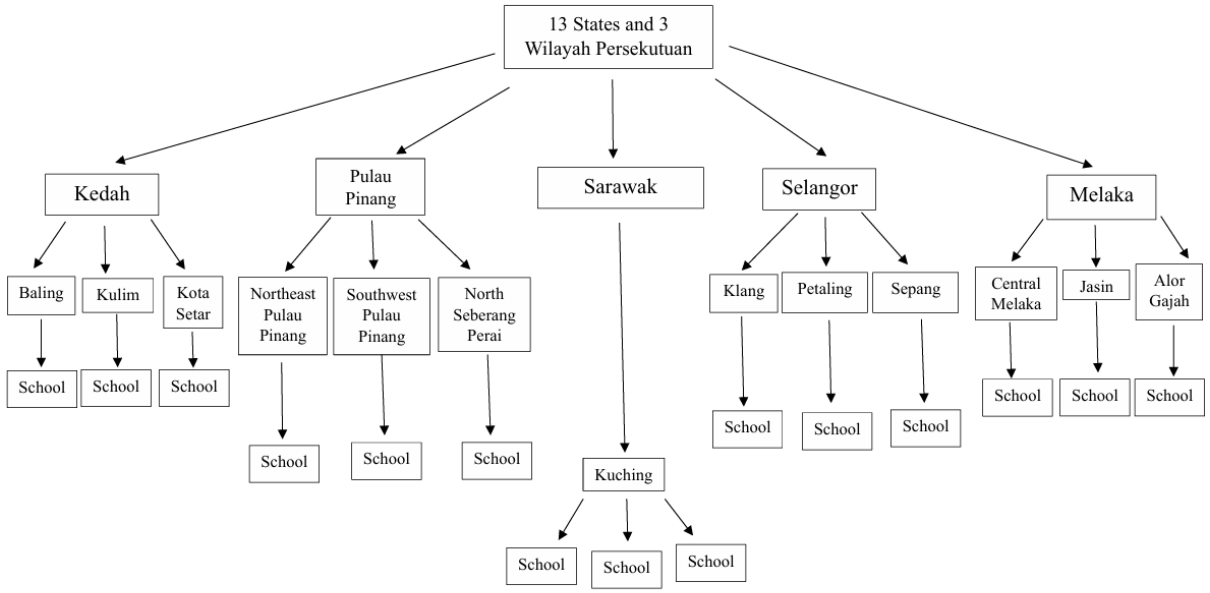
Although the Monte Carlo power analysis suggested a sample size of 100 participants, increasing the sample size to approximately 450 participants, achieved by including 15 clusters each consisting of 30 students, is justified for several reasons. First, an increased sample size enhanced the

generalisability of the findings, thereby ensuring that the results more accurately reflected the diverse population being examined (Li, 2024). The significance of this consideration was particularly pronounced in research involving a heterogeneous population such as Malaysia, where a small sample size might inadequately represent variability and result in incorrect interpretations. Furthermore, an increased sample size also reduced the margin of error, thereby improving the accuracy of the findings and elevating the confidence level of the results (Gumpili & Das, 2022).

Sampling Method

Figure 2

Sampling Framework



The study utilised cluster random sampling, a probability sampling method in which researchers segmented a large population into smaller groups, referred to as clusters, and subsequently selected randomly from these clusters to create a sample (Blair & Blair, 2015). It was essential to recognise that each cluster possessed an equal and independent probability of selection, with the elements contained within each cluster anticipated to exhibit heterogeneity and serve as a representative sample of the population (Sedgwick, 2014; Turner, 2020). According to Blair and Blair (2015), multistage cluster sampling allowed additional sampling within clusters. This method was an extension of cluster sampling, wherein sampling occurred in stages, with smaller units being defined

and selected at each subsequent stage based on the units chosen in the preceding stage (Shimizu, 2014).

In this study, cluster sampling was employed for geographical representation, as the target population of Malaysian adolescents was widely dispersed (see Figure 2). The initial step involved dividing the population into distinct subgroups according to the 13 states and 3 Wilayah Persekutuan of Malaysia. Using the lottery method, the process began with the random selection of five states from a total of 13 states and 3 Wilayah Persekutuan of Malaysia, where each state and Wilayah Persekutuan was represented on a single card, and the cards were meticulously mixed prior to the random drawing of five cards. This guaranteed that each of them possessed an equivalent opportunity for selection. Next, three districts were randomly selected from each chosen state. Subsequently, one school within each selected district was chosen randomly.

Finally, 30 students were randomly chosen from each selected school, forming a cluster. With 15 clusters, each consisting of 30 students, a total sample size of 450 participants was achieved. Therefore, this multistage cluster sampling method ensured a systematic approach to sampling across various hierarchical levels, including states, districts, and schools, improving the sample's representativeness.

Research Procedure

Procedure

Prior to data collection, participants for this study were selected through their respective schools, and data were gathered using self-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaires through the survey method. Approval was requested from the *Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia* (KPM) to conduct research within the Malaysian school system. Upon receiving approval from KPM, subsequent authorisation was sought from the *Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri* (JPN) to facilitate access to schools within the relevant states. Following this, individual school administrators and principals were contacted to obtain permission to conduct the study on their premises and involve their students.

Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from the parents or guardians of all student participants prior to their involvement in the data collection process. This ensured that they understood the nature of the study and willingly consented to their child's participation. The

adolescents were initially acquainted with the study's background and objectives, informed of their right to decline participation at any point without facing consequences, and assured of the privacy and confidentiality of their responses.

Additionally, the study was divided into two phases. Phase 1 took place from January 2, 2025, to January 16, 2025, while Phase 2 occurred roughly three months later, from April 26, 2025, to May 12, 2025. All student participants were given tokens of appreciation (e.g., stationery) in recognition of their time and involvement. Teachers who assisted in obtaining parental consent, helped select classes for participation, and supported the handling of physical questionnaires were also acknowledged with tokens of appreciation (e.g., glass cups).

Location and Sample of Study

This study was conducted in five selected cities from Kedah and Pulau Pinang (northern region), Selangor (central region), Melaka (southern region), and Sarawak, Kuching (East Malaysia). Using a multistage cluster sampling method, three districts were selected from each state, except for Sarawak, where only Kuching was chosen. This decision was made because Sarawak is vast, and due to distance and financial constraints, it was not feasible to include more than one district. This study included a representative sample of 277 multiethnic school-going adolescents who were studying in the selected cities. A pilot study was conducted at *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan* (SMK) Sentosa in Kampar, Perak.

Table 1

Selected School List

No	State	District	School
1	Melaka	Central Melaka	SMK Tun Tuah
2	Melaka	Jasin	SMK Sri Mahkota
3	Melaka	Alor Gajah	SMK Sultan Alauddin
4	Selangor	Petaling	SMK USJ 12
5	Selangor	Klang	SMK Sultan Abdul Samad
6	Selangor	Sepang	SMK Seri Sepang
7	Pulau Pinang	Central Seberang Perai	SMK Jalan Damai
8	Pulau Pinang	Northeast Pulau Pinang	SMK Ait Itam

9	Pulau Pinang	Bayan Lepas	SMK Raja Tun Uda
10	Kedah	Sungai Petani	SMK Ibrahim
11	Kedah	Baling	SMK Bakai
12	Kedah	Kulim	SMK Kulim
13	Sarawak	Kuching	SMK Batu Kawa
14	Sarawak	Kuching	SMK Batu Lintang
15	Sarawak	Kuching	SMK Green Road

Ethical Clearance

The research procedure and complete questionnaire were reviewed and approved by the Scientific and Ethical Review Committee (SERC) of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman prior to data collection (U/SERC/78-397/2024). The committee evaluated the questionnaires, data collection procedures, informed consent forms, and accompanying instructions before granting approval. This ensured adherence to established ethical standards, including respect for participants' rights, minimisation of risks, and transparency in communication.

The review confirmed that risks to participants were minimal, limited primarily to the time required to complete the questionnaires, with no foreseeable physical or psychological harm. Potential benefits included contributing to the understanding of adolescents' subjective well-being in school and informing future educational interventions.

The informed consent process, provided in both Malay and English, outlined the study's purpose, procedures, and participants' rights. This ensured that students and their parents or guardians clearly understood the nature of participation before providing consent. Participants' rights were emphasised throughout the process. They were informed of their voluntary participation, right to withdraw without penalty, and assurance of confidentiality. No identifying personal information was collected, and all data were anonymised and securely stored.

Backwards Translation Procedure

The survey included three languages, Malay, English, and Chinese, within a single questionnaire to accommodate participants' language preferences. To ensure accuracy and clarity across languages, back-translation procedures were applied to all items, procedures, and instructions. The original

English items were first translated into Malay and Chinese by the researchers, who had formal education in all three languages. Each version was then back-translated into English by a different researcher without access to the original English version, ensuring that the intended meaning of each item was preserved. Finally, the Malay version was reviewed by a native Malay speaker, and the Chinese version was reviewed by a native Chinese speaker, both of whom had a background in psychology. This process established equivalence across all three versions, allowing participants to respond in the language with which they were most comfortable.

Measurements

Demographic Information

The demographic section of the questionnaire collected participants' background information, including age, gender, ethnicity, and religion. Each item provided predefined categories with options for alternative responses where relevant. Participants were also asked to indicate their nationality, with choices of Malaysian citizenship or other nationalities, accompanied by space for further specification.

Parental Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR)

The Parental Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR), developed by Barber in 1996, is a 16-item scale designed to measure the extent of psychological control exerted by parents over their children. The scale assesses parental behaviours that undermine a child's psychological and emotional autonomy, such as inducing guilt, withdrawing love, and using psychological manipulation. Respondents rate their agreement with each item on a 3-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Not like him/her to 3 = A lot like him/her. Example items from the scale include, "My Mother (Father) is a person who changes the subject whenever I have something to say," and "My Mother (Father) is less friendly with me if I do not see things his/her way."

The PCS-YSR has demonstrated predictive validity, particularly for internalized problems like depression. Higher scores indicate greater perceived parental psychological control. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the PCS-YSR have ranged from .68 to .87 for fathers and .69 to .89 for mothers in various international studies (Muttaqin et al., 2024).

Perceived Social Competence Scale (PSCS)

The PSCS, developed by Anderson-Butcher et al. (2007), is a brief 4-item measure designed to assess social competence skills and prosocial behaviour in children and young adults. Respondents rate their perceptions of their social competence on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = Not at all, to 5 = Very much. This four-item scale is reflective of one dimension of social competence. The scale includes items such as "I am good at making friends", and "I help other people". The scale produces an overall social competence score (6 to 30), with higher scores indicating greater levels of perceived social competence. Scoring can be reported as either a total or mean score, with interpretations aligned to the scale's theoretical framework.

According to Anderson-Butcher et al. (2007), the internal consistency of the scale is robust, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha of .81. Validity evidence includes predictive validity, demonstrated through a significant positive correlation with perceived belonging (r = .41), and factorial validity, supported by confirmatory factor analysis. Additionally, tests for measurement invariance confirm that the PSCS performs equivalently across gender groups.

Brief Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being in School Scale (BASWBSS)

BASWBSS is an 8-item self-report instrument developed by Tian et al. (2014). It is designed to measure subjective well-being (SWB) in school among adolescents, focusing on two components: cognitive (school satisfaction) and affective (positive and negative affect in school). Respondents rate their agreement with each statement on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 6 = Strongly agree. The cognitive component is assessed through six items, with scores averaged to generate a subscale score. The affective component includes two items: one for positive affect and one for negative affect in school. Respondents rate their agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Never to 5 = Very often.

Scoring involves calculating mean scores for each subscale, with the Affect subscale computed by subtracting the negative affect score from the positive affect score. The total BASWBSS score is obtained by summing the scores of the school satisfaction and affect in school subscales, where higher scores indicate greater subjective well-being in school. A higher total score reflects greater well-being in school. The scale includes both positive and negative items, with sample items like "I perform well in school" and "In school, the frequency of my pleasant feelings is...". According

to Tian et al. (2014), BASWBSS has demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .82 for School Satisfaction) and validity, including strong convergent validity (e.g., r = .724 for positive affect) and test-retest reliability over a 5-week interval (r = .713).

Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale investigation conducted prior to the main trial in extensive research. It provides critical insights for determining sample size and evaluating various components of the primary study. This process also facilitates the validation of results while alleviating additional burdens on researchers and participants, thus avoiding misallocation of research resources (Dayanand et al., 2023). According to Browne (1995), it posits a general guideline that suggests utilising a minimum of 30 subjects or more to estimate a parameter accurately. Therefore, this study utilised a sample size of 30 to conduct the pilot testing.

In the pilot testing, purposive sampling was utilised, deliberately selecting informants based on their capacity to clarify a particular theme, concept, or phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). This approach emphasised particular attributes of the selected units or individuals (APA, 2018). To ensure that the sample utilised in the pilot study remained separate from the participants involved in the actual study, the Kampar district was intentionally omitted from the cluster sampling procedure. This decision served to uphold the integrity of the study by mitigating potential biases and preventing contamination between the participants of the pilot study and those of the main study.

Upon completion of the pilot study, a reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of psychological instruments. The PCS-YSR demonstrated acceptable reliability (α = .754), the PSCS showed questionable reliability (α = .683), and the BASWBSS demonstrated improved reliability (α = .799) when only the 6 cognitive items assessing school satisfaction were retained. After comparing the complete 8-item scale with the 6-item version, the latter demonstrated stronger internal consistency, with the two affective items excluded. Therefore, the 6-item version was adopted in the current study. Overall, the instruments demonstrated acceptable to good reliability in line with Taber's (2017) recommendations. The PSCS showed somewhat lower reliability (α = .683) but was still included in the main study, with caution applied in interpreting its results. No major modifications were made following the pilot testing.

Actual Study

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the PCS-YSR were α = .828 at Time 1 and α = .843 at Time 2. For the PSCS, the coefficients were α = .703 at Time 1 and α = .745 at Time 2. For BASWBSS, reliability was α = .668 at Time 1 and α = .723 at Time 2. Although the BASWBSS at Time 1 demonstrated a slightly lower internal consistency than the conventional threshold of .70 (Taber, 2017), it was included in the study as a control variable. Considering that the values between .60 and .70 are generally regarded as acceptable for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2010), and that the Time 2 BASWBSS demonstrated acceptable reliability (α = .723), the scale was considered adequate for the present study.

Data Analysis Plan and Processing

A series of statistical analyses was performed. Stage one investigated descriptive statistics to assess the general patterns of all variables involved in the study, including an analysis of participants' background information, while inferential statistics were employed to validate the hypotheses of the present study. In the second stage, Pearson correlation and Multiple Regression analyses were conducted to explore the relationships among PPC, SC, and SWBS. Stage three involved conducting mediation analysis utilising the SPSS Macro PROCESS, Model 4 as outlined by Hayes (2022), to investigate the mediating effect of SC on the relationship between PPC and SWBS of the study, with bias-corrected bootstrap CI derived from 10,000 bootstrapped samples. A statistically significant effect was indicated when the CI exceeded zero.

Chapter IV

Results

Missing Data and Data Cleaning

Data was collected in two phases through paper-and-pencil surveys administered on site. In Phase 1, a total of 442 participants completed the survey. Among them, 157 did not continue to Phase 2, resulting in a dropout rate of 35.5%. In Phase 2, 285 participants completed the follow-up survey after 3 months, providing data for longitudinal analysis.

Across both phases, eight survey forms were incomplete, with participants omitting items, failing to complete entire sections, or demonstrating careless responding (e.g., straight lining or alternating response patterns). Because the surveys were administered in person, participants could skip questions, which contributed to missing data. These eight cases were considered unreliable and excluded from analysis. After removing incomplete, ineligible, and patterned responses, the final dataset consisted of 277 valid cases.

Normality Assumptions

Skewness and Kurtosis

Skewness and kurtosis were examined to assess the normality of the study variables. As shown in Table 2, all variables fell within the acceptable range of ±2, indicating no violation of normality assumptions (George & Mallery, 2019).

Table 2

Skewness and Kurtosis

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Parental Psychological Control (Time 1)	.526	-.280
Parental Psychological Control (Time 2)	.613	-.055
Social Competence (Time 1)	.100	-.498
Social Competence (Time 2)	.092	-.357
Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 1)	-.194	.054
Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 2)	-.261	.287

Histograms and Q-Q Plots

Normality was further examined through histograms (see Appendix E). SC Time 1 (TB) and SC Time 2 (TBB) demonstrated approximately normal distributions, whereas PPC Time 1 (TA) and PPC Time 2 (TAA) were slightly skewed to the right, and SWBS Time 1 (TCN) and SWBS Time 2 (TCCN) showed slight left skewness. As illustrated in the Q-Q plots (see Appendix F), the data points for all variables aligned closely with the diagonal line, indicating no substantial deviations from normality.

Normality Tests

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test indicated violations of normality for all variables (see Table 3). Specifically, PPC (Time 1), $D(277) = .09$, $p < .001$; PPC (Time 2), $D(277) = .10$, $p < .001$; SC (Time 1), $D(277) = .09$, $p < .001$; SC (Time 2), $D(277) = .09$, $p < .001$; SWBS (Time 1), $D(277) = .09$, $p < .001$; and SWBS (Time 2), $D(277) = .07$, $p = .004$, all showed significant results, suggesting deviations from normality.

Table 3

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]		
	Statistic	*df*	Sig.
Parental Psychological Control (Time 1)	.091	277	.001
Parental Psychological Control (Time 2)	.102	277	.001
Social Competence (Time 1)	.089	277	.001
Social Competence (Time 2)	.09	277	.001
Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 1)	.091	277	.001
Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 2)	.068	277	.004

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Conclusion for Normality Assumptions

Normality of the study variables was assessed using skewness and kurtosis statistics, visual inspections of distribution plots (histograms and Q–Q plots), and the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. Skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable ±2 range, and visual inspection of the plots indicated no substantial departures from normality. However, the K-S test was significant for all study

variables ($p < .05$), likely reflecting its sensitivity to minor deviations in large samples ($n = 277$) (Field, 2018). Taken together, the results suggest that the study variables can be considered approximately normally distributed.

Assumptions of Mediation Analysis

Test on Independence of Errors

To test the independence of residuals, the Durbin–Watson statistic was calculated. A value of 1.741 was obtained (see Table 4), which falls between the recommended thresholds of 1 and 3 (Champion et al., 1998). This suggests that the assumption of independent residuals was met.

Table 4

Model Summary[b]

Model	*R*	*R* Square	Adjusted *R* Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.329[a]	.108	.102	3.767	1.741

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Psychological Control (Time 1), Social Competence (Time 1)

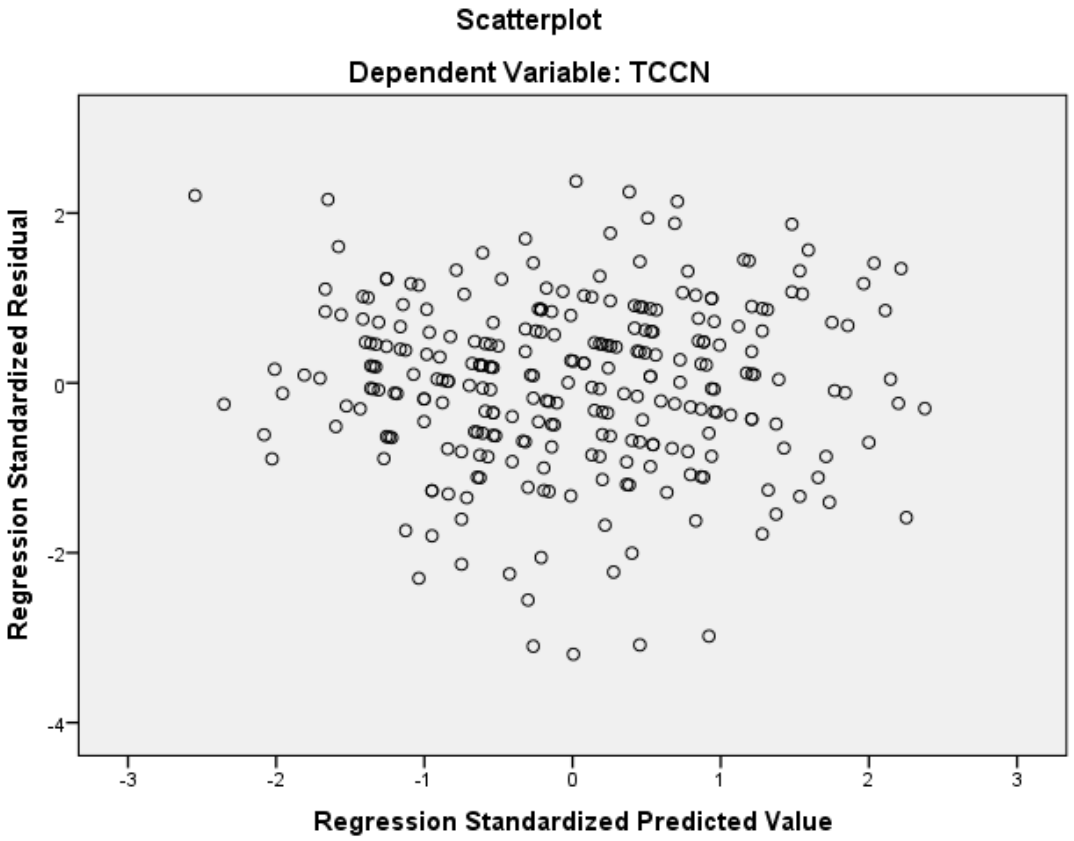
b. Dependent Variable: Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 2)

Test on Normality of Residual, Linearity of Residual, Homoscedasticity

A scatterplot was generated to test the assumptions of residual normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity (see Figure 3). The distribution of standardized residuals around the zero-line appeared random and evenly dispersed, indicating that the data met the required assumptions.

Figure 3

The Scatterplot to Test the Assumptions for Residual Linearity, Residual Normality and Homoscedasticity



Tests on Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values (see Table 5). Tolerance values below .10 (Menard, 1995) and VIF values exceeding 10 (Myers, 1990) indicate problematic multicollinearity. In the current analysis, tolerance values were .985 and VIF values were 1.015 for all predictors, suggesting that multicollinearity was not a concern.

Table 5

Coefficients among Variables

		Collinearity Statistics	
	Model	Tolerance	VIF
1	Parental Psychological Control (Time 1)	. 985	1.015
	Social Competence (Time 1)	. 985	1.015

a. Dependent Variable: Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 2)

Note. VIF=Variance Inflation Factor

Test on Multivariate Outliers and Influential Cases

A case-wise analysis was conducted to assess multivariate outliers in the dataset (N = 277), which flagged 16 cases (19, 44, 45, 61, 63, 115, 122, 127, 227, 230, 242, 246, 250, 255, 263, and 274; see Table 6). These were further evaluated using Mahalanobis distance, Cook's distance, and centered leverage statistics (see Appendix G). As suggested by Cook and Weisberg (1984), Cook's distance values greater than 1 indicate potential influence; however, none of the cases exceeded this threshold. Similarly, Mahalanobis values remained below 15, and centered leverage scores did not surpass the cutoff of .022 (Hoaglin & Welsch, 1978). On this basis, all cases were retained for subsequent analyses.

Table 6

Casewise Diagnostic for Subjective Well-Being in School

Case Number	Std. Residual	Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 2)	Predicted Value	Residual
19	-2.227	19	27.39	-8.387
44	-3.194	15	27.03	-12.033
45	-3.085	16	27.62	-11.620
61	2.374	36	27.06	8.944
63	-2.057	19	26.75	-7.748
115	-2.136	18	26.04	-8.044
122	-3.100	15	26.68	-11.678
127	-2.981	17	28.23	-11.230
227	2.160	33	24.86	8.136
230	-2.301	17	25.67	-8.666
242	2.206	32	23.69	8.310
246	-2.248	18	26.47	-8.469
250	2.249	36	27.53	8.473
255	2.137	36	27.95	8.049
263	-2.557	17	26.63	-9.631
274	-2.004	20	27.55	-7.550

Demographic Statistics

Demographic Information

Table 7 presents descriptive statistics summarizing the demographic characteristics of the

respondents in the present study. The present study involved 277 adolescents aged between 13 and 17 years (M = 14.84, SD = .74). In terms of gender, 46.2% were male and 53.8% female. Ethnic composition consisted of 60.1% Malay, 23.6% Chinese, 8.0% Indian, and 8.3% from other ethnic backgrounds, which includes Siam, Punjabi, Eurasian, Bidayuh, Kadazan, Iban, Dusun and Pakistani Malay. In terms of religious background, 60.6% of participants were Muslim, 19.5% Buddhist, 7.6% Hindu, and 12.3% Christian. For geographic distribution, 19.9% were from Kedah, 16.2% from Melaka, 13.4% from Pulau Pinang, 28.9% from Sarawak, and 21.7% from Selangor. All participants in this study are Malaysians.

Table 7

Demographic Information of Participants (n=277)

Characteristics	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	128	46.2
Female	149	53.8
Race		
Malay	166	60.1
Chinese	65	23.6
Indian	22	8.0
Others	23	8.3
Religion		
Islam	168	60.6
Buddhist	54	19.5
Hindu	21	7.6
Christian	34	12.3
State		
Kedah	55	19.9
Melaka	45	16.2
Pulau Pinang	37	13.4
Sarawak	80	28.9
Selangor	60	21.7

Frequency Distribution of the Variables

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables at both time points. The means

for PPC at Time 1 and Time 2 were 25.61 (SD = 5.56) and 25.80 (SD = 5.93), respectively. The means for SC at Time 1 and Time 2 were 13.72 (SD = 2.80) and 14.03 (SD = 2.87), respectively. The means for SWBS at Time 1 and Time 2 were 27.06 (SD = 3.71) and 27.03 (SD = 3.98), respectively.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Variables (*n* = 277)

Variables	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
Parental Psychological Control (Time 1)	16	43	25.61	5.56
Parental Psychological Control (Time 2)	16	45	25.80	5.93
Social Competence (Time 1)	7	20	13.72	2.80
Social Competence (Time 2)	6	20	14.03	2.87
Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 1)	15	36	27.06	3.71
Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 2)	15	36	27.03	3.98

Note. *M*=Mean; *SD*=Standard Deviation; Min=Minimum; Max=Maximum

Inferential Statistics

Pearson's Correlation Analysis

As shown in Table 9, PPC at Time 1 was not significantly correlated with SWBS at Time 2, $r(275) = .01$, $p = .87$. PPC at Time 1 was weakly but significantly positively correlated with social competence (SC) at Time 1, $r(275) = .12$, $p = .04$. Finally, SC at Time 1 was positively correlated with SWBS at Time 2, $r(275) = .33$, $p < .001$.

Table 9

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between Variables (N=277)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Parental Psychological Control (Time 1)	-				
2. Parental Psychological Control (Time 2)	.64***	-			
3. Social Competence (Time 1)	.12*	.11*	-		
4. Social Competence (Time 2)	.09	.06	.62***	-	
5. Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 1)	-.07	-.05	.41***	.35***	-
6. Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 2)	. 01	-.05	.33***	.44***	.50***

Note. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, one-tailed.

Mediation Analysis

A mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes's PROCESS macro (Model 4) with 10,000 bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2022). This approach was chosen because it directly tests the significance of indirect effects (Zhao et al., 2010). The analysis examined whether SC mediated the relationship between PPC at Time 1 and SWBS at Time 2, controlling for SWBS at Time 1. The effect size was further examined using f^2, which yielded a value of .34, representing a medium effect according to Cohen's (1988) interpretations.

The total effect of PPC on SWBS at Time 2, without accounting for SC, was not significant (b = .03, SE = .04, t (274) = .84, p = .40, 95% CI [−.04, .11], β = .04). PPC and SWBS at Time 1 together explained 25.5% of the variance in SWBS at Time 2 (R^2 = .26, F (2, 274) = 46.82, p < .001), representing a large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

When SC was included as a mediator, the model explained 27.1% of the variance in SWBS at Time 2 (R^2 = .27, F (3, 273) = 33.81, p < .001; see Table 10). Consistent with H_1, PPC at Time 1 did not significantly predict SWBS at Time 2. For H_2, PPC at Time 1 significantly predicted SC at Time 1 , (b = .08, SE = .03, t (275) = 2.78, p = .006, 95% CI [.02, .13], β = .16), which is a small effect. For H_3, SC at Time 1 significantly predicted SWBS at Time 2, (b = .20, SE = .08, t (273) = 2.46, p = .014, 95% CI [.04, .36], β = .15), also a small effect.

The direct effect of PPC on SWBS at Time 2, controlling for SC, was not significant (b = .02, SE = .04, t (273) = .43, p = .67, 95% CI [−.06, .09]). However, the indirect effect of PPC on SWBS at Time 2 via SC was significant (b = .02, BootSE = .01, 95% CI [.001, .04]; completely standardized effect = .02, 95% CI [.002, .05]). According to Zhao et al. (2010), this pattern represents indirect-only mediation, suggesting that PPC influences SWBS at Time 2 only through SC, with no significant direct effect (see Figure 4). These results support H_4, indicating that SC mediates the relationship between PPC at Time 1 and SWBS at Time 2 among adolescents in Malaysia. Collectively, these findings indicate that H_1 and H_2 were not supported, H_3 was supported, and H_4 was supported (see Table 11).

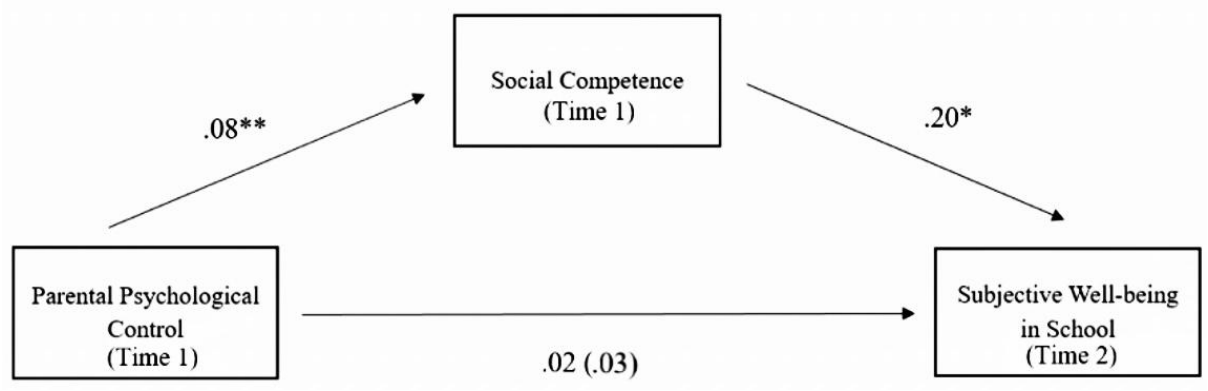
Table 10

Mediation Analysis of the Effect of PPC on SWBS Through SC

Path	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	95% CI	*β*
Total effect	.03	.04	.84	.40	[−.04, .11]	.04
Direct effect	.02	.04	.67	.67	[−.06, .09]	-
Indirect effect	.02	.01	-	-	[.001, .04]	.02
Parental Psychological Control (Time 1) to Subjective Well-Being in School (Time 2)	.08	.03	2.78	.006	[.02, .13]	-
Social Competence (Time 1) to Subjective Well-being in School (Time 2)	.20	.08	2.46	.014	[.04, .36]	-

Figure 4

A Mediation Model Showing the Effect of PPC and SC on SWBS. Unstandardized Coefficients are Reported, with the Total Effect Shown in Parentheses.



Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

Table 11

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Supported/Not Supported
H_1	PPC (Time 1) negatively predicts SWBS (Time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.	Not Supported
H_2	PPC (Time 1) negatively predicts SC (Time 1) among adolescents in Malaysia.	Not Supported
H_3	SC (Time 1) positively predicts SWBS (Time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.	Supported
H_4	SC significantly mediates the relationship between PPC (Time 1) and SWBS (Time 2) among adolescents in Malaysia.	Supported

Chapter V

Discussion & Conclusion

Parental Psychological Control and Subjective Well-Being in School

The present study found a positive yet non-significant correlation between PPC and adolescents' SWBS, suggesting a negligible effect size (Cohen, 1988). These findings suggest that the relationship of PPC on adolescent subjective well-being is not inherently negative; rather, it may vary based on cultural context, or the manner in which adolescents perceive and internalize such control. For instance, Cho et al. (2021) found that maternal control can be viewed as supportive and essential for social and moral development, rather than being inherently detrimental. Another study conducted by Deng et al. (2024) found that while PPC was negatively associated with adolescent's well-being at the between-person level, this effect disappeared when individual differences were considered. This indicates that the relationship between psychological control and subjective well-being may be weak or context dependent. Also, Wang et al. (2014) observed that love withdrawal, a type of PPC, did not have a negative correlation with adolescent adjustment. Although love withdrawal did not predict positive outcomes, their findings underscore the varying meanings of such practices within the Chinese context, where strategies like shaming and love withdrawal may be perceived as moral guidance rather than rejection. Extending this line of reasoning, Shek and Zhu (2019) posited that Chinese adolescents may not necessarily interpret PPC as negative parenting; rather, they frequently regard it as a demonstration of love, concern, and a culturally acceptable means of socializing filial piety and family responsibilities.

In Malaysia's collectivist cultural context, parents who prioritize harmony within social groups tend to foster adolescents' ability to comprehend the emotions and viewpoints of others (Gan et al., 2022). PPC, although not synonymous warm, is frequently perceived in collectivist societies as a form of guidance that fosters group harmony and filial obligation, thereby softening its potentially adverse impact on adolescents' subjective well-being (Deng et al., 2024; Gan et al., 2022; Shek & Zhu, 2019). For example, similar evidence has also been observed among Korean immigrant youth (Cho et al., 2021), Chinese adolescent (Gao et al. (2021), and Hong Kong Chinese adolescents (Shek & Zhu, 2019), who perceived parental control not as manipulative but rather as corrective strategies

intended for their benefit, which they regarded as beneficial for social adjustment. However, when such control is viewed as constructive and culturally appropriate, its impact on adolescents may be neutral or even align with positive outcomes, including instilling values and effective behaviour management (Cho et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024; Shek & Zhu, 2019; Su et al., 2019). These behaviours correspond with cultural values of respect and obligation rather than being perceived as intrusive overcontrol, which reduces the likelihood of negatively impacting well-being (Gao et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024).

Similarly, certain forms of control, including the guiding of decision-making and monitoring daily activities, are frequently viewed as responsible parenting rather than as intrusive interference (Su et al., 2019). Consequently, certain forms of psychological control, such as guilt induction and shaming, do not always predict negative emotional outcomes, as they may instead be interpreted as parental involvement rather than rejection, thereby mitigating the expected negative relationship with well-being (Deng et al., 2024; Gao et al., 2021). At the same time, however, this cultural buffering is not without its limitations. Although moderate control can offer adolescents useful behavioural norms, excessive or inappropriate control may still undermine autonomy and self-regulation, even within a collectivist context (Lin & Li, 2024).

Building on this perspective, we speculate that PPC may not necessarily hinder adolescents' subjective well-being, especially in Malaysia, which is considered in line with collectivist culture (Gan et al., 2022; Masiran, 2022; Mu et al., 2024; Nainee et al., 2021; Ser et al., 2024). This perspective, however, contrasts with much of the existing literature, which generally links psychologically controlling or overinvolved parenting to adverse outcomes such as diminished well-being or maladjustment in adolescents (Gülçin Güler Öztekin et al., 2024; Lin & Li, 2024; Manindjo et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2021).

Notably, the direction shifted from negative to positive after 3 months, indicating a slight reversal in the relationship, though the magnitude was too small to be significant. This shift can be analysed using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which holds that the interrelationship between the interpersonal and broader environmental factors influences a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Masiran, 2022). At the microsystem level, adolescents gradually shift their

reliance from parents toward peers and teachers, who frequently offer more relevant sources of emotional regulation and social support (Nur Afrina Rosharudin et al., 2023). Within the mesosystem, interactions between family and school contexts may also mitigate the potential harm of PPC when schools provide supportive environments (Chen et al., 2024). At the macrosystem level, cultural values are notably salient in collectivist contexts such as Malaysia, where a strong sense of belonging and unity promotes social support networks that help mitigate stress and sustain well-being (Azmi et al., 2023). From the perspective of the chronosystem, adolescence is a transitional stage represented by the pursuit of autonomy and identity exploration (Kaniušonytė et al., 2021). Over time, the salience of parental control gradually diminishes as adolescents internalize decision-making skills, gain greater autonomy, and draw upon wider social resources (Gan et al., 2022; Su et al., 2019). Taken together, the ecological model illustrates why the initially negative association of PPC with SWBS may weaken or even shift direction as adolescents expand their support networks and undergo developmental adjustments.

Parental Psychological Control and Social Competence

This study examined the association between PPC and SC. The results showed a small but significant positive association between the two variables. While prior research often reports negative outcomes of PPC on social development (S.M. Yasir et al., 2020; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Nunes et al., 2023; Salavera et al., 2022), our findings suggest that this effect may depend on cultural norms and the degree of control, with higher levels posing greater risks to adolescents' SC.

Cultural context offers one explanation for this finding. In Malaysia, PPC may be perceived as a culturally appropriate expression of parental guidance. Deng et al. (2024) describe PPC as a contradictory expression of love that embodies both care and potential harm. In collectivist settings such as Malaysia, cultural values of interdependence, filial piety, and respect for authority (Mu et al., 2024; Syasya et al., 2023) may lead adolescents to interpret PPC as guidance and parental investment rather than as intrusive control. Consistent with this view, Scharf and Goldner (2018) note that certain forms of PPC, particularly relational induction, can align with collectivistic norms and promote empathy, social understanding, and academic engagement rather than solely producing negative outcomes. For example, a devoted mother may form a close bond with her child and guide behaviour

through psychological means, such as expressing disappointment or inducing guilt, rather than through physical discipline (Chan et al., 2009). In this context, moderately directive behaviours may thus provide structure and predictability, fostering self-regulation and, in turn, socially competent behaviour (de Swart et al., 2022).

Another explanation for the positive relationship between PPC and SC is the concept of family-of-origin sensitization (Cook et al., 2013), derived from the sensitization hypothesis proposed by Cummings and Davies (2002). This concept suggests that individuals exposed to controlling or conflictual family dynamics are more likely to interpret similar behaviours in close relationships as threats to their emotional security, leading to heightened emotional reactivity. When children fall short of their parents' expectations, highly controlling parents may react with frustration, employing strategies such as guilt induction, expressions of disappointment, emotional withdrawal, or even humiliation, all of which contribute to the child's negative emotional experiences (Qian et al., 2022). These experiences may sensitize adolescents to relational demands, consistent with Chiang and Bai's (2024) finding that higher parent–adolescent conflict was linked to greater negative emotional reactivity to peer conflict. Over time, repeated exposure to such parental behaviours may distort youths' relationship expectations, fostering heightened vigilance to perceived threats in diverse social contexts. In some cases, this attunement may even resemble social–emotional competence (Bender et al., 2022).

This heightened sensitivity may enhance SC in familiar or structured settings, as adolescents are quick to detect and adapt to social expectations, which explains the significant but weak positive association between PPC and SC at Time 1. However, the same reactivity may cause adolescents to perceive peer conflicts as more threatening or as indicators of poor relationship quality (Cook et al., 2013). Repeated exposure to such relational stressors may also impair their capacity to respond to and recover from future stressors, such as disagreements with peers (Chiang & Bai, 2024). These factors could account for the weakened, non-significant association three months later, suggesting that the initially adaptive vigilance may not translate into sustained or generalized SC over time. Thus, our findings suggest that while moderate PPC may initially foster SC, excessive or repeated control could increase adolescents' sensitivity to relational demands and potentially undermine longer-term social

functioning.

Social Competence and Subjective Well-Being in School

The present study found that SC was significantly positively correlated with SWBS. This finding is consistent with prior research showing that related constructs of SC are positively correlated with different aspects of SWBS. For example, studies have linked school-related social support to SWBS (Tian et al., 2015), social relationships to subjective well-being (Aslan-Gördesli & İşmen Gazioğlu, 2022), interpersonal competence to happiness (Baytemir, 2019), SC to psychological well-being (Gómez-López et al., 2022; Holopainen et al., 2011; Kiranpreet & Kirandeep, 2023), social skills to students life satisfaction (Muhammad & Shariqa, 2021), the quality of interpersonal relationships to school well-being (Sturiale & Espino-Díaz, 2024), and social support to school-related subjective well-being (Adhi et al., 2023).

The positive correlation between SC and SWBS can be explained by adolescents' ability to use SC in navigating their evolving social environments, particularly as peer interactions become increasingly central during adolescence. As adolescents' social networks broaden, they spend less time with family and increasingly prioritise peers, leading to a shift in personal relationships and social settings (APA, 2023; Backes & Bonnie, 2019; Office of Population Affairs, 2018). In this context, SC, which is defined as the ability to navigate interpersonal relationships and social situations effectively (APA, 2023), becomes crucial, as it enables adolescents to form meaningful relationships and draw on social resources (Calmeiro et al., 2018). As socialisation with peers is fundamental for various aspects of development and learning, adolescents with stronger SC are better positioned to acquire and practise skills such as empathy, teamwork, sharing, turn-taking, and emotional regulation, which in turn support the development of positive peer relationships. These relationships, in turn, provide adolescents with opportunities to receive positive feedback from their environment and express their thoughts and emotions (Shehu, 2019; Yüksel Doğan & Nilgün Metin, 2023). Consequently, these relationships foster self-esteem, confidence, a sense of worthiness, greater happiness, and reduced feelings of loneliness, ultimately enhancing their overall life satisfaction (Alsarrani et al., 2022; Shehu, 2019; Yüksel Doğan & Nilgün Metin, 2023).

When applied to the school setting, adolescents with stronger SC are better able to foster

supportive peer relationships (de Swart et al., 2022), which in turn promote active engagement in school activities (Demirci, 2020; Shehu, 2019), enhance academic adjustment (Tomás et al., 2020), and strengthen motivation and positive attitudes towards school (Shehu, 2019). Taken together, these pathways illustrate why SC is positively correlated with SWBS, as SC provides adolescents with the necessary skills to effectively navigate social interactions, foster supportive relationships, and engage in constructive school experiences, all of which directly enhance their SWBS.

Additionally, the positive correlation between SC and SWBS can further be understood through the collectivist culture prevalent in Malaysia. In this cultural context, the concept of the self is understood in relation to social groups, marked by interdependence with in-groups and the enduring nature of group-based relationships (Sorensen et al., 2009; Triandis, 2004). Since SC involves forming and maintaining positive relationships and adapting to diverse social contexts (Orpinas, 2010; Owens & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2010), it becomes particularly important in collectivist cultures, where the ability to fit in and engage appropriately within social contexts is a fundamental human goal (Sorensen et al., 2009). Thus, adolescents with higher SC are better equipped to maintain significant interpersonal relationships and important group memberships, thereby improving their SWBS.

In the Malaysian school setting, adolescents with higher SC demonstrate greater ability to fulfil classroom expectations, engage in group activities, and seek assistance when necessary (Firdousa & Bikramjit, 2024). In particular, their ability to seek assistance is reflected in asking questions and discussing difficulties with teachers and peers openly, which improves their understanding of lessons and exam performance while simultaneously strengthening their sense of belonging within the classroom (Baytemir, 2019). In collectivist cultures such as Malaysia, where group belonging and harmonious relationships are highly valued (Syasya et al., 2023; Kim & Rou, 2018), these competencies hold particular importance as they contribute to both academic achievement and the enhancement of social connections within the school community. As a result, students who excel academically while maintaining positive relationships are more likely to enjoy school, develop a stronger attachment to their school, and experience greater positive emotions, thereby deriving increased satisfaction from life (Baytemir, 2019). Taken together, this suggests that in collectivist cultures, where the maintenance of relationships and the fulfilment of collective

expectations are essential, adolescents with higher SC are more likely to experience enhanced SWBS, as their competencies simultaneously promote academic success, social harmony, and a stronger sense of belonging.

The Mediating Role of Social Competence

The present study examined the mediating role of SC in the relationship between PPC and SWBS. Results supported H_4, showing that SC significantly mediated this relationship. This highlights the central role of social processes in explaining how parenting influences adolescents' school adjustment: PPC contributed indirectly to SWBS by fostering SC rather than through a direct effect.

In this study, PPC was positively associated with SC, suggesting that even controlling behaviours can influence adolescents' acquisition and application of social skills. In a collectivist society, where harmony and adherence to social norms are valued (Chao, 1994; Fave et al., 2022), parents tend to cultivate expected social values while guiding appropriate behaviour through parental control (Chao, 1994). This form of control can be understood in the context of guan parenting, which emphasizes monitoring behaviour, setting expectations, and teaching socially appropriate conduct while conveying care and investment in the child's development (Chao, 1994; Lan et al., 2019). The warm yet controlling nature of guan parenting resembles an expression of PPC (Chan et al., 2009), where parental control is guided by benevolent intentions and therefore carries reduced psychological costs (Chao, 1994), which may explain why PPC in this context was linked to higher SC. Evidence from Chinese early adolescents shows that such parental guidance is positively associated with SC (Lan et al., 2019), suggesting that adolescents internalize these behavioural expectations and social norms.

Notably, while guan parenting can promote SC through guidance and involvement, PPC represents the more coercive aspect of parenting, which may or may not accompany culturally endorsed practices depending on parental goals (Chan et al., 2009). Our results showed that PPC had a small but significant positive association with SC but did not directly predict SWBS, suggesting its influence on well-being may operate indirectly. Complementing this, the notion of sensitization (Cook et al., 2013) posits that adolescents exposed to parental control become more attuned to external

standards and relational expectations. According to the sensitization hypothesis, heightened sensitivity enables them to anticipate the social consequences of their actions, regulate their behaviour, and adjust to the demands of peers and teachers. Although such vigilance can sometimes reduce well-being (Chiang & Bai, 2024), it also cultivates social-cognitive skills, including the ability to understand others' feelings and perspectives, which are essential for effective interpersonal interactions (Dietze & Knowles, 2020). These competencies allow adolescents to respond appropriately in social contexts, maintain positive peer relationships, and engage constructively with teachers, and hence explain why PPC influences SWBS indirectly through SC.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that excessive or repeated PPC may have limits. Over time, repeated exposure to controlling parental behaviours can heighten adolescents' sensitivity to relational demands and potentially undermine their capacity to respond effectively to social stressors, such as peer conflict or disagreements with teachers (Chiang & Bai, 2024; Cook et al., 2013). In this way, while moderate PPC may foster SC initially, its long-term effect on social functioning and well-being may be less consistently positive.

SC, in turn, is a key contributor to subjective well-being in Malaysia's school context. In this predominantly collectivist culture, adolescents place high value on relatedness needs, with close interpersonal relationships serving as a primary source of school-based well-being (Su et al., 2019). Because much of their daily life is spent in school, interactions with classmates and teachers play a central role in fulfilling these needs. High SC supports the formation and maintenance of supportive peer relationships, which in turn enhance school satisfaction, reduce stress, and strengthen coping ability and academic performance (Hoferichter et al., 2022). Conversely, low SC can result in peer conflict or rejection, leading to anxiety, distress, and difficulty sustaining positive school-based relationships (Chiu et al., 2020; de Swart et al., 2022), and may also reduce school engagement and interest, particularly when achievement goals are not strongly endorsed (Corominas et al., 2021). Over time, these challenges can erode school belonging and diminish SWBS.

These patterns underscore the central role of SC in supporting adolescents' SWBS. In Malaysia's collectivist culture, where harmonious relationships and relatedness are highly valued, effectively navigating social interactions is crucial for school satisfaction, engagement, and emotional

resilience. When PPC is perceived as structured guidance rather than intrusive control, it provides a predictable environment that fosters self-regulation and the development of SC. In turn, this competence helps adolescents maintain positive peer relationships, manage challenges effectively, and stay engaged in learning, ultimately enhancing their SWBS.

Conclusion

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study make several important theoretical contributions. To our knowledge, this is the first study to examine the mediating role of SC in the relationship between PPC and adolescents' SWBS. While prior research has recognized SC as a mediator of adolescent adjustment (Langeveld et al., 2012; Rockhill et al., 2009; Sakız et al., 2020), the present study situates SC specifically within the PPC-SWBS linkage. This underscores SC not only as an outcome influenced by parenting but also as a dynamic mechanism that channels parental behaviours into adolescents' social and academic functioning. By highlighting SC as both a developmental asset and a protective mechanism, these findings refine existing models and emphasize its central role in adolescent well-being.

In addition, the findings also contribute to the literature by refining our understanding of PPC and its role in adolescent development within collectivist contexts. While much research in both Western (e.g., Gong & Wang, 2021; Pérez et al., 2021) and East Asian contexts (e.g., Cui et al., 2014; Deng et al., 2024; Qian et al., 2022) has documented the detrimental impact of PPC on adolescent adjustment, the present findings suggest that these effects may be conditional rather than uniform. In particular, when PPC is expressed at moderate levels and within a warm, culturally normative framework such as guan parenting, it may temporarily foster adolescents' SC. This underscores the importance of considering the intensity and meaning of PPC when theorizing its developmental consequences.

Second, the study extends SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000) by illustrating how the fulfilment of basic psychological needs can be shaped by culturally specific parenting practices. SDT posits that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are universal requirements for optimal development. However, the present findings suggest that the way these needs are supported or constrained is

contingent on cultural interpretations of parenting behaviours. In Malaysian collectivist settings, where respect for parental authority, interdependence, and close family ties are highly valued, moderate PPC may not necessarily be perceived as undermining autonomy. Instead, it can be understood as a form of parental guidance that helps adolescents navigate expectations, thereby fostering competence in social and academic domains. At the same time, the warm and involved nature of such control may strengthen relatedness, as adolescents interpret it as a sign of care and investment rather than intrusion.

Lastly, the positive association between PPC and SC may reflect non-linear dynamics that have not been fully modelled in prior research. Moderate PPC may provide guidance, set boundaries, and model acceptable behaviour, thereby facilitating social skill development, whereas excessive PPC may suppress autonomy, impair emotional regulation, and restrict social adjustment. While the present study did not directly test these non-linear effects, prior evidence from other East Asian collectivist populations suggests that high PPC can have negative developmental consequences (Deng et al., 2024; Qian et al., 2022). In the current sample, the positive PPC-SC link may reflect culturally normative interpretations of parental guidance, experienced as supportive rather than intrusive. This distinction helps explain why PPC did not exert a significant direct effect on SWBS, as its influence appears to operate primarily through SC. Overall, these findings underscore the need for future research to theorize parenting processes in ways that incorporate cultural diversity and potential threshold effects, rather than assuming PPC is universally adaptive or maladaptive.

Practical Implications

This study's findings underscore various practical approaches to enhancing adolescent well-being within Malaysian contexts. The findings highlight the importance of culturally sensitive interventions that assist parents in balancing guidance with support for autonomy. Parenting workshops and psychoeducational programs provide parents with strategies to differentiate between constructive methods, such as monitoring, value transmission, and warmth, and intrusive forms of control, including guilt induction and emotional withdrawal. In addition to enhancing parenting skills, these programs should prioritize the psychological well-being of parents by focusing on stress management, coping strategies, and intergenerational expectations, which can help diminish the

tendency towards controlling behaviours.

Within schools, the mediating role of SC highlights the necessity of integrating social–emotional learning into educational programs. These programs improve SC, a crucial method for understanding how parental control affects well-being. Collaboration among teachers, school counsellors, and parents is crucial for providing consistent developmental support in both home and school environments.

At the policy level, these findings can inform the Ministry of Education and community-based organizations in developing culturally responsive parenting guidelines and implementing nationwide training initiatives. By integrating family–school partnerships and promoting positive parenting practices, such policies can enhance adolescents' emotional adjustment and SWBS across Malaysia's diverse cultural landscape. The longitudinal nature of the study also underscores the importance of early preventive efforts, particularly during middle childhood and early adolescence, before patterns of excessive control become entrenched.

Taken together, these implications suggest that enhancing parental awareness, strengthening adolescents' SC, supporting parental well-being, and fostering collaborative school environments can work synergistically to promote healthier developmental outcomes and, ultimately, adolescents' SWBS and beyond.

Limitations and Recommendations

There are several limitations in the present study that should be noted. First, this study relied exclusively on adolescents' self-reports, which may have been influenced by social desirability. This concern may have been heightened by the context of data collection. Because surveys were administered in classrooms with teachers or peers nearby, adolescents may not have felt fully comfortable disclosing negative experiences, particularly regarding school-related items in the SWBS scale. Such conditions may have led to inflated ratings of well-being. Future studies could address this issue by adopting data collection methods that enhance privacy, such as seating students apart during administration and ensuring teachers step out or remain seated quietly.

Second, as all measures were obtained from the same informant using the same method, the findings are vulnerable to common method bias. Adolescents' responses may have been influenced by

their current mood, temperament, or relationship quality with parents and peers, which could affect how they rated both PPC and their own SWBS. Since all data were collected in schools through self-administered questionnaires, the risk of common method variance is heightened (Baumgartner et al., 2021). Future studies could adopt a multi-informant design, incorporating teacher ratings, parent reports, or peer nominations, and comparing consistencies and discrepancies across informants to better understand adolescents' functioning (De Los Reyes & Kazdin, 2005). Classroom observations or performance-based tasks could further strengthen validity.

Thirdly, both SC and SWBS were assessed solely through adolescents' self-reports, without the inclusion of objective or external measures. While self-perceptions are valuable, they may not accurately capture actual social skills or well-being. This limits the extent to which findings can be generalized to real-world behaviours and outcomes. Future studies should therefore complement self-reports with objective or external indicators, such as teacher evaluations of classroom participation, peer nominations of friendship quality, or performance-based tasks assessing social skills. Incorporating multiple data sources would provide a more comprehensive and reliable assessment of adolescents' SC and SWBS.

Fourth, the study measured PPC using a scale originally developed in Western contexts. While widely used, this instrument may not fully capture the cultural nuances of parental practices in collectivist societies such as Malaysia. Behaviours such as guilt induction or an emphasis on compliance, often viewed as intrusive in Western settings, may be interpreted as normative or caring in Asian contexts. This suggests that the current measure may not provide a holistic representation of how PPC is experienced across cultures. Future research should therefore consider culturally adapting or validating PPC measures to better distinguish between coercive control and normative practices, thereby improving the inclusivity of cross-cultural findings.

Fifth, this study did not differentiate between maternal and paternal psychological control, despite evidence that they may exert distinct influences. Maternal psychological control has been associated with antisocial behaviours, whereas paternal psychological control has been linked to fewer internalizing symptoms (Basili et al., 2021). Future studies should examine these contributions separately to clarify their unique roles in shaping adolescent adjustment.

Sixth, considering the varying impact of PPC across societies, it is essential to examine the influence of cultural context on adolescents' interpretations of these practices. In collectivist cultures such as Malaysia, there is a strong emphasis on family obligations and parental authority, which renders norms like filial piety particularly significant. Guan parenting, characterised by parental training and guidance, is tightly connected to filial piety, as both originate from traditional Chinese family socialisation systems. Nainee et al. (2021) suggested that guan parenting may facilitate the development of filial piety beliefs among Malaysian adolescents, subsequently enhancing developmental outcomes and life satisfaction. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2024) emphasized that filial perceptions influence the degree of PPC and the ways in which children interpret negative parenting styles. Within this framework, PPC can be viewed as legitimate guidance rather than intrusive control, depending upon adolescents' acceptance of filial values and their attitudes towards guan. Future research should investigate whether filial piety acts as a pathway through which PPC impacts adolescents' SWBS, and whether these effects differ based on adolescents' cultural orientations and their acceptance of parental authority.

Finally, the study employed a two-wave longitudinal design, which limited the ability to capture more complex developmental patterns over time. With only two measurement points, it was not possible to fully observe potential changes in the relationship between PPC, SC, and SWBS as adolescents progress through different stages. Longitudinal designs with three or more measurement waves would also allow researchers to test nonlinear or discontinuous trajectories (Feely et al., 2020; Hopwood et al., 2021), while addressing the limitation of relying solely on Time 1 SC in mediation analysis. The slight positive trend observed at Time 2 further highlights the need for additional waves to determine whether this shift reflects continuity or change across adolescence and to identify potential mediating mechanisms emerging at different stages.

Conclusion

The present study examined the relationships among PPC, SC, and SWBS among Malaysian adolescents. The findings indicated that PPC did not serve as a significant direct predictor of SWBS, despite the coefficient exhibiting a positive direction. The non-significant direct effect observed may be indicative of the cultural interpretations of parental control within Malaysia, where such practices

are frequently perceived as expressions of care rather than as forms of restriction, and thus their influence emerges indirectly through adolescents' social functioning. Instead, PPC was positively correlated with SC, and SC in turn significantly correlated with SWBS. Mediation analysis confirmed that SC fully mediated the PPC-SWBS relationship, indicating that PPC influenced adolescents' SWBS only indirectly through SC, with SC playing a central role in shaping adolescents' social adjustment, school satisfaction, and emotional well-being.

Taken together, these findings extend existing knowledge by offering empirical evidence from a multi-ethnic Malaysian context, where research on PPC, SC, and SWBS has been limited. The results reinforce SDT by showing that PPC affects adolescents' SWBS only indirectly through competence-related pathways, with SC serving as a crucial mediator. Practically, the study emphasizes the importance of strengthening SC through school-based social-emotional learning programs, encouraging less controlling parenting, and fostering family-school partnerships. In line with cultural values, incorporating filial piety into parenting and educational practices may further enhance interventions aimed at supporting adolescents' SWBS. Nevertheless, limitations such as the reliance on self-reported measures and the absence of multi-informant data underscore the necessity for longitudinal studies to more comprehensively capture developmental changes and cultural variations. Overall, the study offers both theoretical and practical insights into how PPC and SC jointly shape adolescents' SWBS, while also pointing to valuable directions for future research and culturally sensitive intervention.

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Zhang, Y., Hwang, W., Jung, E., Kim, S., & Sin, H. L. (2020). Helicopter parenting, parental psychological and behavioral control revisited: Assessing constructs across the United States and South Korea. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *51*(1), 59–83. https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.51.1.004

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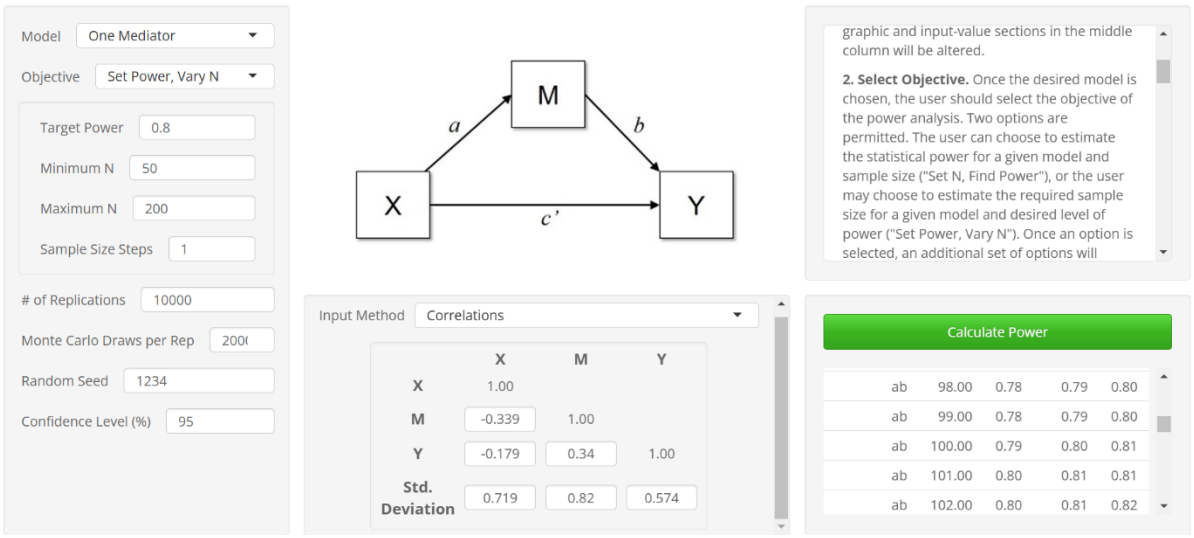
33(2). https://doi.org/10.2307/1269070

Appendices

Appendix A

Sample Size Calculation using Monte Carlo Power Analysis for Indirect Effects



Note. Sample size determination was conducted using Monte Carlo power analysis for indirect effects. Using a one-mediator model with 10,000 replications, 200 draws per replication, and a target power of .80 at $\alpha = .05$, results indicated that a minimum of 100 participants would be required to adequately detect the hypothesized mediation effect.

Appendix B

Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN DU012(A)
Wholly owned by UTAR Education Foundation Co. No. 578227-M

Re: U/SERC/78-397/2024

20 November 2024

Mr Tay Kok Wai
Head, Department of Psychology and Counselling
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Jalan Universiti, Bandar Baru Barat
31900 Kampar, Perak.

Dear Mr Tay,

Ethical Approval For Research Project/Protocol

We refer to the application for ethical approval for your students' research project from Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) Psychology programme enrolled in course UAPZ3013/UAPZ3023. We are pleased to inform you that the application has been approved under Expedited Review.

The details of the research projects are as follows:

No	Research Title	Student's Name	Supervisor's Name	Approval Validity
1.	Parental Psychological Control and Well-Being in School of Malaysian Adolescents: Social Competence As a Mediator	1. Bernicia Gilbert Tan Ze San 2. Daphne Kho Wei Qian 3. Teh Chai Horng	Dr Tan Soon Aun	20 November 2024 – 19 November 2025

The conduct of this research is subject to the following:

(1) The participants' informed consent be obtained prior to the commencement of the research;

(2) Confidentiality of participants' personal data must be maintained; and

(3) Compliance with procedures set out in related policies of UTAR such as the UTAR Research Ethics and Code of Conduct, Code of Practice for Research Involving Humans and other related policies/guidelines.

(4) Written consent be obtained from the institution(s)/company(ies) in which the physical or/and online survey will be carried out, prior to the commencement of the research.

Should the students collect personal data of participants in their studies, please have the participants sign the attached Personal Data Protection Statement for records.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Ts Dr Faidz bin Abd Rahman
Chairman
UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee

c.c Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Director, Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research

Kampar Campus : Jalan Universiti, Bandar Barat, 31900 Kampar, Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia
Tel: (605) 468 8888 Fax: (605) 466 1313
Sungai Long Campus : Jalan Sungai Long, Bandar Sungai Long, Cheras, 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: (603) 9086 0288 Fax: (603) 9019 8868
Website: www.utar.edu.my

Appendix C

Parental Consent Form

Kajian Impak Kawalan Psikologi Ibu Bapa Terhadap Kesejahteraan Subjektif Remaja di Sekolah di Malaysia: Kesan Perantaraan Kecekapan Kendiri Sosial

Jabatan Psikologi dan Kaunseling

Kebenaran Ibu Bapa untuk Penyertaan Anak-anak dalam Penyelidikan

Anak anda dijemput untuk menyertai kajian bertajuk "Kajian Impak Kawalan Psikologi Ibu Bapa Terhadap Kesejahteraan Subjektif Remaja di Sekolah di Malaysia: Kesan Perantaraan Kecekapan Kendiri Sosial" yang dibiayai oleh Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). Oleh kerana anak anda berumur bawah 21, persetujuan anda diperlukan untuk penyertaan anak anda dalam kajian ini.

Apa yang akan diminta untuk anak anda lakukan?
Anak anda akan diminta untuk menjawab borang soal selidik berdasarkan pemahaman dan pengalaman mereka.

Adakah penyertaan anak anda wajib?
Penyertaan anak anda adalah secara sukarela. Peserta akan dijelaskan tentang objektif, kaedah persampelan kajian, dan soal privasi. Anak anda boleh menarik diri daripada kajian ini pada bila-bila masa.

Apa yang anak anda akan dapat?
Anak anda boleh menyumbangkan maklumat bermakna dan berguna yang membolehkan penyelidik mengisi jurang pengetahuan.

Apakah risiko kepada anak saya?
Jawatankuasa Saintifik dan Etika Penyelidikan UTAR telah menyemak semula kajian dan mengesahkan bahawa tiada risiko terjangka dikaitkan dengan peserta kajian ini.

Bagaimanakah privasi anak saya dilindung?
Respon anak anda adalah sulit. Hanya penyelidik-penyelidik yang akan mempunyai akses ke atas jawapan anak anda. Sekiranya kajian ini diterbitkan, tiada maklumat mengenai keperibadiaan akan didedahkan.

Siapakah yang boleh dihubungi untuk keterangan atau penjelasan lanjut?
Untuk informasi dan penjelasan lanjut, anda boleh menghubungi Bernicia Gilbert Tan Ze San (berniciatan03@1utar.my), Daphne Kho Wei Qian (dkwq2003@1utar.my), atau Teh Chai Horng (tch0419@1utar.my) penyelidik-penyelidik kajian ini melalui emel.

Sekiranya anda membenarkan anak anda untuk menyertai penyelidikan ini, sila tandatangan dan kembalikan borang ini kepada UTAR melalui anak anda.

Saya telah membaca maklumat di atas dan saya membenarkan anak saya untuk menyertai kajian ini.

Nama anak : _____ Tarikh: _____

Nama Ibu/bapa: _____ Tandatangan: _____

Department of Psychology and Counselling

Parental Consent for Child Participation in Research

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled "Parental Psychological Control and Subjective Well-Being in School of Malaysian Adolescents: Social Competence as a Mediator", funded by Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). As your child is under 21, your consent is required for their participation in this study.

What will your child be asked to do?
Your child will be asked to complete a questionnaire based on their understanding and experiences.

Is your child's participation mandatory?
Participation is entirely voluntary. The study's objectives, sampling method, and privacy considerations will be explained to all participants. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

What are the benefits of participation?
Your child's involvement may contribute valuable insights that would help researchers to expand knowledge in this area.

Are there any risks to my child?
The UTAR Scientific and Research Ethics Committee has reviewed the study and confirmed no anticipated risks to participants.

How is my child's privacy protected?
Your child's responses will be kept confidential. Only researchers will have access to their answers, and no personal information will be disclosed in any publications arising from this study.

Who can I contact for more information?
For further information or clarification, please email the researchers: Bernicia Gilbert Tan Ze San (berniciatan03@1utar.my), Daphne Kho Wei Qian (dkwq2003@1utar.my), or Teh Chai Horng (tch0419@1utar.my).

If you permit your child to participate, please sign and return this form to UTAR through your child.

I have read the above information and consented to my child participating in this study.

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Signature: _____

Appendix D

Study Questionnaire

2

UTAR UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN	KAWALAN PSIKOLOGI IBU BAPA, PENGGUNAAN MEDIA SOSIAL, DAN PERMAINAN DALAM TALIAN SEBAGAI PERAMAL KESEJAHTERAAN SUBJEKTIF REMAJA DI MALAYSIA: KESAN PERANTARAAN KECEKAPAN KENDIRI SOSIAL

Lembaran Maklumat Peserta

Selamat datang ke kajian mengenai kawalan psikologi ibu bapa, penggunaan media sosial, dan permainan dalam talian sebagai peramal kesejahteraan subjektif remaja di Malaysia: kesan perantaraan kecekapan kendiri sosial. Survei ini merangkumi beberapa soal selidik berkaitan kawalan psikologi ibu bapa, penggunaan media sosial, permainan video, kesejahteraan subjektif, dan kecekapan kendiri sosial, serta maklumat demografi. Survei ini mengambil masa lebih kurang 45 minit untuk dilengkapkan.

Penyertaan anda adalah secara sukarela. Anda boleh memilih untuk berhenti atau menarik diri pada bila-bila masa atau melangkau mana-mana soalan yang anda tidak mahu atau tidak dapat jawab. Anda tidak diwajibkan untuk mengambil bahagian dan tidak ada penalti sekiranya tidak mengambil bahagian. Walau bagaimanapun, penyempurnaan survei ini dianggap sebagai persetujuan anda terhadap maklumat yang diberikan untuk disertakan ke dalam kajian ini.

Jawapan anda hanya akan dikodkan dalam bentuk angka untuk analisis data, perbincangan, dan pembentangan. Tiada maklumat peribadi akan dikeluarkan atau diterbitkan. Data akan disimpan di dalam komputer penyelidik dan pangkalan data sistem survei dalam talian. Kata laluan diperlukan untuk mengakses data bagi kedua-dua kaedah. Selain itu, data akan disimpan selama 5 tahun selepas tamatnya kajian itu, selaras dengan dasar Persatuan Psikologi Amerika (APA). Selepas tempoh itu, data tersebut akan dipadamkan.

Para penyelidik dengan sukacitanya akan menjawab sebarang persoalan berkaitan prosedur kajian ini. Anda boleh menujukan sebarang kebimbangan atau soalan kepada penyelidik. Setelah melengkapkan fasa 1 dan 2 survei, anda akan menerima hadiah kecil sebagai tanda penghargaan atas masa dan sumbangan anda untuk penyelidikan ini.

Kajian ini telah diluluskan oleh Jawatankuasa Semakan Saintifik dan Etika Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.
Saya dengan ini **bersetuju/tidak bersetuju*** untuk mengambil bahagian secara sukarela dalam menyertai kajian soal selidik yang disebut di atas.

Saya telah diberi penerangan secara menyeluruh mengenai dasar kajian soal selidik dari segi metodologi, risiko dan implikasi. Saya memahami bahawa saya berhak menarik diri dari penyelidikan ini pada bila-bila masa tanpa memberi sebarang alasan. Saya juga memahami bahawa sebarang maklumat yang berkaitan dengan identiti saya akan dirahsiakan.

Tandatangan Responden: …… Tarikh: ……

*Sila bulatkan pilihan anda

1

UTAR UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN	**PARENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTROL, SOCIAL MEDIA USE, AND ONLINE GAMING AS PREDICTORS OF ADOLESCENTS' SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN MALAYSIA: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL COMPETENCE**

Participant Information Sheet

Welcome to the study on parental psychological control, social media use, and online gaming as predictors of adolescents' subjective well-being in Malaysia: the mediating effect of social competence. This survey consists of several questionnaires that explore parental psychological control, social media usage, online gaming, subjective well-being, social competence, and demographic information. It will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may choose to stop or withdraw at any time or skip any questions you prefer not to answer. Participation is not mandatory, and there are no penalties for opting out. However, completing this survey indicates your consent for the information provided to be included in the study.

Your responses will be anonymous and coded for data analysis, discussion, and presentation. No personal information will be disclosed or published. Data will be securely stored on the researchers' computers and in a protected database. Access to the data will require a password. Additionally, data will be retained for 5 years after the study's conclusion, in accordance with the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). After this period, the data will be deleted.

The researchers are happy to address any questions related to this study. Please feel free to reach out with any concerns or inquiries. Upon completing phases 1 and 2 of the survey, you will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation for your time and contribution to this research.

This study has been approved by the Scientific and Ethical Review Committee of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

I hereby ***agree/disagree**** *to voluntarily participate in the above-mentioned survey study.*

I have been fully informed about the survey study's policy in terms of methodology, risks, and implications. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time without providing any reason. I also understand that any information related to my identity will be kept confidential.

Respondent's Signature: …… *Date:* ……

**Please circle your selection*

Negeri *State*: _____ Sekolah *School:* _____

BAHAGIAN D: LATAR BELAKANG INDIVIDU
SECTION D: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
第四部分：个人背景**信息**
Sila **ISIKAN** jawapan anda di tempat kosong dan **BULATKAN** pada nombor jawapan yang berkenaan.
*Please **FILL** in your answers in the blank spaces and **CIRCLE** the number of the relevant answer.*
请在空白处填写您的答案并圈出相关答案的数字。

1. Umur : _____tahun
   Age: _____*years old*
   年龄: _____岁

2. Jantina *Gender* 性别
   1 : Lelaki *Male* 男
   2 : Perempuan *Female* 女

3. Bangsa *Race* 种族
   1 : Melayu *Malay* 马来族
   2 : Cina *Chinese* 华族
   3 : India *Indian* 印度族
   4 : Lain-lain *Others* 其他 (Sila nyatakan) *(Please specify)*(请注明): _____

4. Agama *Religion* 宗教
   1 : Islam *Islam* 伊斯兰教
   2 : Buddha *Buddhist* 佛教
   3 : Hindu *Hindu* 印度教
   4 : Kristian *Christian* 基督教
   5 : Lain-lain *Others* 其他 (Sila nyatakan) *(Please specify)* (请注明): _____

5. Kewarganegaraan *Nationality* 国籍
   1 : Malaysia *Malaysian* 马来西亚
   2 : Lain-lain *Others* 其他 *(Sila nyatakan) (Please specify)* (请注明): _____

Arahan: Mencipta ID Unik

Sila mencipta ID unik dengan menggunakan format berikut. Pastikan anda menyimpan ID ini, kerana ia akan diperlukan dalam tinjauan seterusnya, dalam tempoh **TIGA hingga ENAM bulan**.

Gabungkan **HARI JADI anda (format HHBBTTTT)** dan **NAMA KELUARGA (NAMA AKHIR) anda.** Tulis semua huruf dalam **HURUF BESAR tanpa ruang.**

CONTOH:

A. Jika hari jadi anda ialah 12 Disember 2012 dan nama anda ialah *Siti binti Ahmad (*atau *Siti Aisyah binti Ahmad)* ID unik akan menjadi: **12122012AHMAD**.

B. Jika hari jadi anda ialah 11 November 2011 dan nama anda ialah *Kavitha a/p Muthu*, ID unik akan menjadi: **11112011MUTHU**.

C. Jika hari jadi anda ialah 10 Oktober 2010 dan nama anda ialah *Chong Mei Mei (*atau *Janice Chong),* ID unik akan menjadi **10102010CHONG**.

Instructions: Creating a Unique ID

*Please create your unique ID using the format below. Ensure you save this ID, as it will be required for the next survey in **THREE to SIX months.***

*Combine your **DATE OF BIRTH (format DDMMYYYY)** and your **FAMILY NAME (LAST NAME).** Write everything in **UPPERCASE** without spaces.*

EXAMPLES:

A. *If your date of birth is 12 December 2012 and your name is* Siti binti Ahmad *(or* Siti Aisyah binti Ahmad*),*
*your unique ID will be: **12122012AHMAD***

B. *If your date of birth is 11 November 2011 and your name is* Kavitha a/p Muthu*, your unique ID will be: **11112011MUTHU***

C. *If your date of birth is 10 October 2010 and your name is* Chong Mei Mei*, your unique ID will be: **10102010CHONG***

指示：创建独特 ***ID***

请按照以下格式创建您的独特 ID。请确保保存此 ID，因为 3 到 **6** 个月后的下一次调查将需要使用它。

将您的出生日期（格式为 **DDMMYYYY**）与您的姓氏（**FAMILY NAME**）结合在一起。所有内容请使用大写字母，并且不要留空格。

示例：

A. 如果您的出生日期是 **2012** 年 **12** 月 **12** 日，姓名是 **Siti binti Ahmad**（或 **Siti Aisyah binti Ahmad**），您的独特 ID 将是：**12122012AHMAD**

B. 如果您的出生日期是 **2011** 年 **11** 月 **11** 日，姓名是 **Kavitha a/p Muthu**，您的独特 ID 将是：**11112011MUTHU**

C. 如果您的出生日期是 **2010** 年 **10** 月 **10** 日，姓名是 **Chong Mei Mei**，您的独特 ID 将是：**10102010CHONG**

6. ID Unik *Unique ID* 独特 *ID*: _____

Appendix E

Histograms for Study Variables

Figure E1

Histogram of Parental Psychological Control (Time 1).

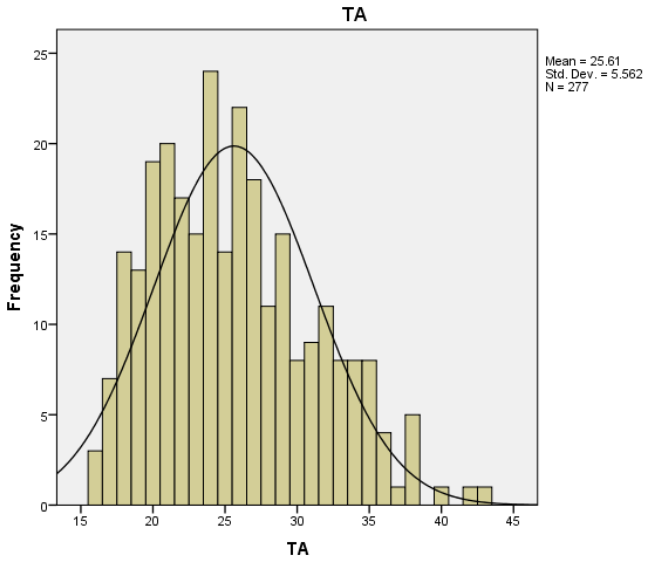


Figure E2

Histogram of Parental Psychological Control (Time 2).

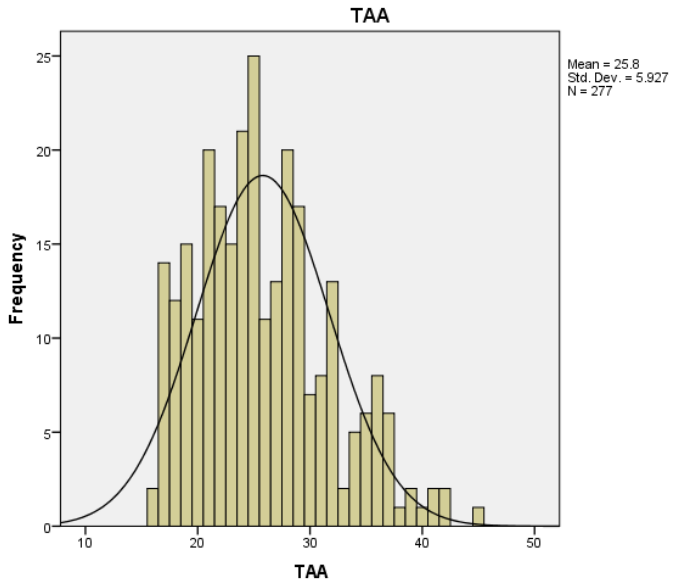


Figure E3

Histogram of Social Competence (Time 1).

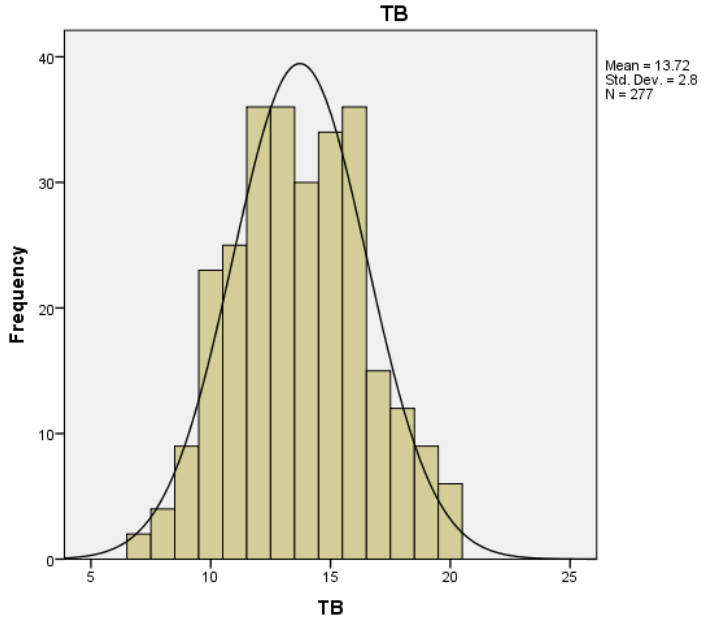


Figure E4

Histogram of Social Competence (Time 2).

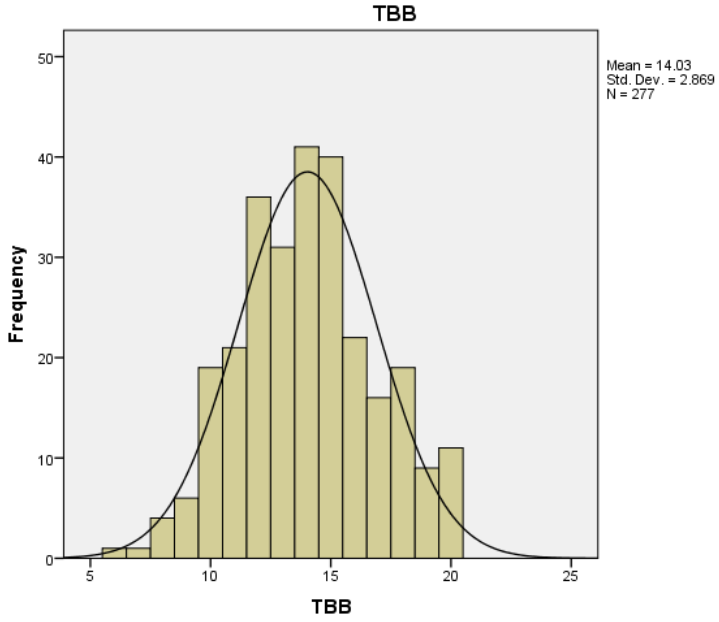


Figure E5

Histogram of Subjective Well-being in School (Time 1).

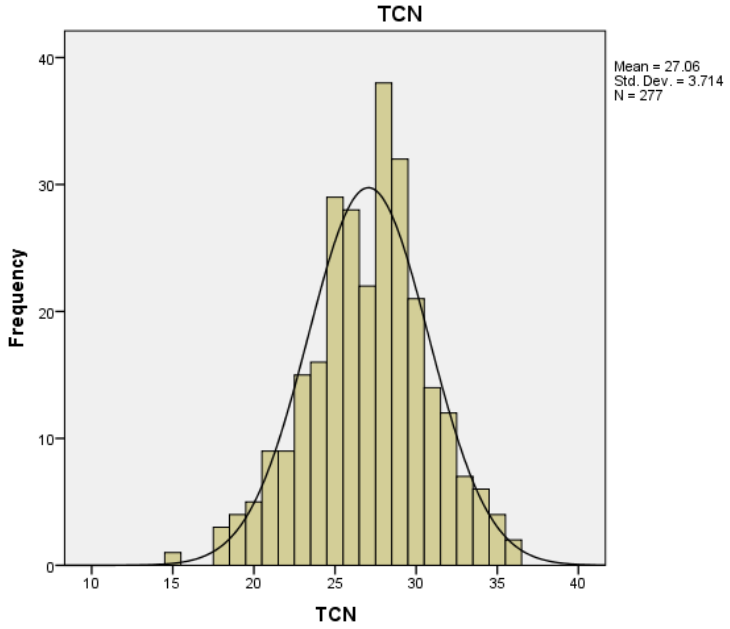
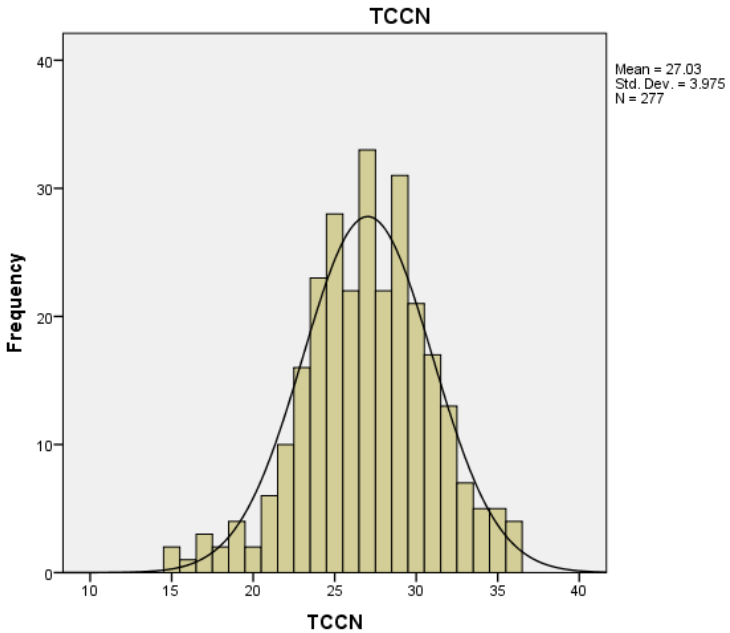


Figure E6

Histogram of Subjective Well-being in School (Time 2).



Appendix F

Q-Q Plots for Study Variables

Figure F1

Q-Q Plot of Parental Psychological Control (Time 1).

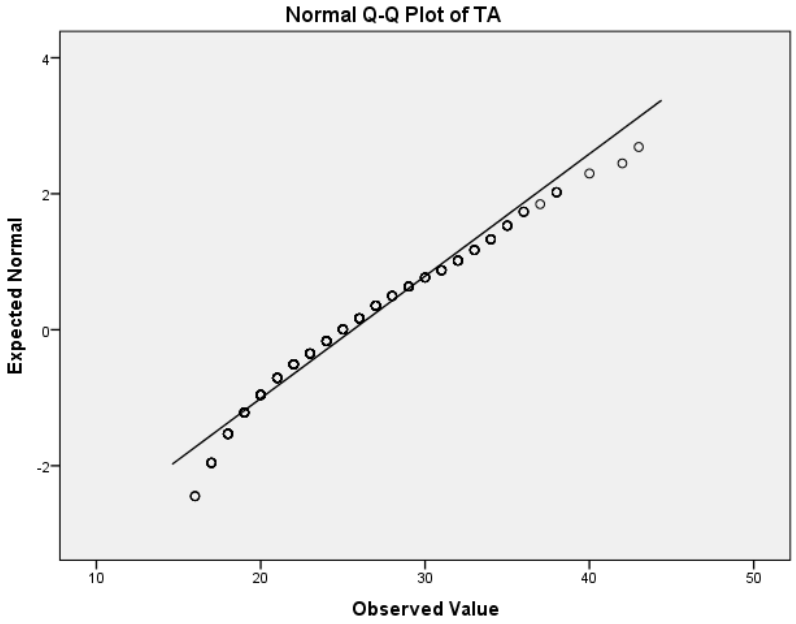


Figure F2

Q-Q Plot of Parental Psychological Control (Time 2).

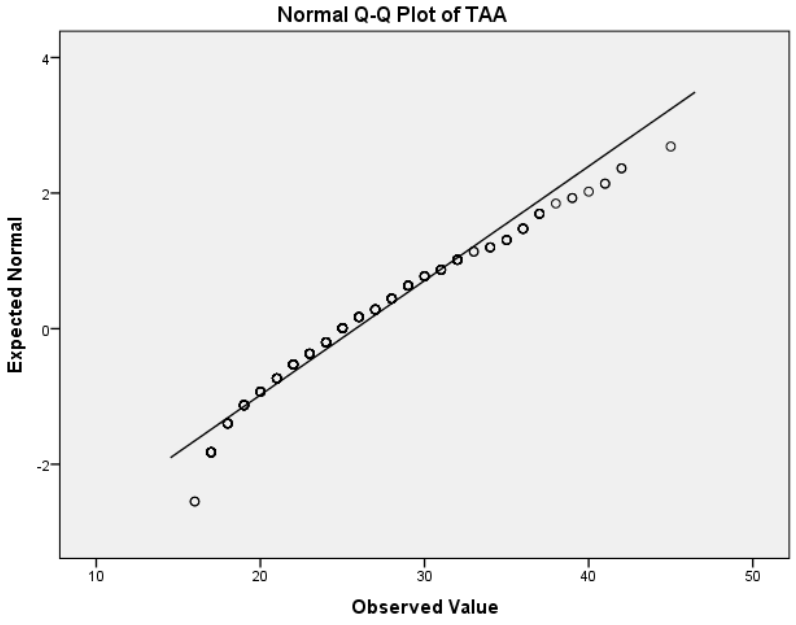


Figure F3

Q-Q plot of Social Competence (Time 1).

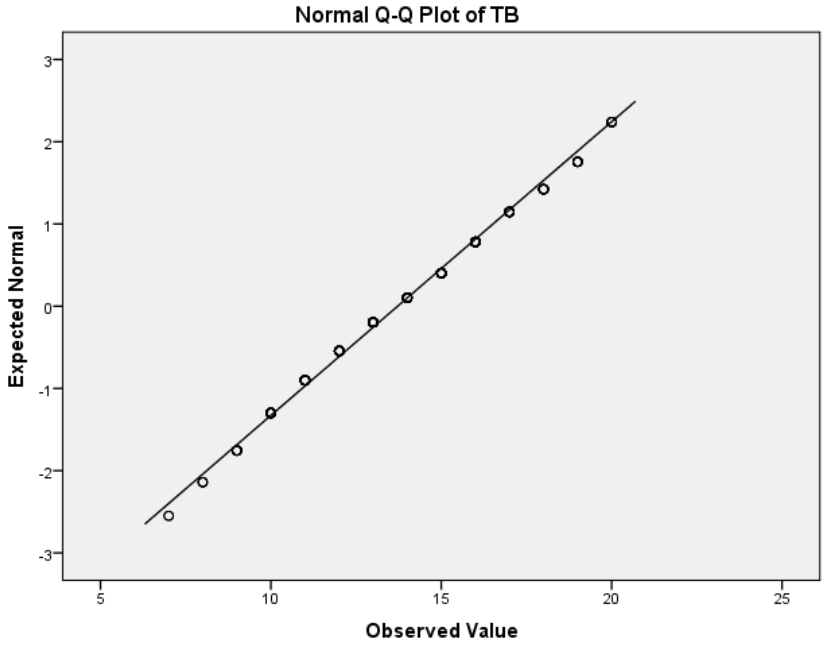


Figure F4

Q-Q plot of Social Competence (Time 2).

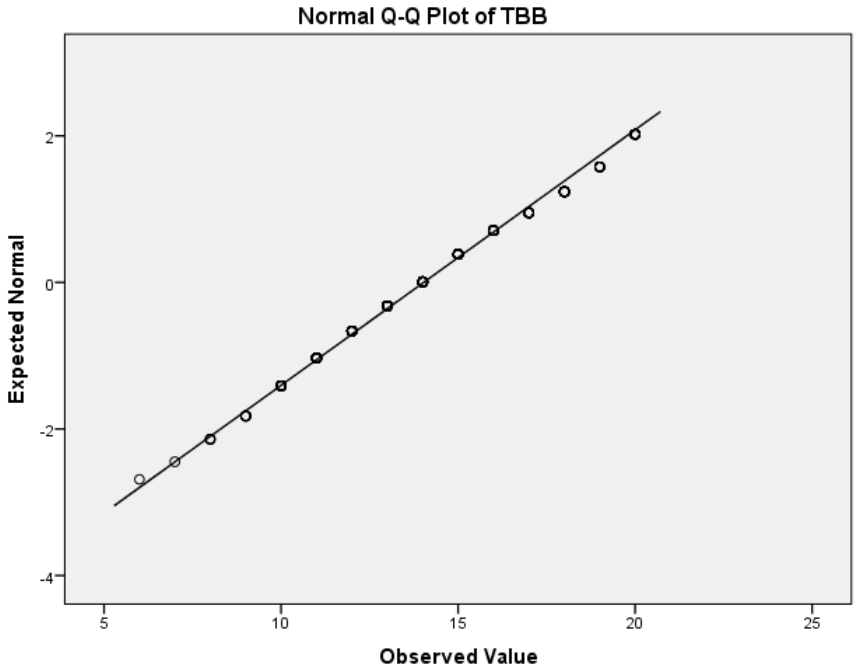


Figure F5

Q-Q Plot of Subjective Well-being in School (Time 1).

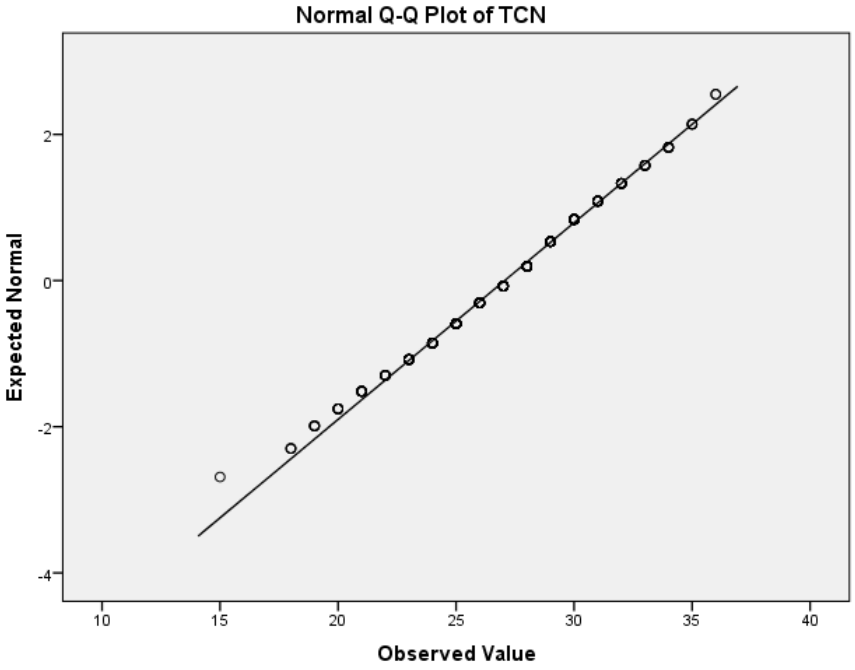
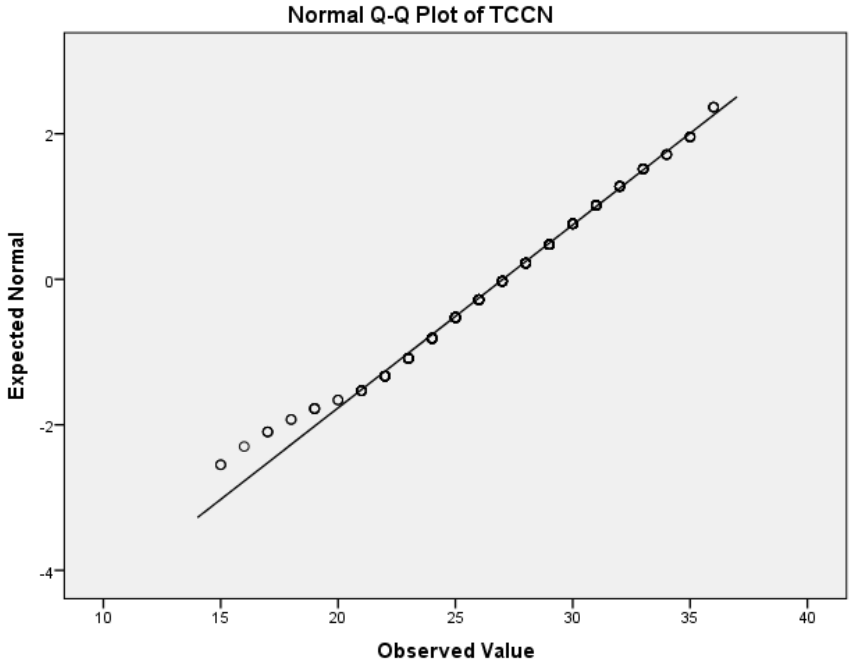


Figure F6

Q-Q Plot of Subjective Well-being in School (Time 2).



Appendix G

Outlier and Influence Diagnostics

Case	Mahalanobis Distance	Cook's Distance	Centered Leverage Value
19	3.54	.028	.013
44	.94	.024	.003
45	.21	.014	.001
61	.62	.011	.002
63	.26	.006	.001
115	2.37	.019	.009
122	.08	.013	.000
127	1.91	.032	.007
227	2.91	.023	.011
230	1.48	.016	.005
242	8.42	.059	.030
246	3.06	.026	.011
250	.75	.011	.003
255	1.78	.016	.006
263	.28	.010	.001
274	.52	.007	.002

Note. Sixteen flagged cases (19, 44, 45, 61, 63, 115, 122, 127, 227, 230, 242, 246, 250, 255, 263, 274) were examined using Mahalanobis distance, Cook's distance, and centered leverage. None exceeded recommended thresholds. All cases were retained.