

Relationship Between Emotional Neglect of Parents and Children's Internalizing, Externalizing Behavior Problems and Academic Achievement

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Abstract— The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of emotional neglect of parents on the behaviors and academic achievement of primary five children in Pasir Gudang, Johor. In this quantitative research, a sample of 340 primary five children and their parents were involved by using cluster sampling method. Using a survey research design, two sets of questionnaires; namely: Neglect Scale, Child Behavior Checklist (6-18) and achievement test were used to collect data. The analysis of data collected revealed that the children experienced mild level of emotional neglect of parents. Besides, the children also had mild internalizing and externalizing behavior problems and their academic achievement was at satisfactory level. In addition, there was a significant difference between emotional neglect of parents and genders. Male children experienced slightly higher level of emotional neglect of parents compared to female children. High correlations were found between emotional neglect of parents and children's internalizing and externalizing behavior problems whereas moderate correlation was found between emotional neglect of parents and children's academic achievement.

Keywords: *emotional neglect, internalizing, externalizing behavior problems, academic achievement*

I. INTRODUCTION

Children are important human capitals to the country. It is important for every country and society to nurture a strong, intellectual and healthy youth. However, based on the data collected by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), the number of victims had been increasing in an alarming rate in the past 5 years. Approximately 75.3% of child maltreatment cases in 2015 were classified as child neglect [1]. Based on a national clinical dataset of over 11000 trauma-exposed youth, psychological maltreatment (emotional abuse and emotional neglect) was identified as the most prevalent (38%) form of maltreatment (Briggs, et al., 2013). It arose due to insufficient nurturing, lack of care, and insufficient affection [2]. It is now increasingly believed that parental emotional neglect increases risk for the children's internalizing and externalizing behavior, as well as delays in cognitive development [3]. According to Teoh (2013), children who encountered emotional neglect were at least 25% more likely to involve in internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems such as low self-esteem, mood swing and delinquency.

Positive Parenting Malaysia (2014) also claimed that emotionally neglected children often exhibit some problematic or self-destructive social or behavioral patterns such as anxiety or depression (internalizing behavior problems), temper tantrums, destructive behavior, unwilling to follow rules, running away, chronic lying, and extreme risk taking (externalizing behavior problems). Research findings suggest that there is a relationship between emotional neglect of parents and academic achievement of children. According to Iwaniec (2007) [2], emotionally neglected children have difficulty paying attention in class, which results in poor academic achievement. Leiter & Johnsen (2014) also found that neglected children had the poorest school performance of all maltreated children. In Malaysia, urban primary school children had showed poor academic achievement [4]. Findings of the study by Ong et al. (2010) showed that there was 14 percent out of 1470 eligible children who had poor academic achievement. The main reason caused poorer academic achievement among the children was their parents who showed low level of interest on their children's academic performance [4].

Maltreated children who often undergo different forms of maltreatment and emotional neglect may actually be the most ordinary types [5]. However, it is the most hidden, underreported and least studied type of abuse [6]. In a study conducted by Bernstein and Fink (1998), emotional neglect was defined as the failure of caretakers to attend to their children's psychological needs which include love, belonging, nurturance and support. In another study by Schimmenti, A., et al. (2015) [7], they claims that emotional neglect happens when parents overlooks the symptoms that a child needs attention or comfort. It happens intentionally or unintentionally and involves a few of parental behaviors which include failure to provide needed psychological care such as rejection of the child, failure to express positive feelings to the child and withholding love.

Various studies have been looking into the gender differences in the level of parental emotional neglect. Kylie, Amanda & Patrick (2016) reported that there was no gender differences in reported exposure to emotional neglect although the prevalence rate was approximately one in ten children [8]. Similarly, the fourth National Incidence Study

(NIS-4) did not find gender differences in the prevalence of emotional neglect. However, study by Sentse et al. (2010) used the Parental Acceptance-Rejection questionnaire to determine the level of emotional neglect experienced by the male and female children [9]. The T-test result shows that girls are more likely to be accepted by parents compared to boys. Therefore, boys tend to experience higher level of parental emotional neglect.

The results of Sharon et al.'s (2017) study showed that psychological neglect of caregiver had a substantial and significant relationship with depression [10]. Vachon et al. (2015) also found that different types of child maltreatment had equivalent psychiatric and internalizing behavioral effects like anxiety and depression [11]. Moreover, similar study done by Marie-Eve et al. (2013) examined the emotional profiles of 41 neglected children, aged 6 to 12 years and compared them with a control group of 41 children [12]. Findings of the study revealed that emotionally neglected children had more internalized behavior problems than controlled group children. Findings of Wark, Kruczek and Boley's (2003) study showed that respondents who were being emotionally neglected by a primary male or by a primary female caregiver would exhibit higher levels of psychological distress than those without neglect experiences [13]. Besides, respondents who perceived primary female caregiver as neglectful reported higher levels of psychological distress too.

Externalizing behavior problems are defined as problems that are manifested externally [14]. In Swedish, a study was conducted by Hadborg, Tidefors and Fahlke's (2017) to explore the effect of emotional neglect on mental health and behavioral problems of young adolescents. Findings of this study demonstrated that emotional neglect of parents had significant influence on externalized symptoms for both gender. Tamara et al. (2016) claimed that parental emotional neglect was strongly correlated with externalizing behaviors like aggression, impulsivity and criminality. Similarly, Young, Lennie & Minnis (2011) did find that adolescents who were being emotionally neglected by parents at 11-age had a greater risk to exhibit conduct problem symptoms at age 15 [15].

In United State, Spinazzola et al. (2014) analyzed the independent and additive predictive effects of emotional neglect on an array of behavioral problems, symptoms, and disorders with children and adolescents as the sample [16]. A subsample of 5616 with history of one or several forms of maltreatment such as psychological maltreatment (emotional abuse and emotional neglect), physical abuse and sexual abuse were analyzed. Surprisingly, findings revealed that psychological maltreated children showed more levels of behavioral problems, symptoms, and disorders compared to children who are physically and sexual abused. Study by White and Renk (2012) also showed that adolescents' perceived experiences at each level of the ecological model would be closely associated with their externalizing problems.

Emotional neglect of parents increases children's academic problems [14]. Kathleen (2011) had examined the impacts of emotional neglect on academic achievement of elementary, junior high and senior high students [17]. Compared with non-maltreated samples, emotionally neglected children and adolescents did perform more poorly, had lower grades, got more suspensions and more grade repetitions even when controlling for socioeconomic status and gender of child. Another study by Spratt et al. (2013) also revealed similar findings [18]. They found out that emotionally neglected children had lower academic achievement, repetitions of grade and more suspensions [18]. In Bangladesh, Uddin (2011) had conducted a study to explore the possible association between parental acceptance and academic achievement of adolescents [19]. Findings of this study showed that parental warmth is correlated to academic achievement of children whereas indifferent (neglecting) and undifferentiated rejection of parents was not significantly correlated to children's academic achievement. Study by David, James & Gaudin (2013) also revealed that emotionally neglected children displayed severe academic delays [20]. They scored lower on reading, math and language compared to the controlled group. Neglected children tended to have lower academic performance. David, James & Gaudin (2013) claimed that it was not surprising that neglected children may have trouble in school performance [20]. This is because intellectual development of children depends on the quality of the interaction between parent and child.

The neglectful, unavailable parenting induces deficit in intellectual development of the child. In Singapore, Grace (2014) had explored the relationship between parental behaviors and the academic achievement of their children in primary schools [21]. Parents of EM 1 students were warmer than parents of EM2 and EM3 students. Besides, the analysis of the subscale on parental communication with their child also found that EM1 and EM 2 students inclined to tell their parents everything that happens to him/her in school more than an EM3 child. The findings indicated that parents who were warm and nurturing tended to have EM1 or EM2 children. Emotional neglect of parents is a serious problem. It leads to harmful influence on children especially on their behavioral development and academic achievement. This study is aimed to investigate the effects of emotional neglect of parents on children's behaviors and academic achievement.

This research attempted to identify the impact of emotional neglect of parents on children's internalizing, externalizing behavior problems and their academic achievement. Specifically, this study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To identify the level of emotional neglect of parents, the level of children's internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, and the level of children's academic achievement.
- ii. To examine whether there is any significant difference in emotional neglect of parents between male and female children.

- iii. To investigate whether there is any significant relationship between emotional neglect of parents and children’s internalizing behavior problems.
- iv. To determine whether there is any significant relationship between emotional neglect of parents and children’s externalizing behavior problems.
- v. To determine whether there is any significant relationship between emotional neglect of parents and children’s academic achievement

II. METHOD

In this study, quantitative approach was used. The design of this study was descriptive in nature. The approach that widely used in descriptive research to collect data and information is survey research design (Berg and Bruce L., 2009). According to Creswell (2012). Survey research design was employed to the entire population or a selected sample to describe the perceptions, characteristics or attitudes of the population . As with other typical survey research design, questionnaire was used in this study to collect data. Neglect Scale and Child Behavior Checklist were used to collect data on the level of parental emotional neglect and children’s internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. The sample method employed in this study was cluster sampling.

A. Population and Sample

In this study, the target population were 11 Chinese National-type primary schools in Pasir Gudang district which further divided into different areas (cluster) according to their postcode. The four different areas were Johor Bahru, Ulu Tiram, Masai and Pasir Gudang. There were three schools located in Johor Bahru area, another three schools in Ulu Tiram, four schools were located in Masai and only a school was located in Pasir Gudang. The samples involved in this study were primary five children from the four schools in Masai area. In each school, three classes were randomly selected as they were heterogeneously streamed.

B. Neglect Scale

The Neglect Scale questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A of the questionnaire consisted of demographic variables which were gender and average score obtained by the children in the year-end assessment. In Section B, the items in the questionnaire were in a form of self-report to identify the level of emotional neglect of their parents. The Neglect Scale consisted of a total of 20 items that were directly related to the theoretical definition of emotional neglect in this study. It included the level of care and support received from the caregivers, time spent and communication with the caregivers and lastly children’s assessment of their caregivers’ positive affection towards them.

C. Child Behavior Checklist

Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) was rated by caregivers to identify behavior problems in children. In this study, there were two domains in the adapted CBCL namely internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. It consisted of 30 items in internalizing behavior problems

domain whereas 34 items in externalizing behavior problems domain.

III. RESULT

To analyze the collected data, two types of statistical methods, descriptive and inferential analyses, were applied to answer the research questions.

A. Demographic Information of Respondents

In this study, data were collected from parents and children in four Chinese National-type primary schools in Pasir Gudang district. A total of N=340 primary five children and their parents participated in this study. Out of all respondents, 163 (47.9%, n=163) of them were male and 177 (52.1%, n=177) were female. Table 1 showed the frequency and percentage of respondents’ gender.

TABLE I. FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS’ GENDER

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------|-----------|----------------|
| Male | 163 | 47.9 |
| Female | 177 | 52.1 |
| Total | 340 | 100.0 |

B. Level of Emotional Neglect of Parents

To determine the magnitude of emotional neglect of parents, a total score was calculated. The mean of the total score was used to determine the level of parental emotional neglect experienced by the primary five children.

TABLE II. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL NEGLECT SCALE SCORES

| Total Neglect Scale Score | Levels of Emotional Neglect | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 20-40 | Mild | 222 | 65.29 |
| 41-60 | Moderate | 109 | 32.06 |
| 61-80 | Severe | 9 | 2.65 |

The findings in Table 2 shows that he majority of children (65%, n=222) were experiencing mild emotional neglect of parents while (32%, n=109) of children were experiencing moderate emotional neglect of parents and only (3%, n=9) of them fall within the severe range.

TABLE III. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF NEGLECT SCALE

| Variable | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|
| Total Neglect Scale Score | 340 | 37.52 | 11.00 |

Table 3 shows that from the analysis done on 340 respondents, the mean value for the overall score was 37.52 with a standard deviation of 11.00. By referring to the scale of Emotional Neglect, primary five children were experiencing mild emotional neglect of parents.

C. Level of Children's Internalizing Behavior Problems

To determine the level of respondents' internalizing behavior problems, a total score was calculated and the total mean score was used to determine the level of primary five children's internalizing behavior problems. Higher scores indicated a higher level of respondents' internalizing behavior problems.

TABLE IV. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL CBCL (INTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS) SCORES

| Total Internalizing Behavior Scores | Level of Internalizing Behavior Problems | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|----------------|
| 30-70 | Mild | 301 | 88.53 |
| 71-110 | Moderate | 39 | 11.47 |
| 111-150 | Severe | 0 | 0.00 |

By referring to Table 4, the findings revealed that the majority of the children (89%, n=301) were having mild internalizing behavior problems while the remaining children (11%, n=39) were found to be within the range of moderate internalizing behavior problems and none of them were having severe internalizing behavior problems.

TABLE V. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF CBCL (INTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS)

| Variable | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|
| Total Internalizing Behavior Score | 340 | 52.44 | 15.05 |

Table 4 shows that the mean value for the total internalizing behavior score was 52.44 with a standard deviation of 15.05. by comparing to the scale of CBCL score indicator, it demonstrated primary five children were having mild internalizing behavior problems

D. Level of Children's Externalizing Behavior Problems

Again, Child Behavior Check List (CBCL) served as purpose in assessing the level of children's externalizing behavior problems. A total score was calculated to determine the level of respondents' externalizing behavior problems and the total mean score was used to determine the level of primary five children's externalizing behavior problems.

TABLE VI. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL CBCL (EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR) SCORES

| Total Externalizing Behavior Scores | Level of Externalizing Behavior Problems | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|----------------|
| 34-79 | Mild | 268 | 78.82 |
| 80-125 | Moderate | 69 | 20.29 |
| 126-170 | Severe | 3 | 0.89 |

Referred to table 5, it reveals that majority of the children (79%, n=268) were having mild externalizing

behavior problems and 20% (n=69) of the children were having moderate externalizing behavior problems. There was only 1% (n=3) of the children had severe externalizing behavior problems.

TABLE VII. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF CBCL (EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS)

| Variable | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|
| Total Externalizing Behavior Score | 340 | 63.71 | 19.25 |

Table 6 revealed the mean value for the total externalizing behavior score was 63.71 with standard deviation of 19.25. It demonstrated primary five children were having mild externalizing behavior problems.

E. Level of Children's Academic Achievement

In this study, the level of children's academic achievement was determined by the average scores of their year-end assessment. The scores and the status were based on the grading system in Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR) in Malaysia. It should be remarked that higher scores indicated a higher level of their academic achievement. Table 4.8 showed the frequency and percentage of children's average scores in year-end assessment.

TABLE VIII. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF PRIMARY FIVE CHILDREN

| Average Scores | Status | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 80-100 | Excellent | 8 | 2.35 |
| 65-79 | Good | 95 | 27.94 |
| 50-64 | Satisfactory | 76 | 22.35 |
| 40-49 | Minimum standard | 79 | 23.24 |
| 0-39 | Below minimum standard | 82 | 24.12 |

Table 7 shows academic achievement of primary five children. Only 2% (n=8) of the children had excellent scores, 28% (n= 95) of children had good scores, 22% (n=76) of children had satisfactory scores while the remaining of 23% (n=79) and 24% (n=82) of children were found to have score reaching the minimum standard and below minimum standard.

TABLE IX. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF AVERAGE SCORES IN YEAR-END ASSESSMENT

| Variable | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|
| Total Average Score | 340 | 51.13 | 18.75 |

Table 8 shows the mean and standard deviation of average scores in year-end assessment. The mean value of the total average scores obtained by the primary five children was 51.13 with standard deviation of 18.75. By comparing the mean value to the UPSR grading system, the academic achievement of the primary five children was at the satisfactory level.

F. Difference in Emotional Neglect of Parents between Male and Female Children

TABLE X. INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE CHILDREN AND TOTAL SCORE OF EMOTIONAL NEGLECT SCALE

| Variable | t-Test for Equality of Means | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | t | df | Significant t (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
| Total Emotional Neglect Scale | 2.064 | 338 | .040 | 2.45291 |

The result of the t-Test analysis was summarized in Table 9. The t-Test result shows that there were significant differences between male and female respondents in the level of emotional neglect of parents ($t = 2.06, df = 338, p = 0.04$). The mean differences between male and female respondents are 2.45. It demonstrated that male children were experiencing slightly higher level of emotional neglect of parents compared to female children.

G. Relationship between Emotional Neglect of Parents and Children's Internalizing Behavior Problems

TABLE XI. PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL NEGLECT OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S INTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

| Parameter | Total Neglect Scale scores | Total Internalizing Behavior Scores |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pearson Correlation | 1 | .690* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| N | 340 | 340 |

From Table 10, it demonstrates that there was a strong positive correlation between emotional neglect of parents and children's internalizing behavior problems ($r = 0.690, p < 0.01$). The results showed that children who were more likely to experience emotional neglect of parents were more likely to exhibit internalizing behavior problems and the strength of this relationship is strong.

H. Relationship between Emotional Neglect of Parents and Children's Externalizing Behavior Problems

Pearson Correlation was computed to measure the relationship between emotional neglect of parents and children's externalizing behavior problems. The independent variable was emotional neglect of parents whereas the

dependent variable was children's externalizing behavior problems.

TABLE XII. PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL NEGLECT OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

| Parameter | Total Neglect Scale Score | Total Externalizing Behavior Scores |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pearson Correlation | 1 | .692* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| N | 340 | 340 |

From Table 11, the results shows that there was strong positive correlation between emotional neglect of parents and children's externalizing behavior problems ($r = 0.692, p < 0.01$). The results revealed that children who were experiencing emotional neglect of parents were more likely to exhibit externalizing behavior problems.

I. Relationship between Emotional Neglect of Parents and Children's Academic Achievement

Table 12 shows the Pearson Correlation between emotional neglect of parents and children's academic achievement. By using Pearson's interpretation, it revealed that children's academic achievement was negatively correlated to emotional neglect of parents variable ($r = -0.353, p < 0.01$). It showed that children who perceived their parents as emotionally neglectful were more likely to have poorer academic achievement and the strength of this relationship is moderate.

TABLE XIII. PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL NEGLECT OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

| Parameter | Academic Achievement | Total Emotional Neglect Scores |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.353* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| N | 340 | 340 |

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Level of Emotional Neglect of Parents

The overall mean score was 37.52 which indicated that primary five children in Pasir Gudang district experienced mild emotional neglect of parents. The findings correspond with Hadborg, Tidefors and Fahlke (2017) where they found that most of the respondents perceived their parents as not "neglectful". As much as 60.2% of boys and 64.3% of girls were not experiencing emotional neglect of parents whereas 28.7% of boys and 25.3% of girls were in moderate range. There were only 11.1% of boys and 10.4% of girls were in severe range. Similarly, study by Young, Lennie & Minnis (2011) also found that only a small (3%) group of children at age 11 perceived their parents as "neglectful" and most of them (97%) perceived their parents as "caring" [15]. However, study by Wark, Kruczek and Boley (2003) found

that respondents who characterized their relationship with their caregiver as neglectful (n=60) were more than the respondents reported no neglect (n=49) [13]. The differences in the level of emotional neglect of parents were probably due to different age groups of respondents involved in the studies. Three studies that reported similar levels of parental emotional neglect as the current study [15] had been involved pre-adolescents with a mean age of 12 whereas the respondents involved in Wark, Kruczek and Boley's (2003) study was undergraduate students with an average age of 21.90 [13]. Besides, good parent-child relationship is also one of the explanations to the occurrence of mild level of parental emotional neglect. When children were asked about their interaction with their parents, 57% (n=194) of the children rated strongly disagree to the item 20 "Interact with me only when necessary". It showed that primary five children had good interaction with their parents. According to Sawyer et al. (2011) [22], in their study, parent-child relationship variable differentially predict child neglect potential. It implied that negative parent-child relationship predicted the occurrence of emotional neglect of parents and vice versa. Specifically, good parent-child relationship decreases the level of parental emotional neglect.

B. Level of Children's Internalizing Behavior Problems

Child Behavior Checklist was used to measure the level of children's internalizing behavior problems. The findings showed that primary five children had mild internalizing behavior problems as the parental emotional neglect perceived by the children were at mild level. The findings of the current study corresponds with other similar studies [12][13] where emotional neglect of parents is associated with internalizing behavior problems of children. According to Wark, Kruczek and Boley's (2003) [13], the results indicated respondents who reported no neglected by caregivers exhibit lower level of psychological distress than those respondents reporting a childhood experience of emotional neglect. Marie-Eve et al. (2013) [12] also found that controlled group children had less internalized problems than emotionally neglected children. This phenomenon has been discussed by Bowlby (1988), that secure attachment relationship promotes adolescents' cognitive, social and emotional competence and less symptoms of psychological problems such as depression and anxiety. On the other hand, insecure attachment represented by parental emotional neglect will cause problematic outcomes especially internalizing symptoms of children.

C. Level of Children's Externalizing Behavior Problems

In this study, children were having mild level of externalizing behavior problems. According to White and Renk (2012), parental acceptance was associated with lower levels of externalizing behavior problems whereas parental rejection (parental emotional neglect) was related to higher levels of externalizing behavior problems in early adolescents. According to PAR Theory, accepting parents will express their love and affection toward their children. All these behaviors tend to promote a child to feel love and accepted and exhibited less externalizing behavior problems

(Rohner and Khaleque, 2002). Therefore, one of the best explanations to mild level of externalizing behavior problems among the primary five children was due to mild level of parental emotional neglect experienced by the children. This explanation was further supported by the study conducted by Spratt et al. (2013), control group of respondents had significantly better scores on behavioral measures than children with history of neglect [18].

D. Level of Children's Academic Achievement

The findings of this study showed that the academic achievement of primary five children was at satisfactory level. The mean value of the total average score obtained by the primary five children was 51.13. To answer the question of the occurrence of satisfactory level of academic achievement among the children, one of the best explanations was parental behaviors. When children were asked about their parent's behavior towards their study, most of the children (64%) rated "strongly disagree to the item "Did not show interest in my grades at school". This indicated that parents showed interest and cared about their children's study. The finding of this study was supported by previous study conducted by Grace (2014) [21]. According to Grace (2014), parental behavior is closely linked to a child's academic achievement. It indicated caring parents tended to have EM1 (highest level) or EM2 (level where majority are posted) children [21].

E. Differences in Emotional Neglect of Parents Between Male and Female Children

Findings from many studies had shown that there were no significant gender differences in the level of parental emotional neglect. Emotional neglect occurred at the same frequency among female and male children [8]. However, in comparison with the earlier findings, the findings in this study were inconsistent with the earlier studies. In the current study, male children were experiencing slightly higher level of emotional neglect of parents compared to female children. This result was supported by the study carried out by Sentse et al. (2010) which found out that girls perceived more parental acceptance whereas boy perceived more parental rejection [9]. Therefore, it implied that boys inclined to experience emotional neglect of parents. The findings of this study were further supported by a study carried out Irene & Choo (2016) who claimed that there was a notable proportion of young adolescents (22%) were exposed to multiple types of neglect. Male reported much more emotional victimizations compared to females.

F. Relationship Between Emotional Neglect of Parents and Children's Internalizing Behavior Problems

The result of Pearson Correlation showed that children's internalizing behavior problems were strongly correlated to emotional neglect of parents. The result corresponded with Wark, Kruczek and Boley's (2003) findings where they found emotional neglect of parents would cause greater level of internalizing behavior problems of children [13]. For instances, in the study conducted by Sharon et al. (2017), caregiver emotional neglect had significant and substantial relationship with depression [10].

G. Relationship between Emotional Neglect of Parents and Children's Externalizing Behavior Problems

In the prior research, there were a lot of researchers studied the levels of emotional neglect of parents on children's externalizing behavior problems. One of the research was carried out by Spratt et al. (2013) to compare the behavioral functioning between two groups of children [18]. The two groups of children were children with no history of neglect (n=30) and children who undergone emotional neglect from caregivers (n=30). Findings of their study revealed that emotionally neglected group exhibited lower levels of behavioral functioning than control groups. From this past study, it had been proven that emotional neglect of parents was positively related to children's externalizing behavioral problems. This result was in line with the current study that emotional neglect or parents was positively related to children's externalizing behavior problems.

H. Relationship Between Emotional Neglect of Parents and Children's Academic Achievement

The relationship between emotional neglect of parents and children's academic achievement was identified using Pearson correlation. The result showed that there was a significant relationship between the level of parental emotional neglect and children's academic achievement. The result of this study was supported by the study carried out by Kathleen (2011) who stated that emotionally neglected children and adolescents did perform more poorly, having lower grades, more suspensions and more grade repetitions even when controlling for gender of child and socioeconomic status [17]. The findings of this study was consistent with David, James & Gaudin's (2013) findings which revealed that there was a strong link between parental emotional neglect and children's academic performance [20]. According to David, James & Gaudin (2013), emotionally neglected children displayed severe academic delays [20]. They scored lower on reading, math and language compared to the controlled group. Neglected children tended to have lower academic performance. These emotionally neglected children were confirmed to have below average levels of working and learning skills compared with their classmates.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings revealed the children were experiencing mild level of emotional neglect of parents. Besides, the children were also having mild internalizing and externalizing behavior problems and their academic achievement was at satisfactory level. In addition, there was a significant difference between emotional neglect of parents and genders. Male children were experiencing slightly higher level of emotional neglect of parents compared to female children. High correlations were found between emotional neglect of parents and children's internalizing and externalizing behavior problems whereas moderate correlation was found between emotional neglect of parents and children's academic achievement.

For future research, it is suggested the research on similar issue can be carried out longitudinally. For instance, research can be conducted to identify the influence of parental emotional neglect on participants over late adulthood. Future researchers who are interested in this topic also can include the demographic variables especially socioeconomic status to study the relationship between the emotional neglect of parents and social class, as well as the levels of children's behavioral problems. Moreover, this research can be conducted using qualitative research design. Tools like interviews and observation can be implemented to gather a great deal of data provided by the interviewees. By interviewing the participants, future researcher can gain an insight into the negative impact of emotional neglect.

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