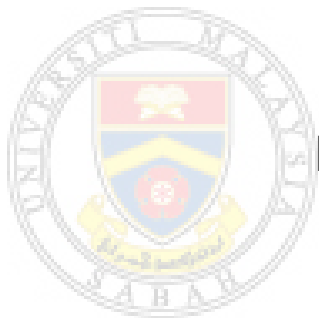


**THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLES AND  
SOCIAL SUPPORT ON CHILD-PARENT  
RELATIONSHIP AMONG CHINESE  
MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS IN  
PENAMPANG, SABAH**



**LIU QINGHUA**

**UMS**  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH  
2023**

**THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLES AND  
SOCIAL SUPPORT ON CHILD-PARENT  
RELATIONSHIP AMONG CHINESE  
MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS IN  
PENAMPANG, SABAH**

**LIU QINGHUA**



**UMS**

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH  
2023**

**UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH**  
**BORANG PENGESAHAN STATUS TESIS**

JUDUL : **THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLES AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIP AMONG CHINESE MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS IN PENAMPANG, SABAH**

IJAZAH : **SARJANA PENDIDIKAN**

BIDANG : **KURIKULUM DAN PENGAJARAN**

Saya **LIU QINGHUA**, Sesi **2021-2023**, mengaku membenarkan tesis Sarjana ini disimpan di Perpustakaan Universiti Malaysia Sabah dengan syarat-syarat kegunaan seperti berikut:-

1. Tesis ini adalah hak milik Universiti Malaysia Sabah
2. Perpustakaan Universiti Malaysia Sabah dibenarkan membuat salinan untuk tujuan pengajian sahaja.
3. Perpustakaan dibenarkan membuat salinan tesis ini sebagai bahan pertukaran antara institusi pengajian tinggi.
4. Sila tandakan ( / ):

<input type="checkbox"/>	SULIT
<input type="checkbox"/>	TERHAD
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TIDAK TERHAD

(Mengandungi maklumat yang berdarjah keselamatan atau kepentingan Malaysia seperti yang termaktub di dalam AKTA RAHSIA 1972)

(Mengandungi maklumat TERHAD yang telah ditentukan oleh organisasi/badan di mana penyelidikan dijalankan)

Disahkan Oleh,

**LIU QINGHUA**  
**MP2021296A**

(Tandatangan Pustakawan)

Tarikh : 22 September 2023

(Dr. Connie Shin @ Connie Cassy Ompok)  
Penyelia

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own except for quotations, excerpts, equations, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

22 August 2023

---

Liu Qinghua  
MP2021296A



UMS  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

## CERTIFICATION

NAME : **LIU QINGHUA**  
MATRIC NUM : **MP2021296A**  
TITLE : **THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLES AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIP AMONG CHINESE MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS IN PENAMPANG, SABAH**  
DEGREE : **MASTER OF EDUCATION**  
FIELD : **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**  
VIVA DATE : **22 AUGUST 2023**



**CERTIFIED BY;**

**UMS**  
Signature  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**SUPERVISOR**

Dr. Connie Shin @ Connie Cassy Ompok

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge and thank my supervisor Dr. Connie Shin @ Connie Cassy Ompok from the Faculty of Psychology and Education for her expert guidance in all aspects, encouragement, also for her valuable advice, and assistance throughout my master's journey. I would not have completed my master's study without her amazing support. Thank you, Dr. Connie! I would love to extend my many thanks to my internal examiner and external examiner Dr. Soon Singh Bikar Singh, Dr. Juppri Bacotang, and Prof. Dr. Anna Christina Abdullah for guiding me throughout my thesis writing. Moreover, I express my gratitude to Prof. Madya Dr. Abdul Said Ambotang and Dr. Musirin Musin for validating the research instruments.

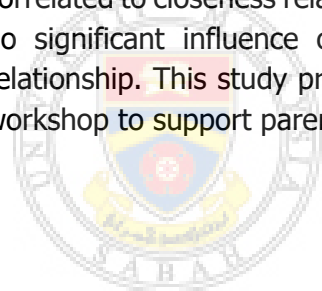
I gratefully acknowledge my dear husband Bai Jidong for his support mentally, physically, and financially, also motivation for me to overcome difficulties in my study, and encouragement from the very first day to today during my master adventure. Thanks to my sons Skyler and Skipper for their support as well. Moreover, I would like to appreciate myself. It has been twenty years since graduating from university, yet I still have the courage and ability to pursue academic dreams. Balancing the responsibilities of a full-time housewife, preparing three meals a day and raising two children, I successfully completed my master's degree.

Finally, special thanks to my dearest motherland, China!

Liu Qinghua  
22 August 2023

## ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of parenting styles and social support on child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah. The research also examined the relationship between maternal education level and parenting styles. This was a quantitative study that utilized an online questionnaire to collect data. The study employed the method of cluster sampling to select 165 Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang district as the sample. To assess parenting styles, social support and child-parent relationship, the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Supports (MSPSS), and Child-Parent Relationship Scale-Short Form (CPRS-SF) were used, respectively. The collected data were analysed using Pearson's correlation and multiple regression. The results revealed maternal education was positive related to authoritative parenting style and negative related to authoritarian style. The authoritative style was strongly positively correlated with closeness relationship and moderate negative correlated with conflict relationship. However, the authoritarian style was moderate negative related to closeness relationship and moderate positive related to conflict relationship. On the other hand, social support was weak positively correlated to closeness relationship. The regression analyses indicated that there was no significant influence of parenting styles and social support on child-parent relationship. This study provides information for teachers could organize parenting workshop to support parenting styles that's effects in their learning.



UMS  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

## **ABSTRAK**

### **PENGARUH GAYA KEIBUBAAPAN DAN SOKONGAN SOSIAL TERHADAP HUBUNGAN ANAK-IBU BAPA DALAM KALANGAN IBU KANAK-KANAK PRASEKOLAH CINA DI PENAMPANG, SABAH**

*Kajian ini mengkaji pengaruh gaya keibubapaan dan sokongan sosial terhadap hubungan anak-ibu bapa di kalangan ibu-ibu kanak-kanak prasekolah Cina di Penampang, Sabah. Ia juga mengkaji hubungan antara tahap pendidikan ibu dan gaya keibubapaan. Ini adalah satu kajian kuantitatif yang menggunakan soal selidik dalam talian untuk mengumpul data. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah persampelan kluster untuk memilih 165 ibu Cina yang mempunyai anak prasekolah di daerah Penampang sebagai sampel. Untuk menilai gaya keibubapaan, sokongan sosial dan hubungan anak-ibu bapa, Gaya Keibubapaan dan Soal Selidik Dimensi (PSDQ), Skala Multidimensi Sokongan Sosial Yang Dirasakan (MSPSS), dan Borang Pendek Skala Hubungan Anak-Ibu Bapa (CPRS-SF) masing-masing digunakan. Data yang dikumpul dianalisis menggunakan korelasi Pearson dan pelbagai regresi. Hasil analisis menunjukkan pendidikan ibu adalah positif berkaitan dengan gaya keibubapaan yang berwibawa dan negatif yang berkaitan dengan gaya autoritarian. Gaya berwibawa adalah hubungan positif yang kuat dengan hubungan keakraban dan hubungan negatif sederhana yang berkaitan dengan hubungan konflik. Walau bagaimanapun, gaya autoritarian adalah negatif sederhana yang berkaitan dengan hubungan keakraban dan positif sederhana yang berkaitan dengan hubungan konflik. Sebaliknya, sokongan sosial lemah dikaitkan secara positif dengan hubungan keakraban. Analisis regresi menunjukkan bahawa tidak ada pengaruh ketara gaya keibubapaan dan sokongan sosial terhadap hubungan anak-ibu bapa. Kajian ini menyediakan maklumat agar guru dapat menganjurkan bengkel keibubapaan untuk menyokong gaya keibubapaan yang memberi kesan terhadap pembelajaran mereka.*

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH



# LIST OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>TITLE</b>	i
<b>DECLARATION</b>	ii
<b>CERTIFICATION</b>	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iv
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	v
<b><i>ABSTRAK</i></b>	vi
<b>LIST OF CONTENTS</b>	vii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xiv
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	xv
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Background of the Study	2
1.3 Problem Statement	3
1.4 Objectives of the Research	6
1.5 Research Questions and Hypotheses	7
1.6 Significance of the Study	8
1.7 Definitions	9
1.7.1 Chinese	9
1.7.2 Parenting Styles	9
1.7.3 Social Support	11
1.7.4 Child-Parent Relationship	11
1.8 Research Framework	12

1.9	Limitations of the Study	12
1.10	Conclusion	13

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1	Introduction	15
2.2	Parenting Styles	15
2.2.1	Authoritative Parenting Style	18
2.2.2	Authoritarian Parenting Style	19
2.2.3	Permissive Parenting Style	19
2.2.4	Uninvolved Parenting Style	20
2.3	Social Support	21
2.4	Child-Parent Relationship	24
2.4.1	Conflict	25
2.4.2	Closeness	26
2.5	Maternal Education Level and Parenting Styles	29
2.6	Parenting Styles and Child-Parent Relationship	30
2.7	Social Support and Child-Parent Relationship	32
2.8	Parenting Styles, Social Support and Child-Parent Relationships	33
2.9	Related Theories	36
2.9.1	Baumrind's Theory of Parenting	36
2.9.2	Bioecological Human Development Model	37
2.9.3	Attachment theory	39
2.10	Theoretical Framework	40
2.11	Conclusion	41

## **CHAPTER 3: MATERIALS AND METHODS**

3.1	Introduction	42
3.2	Research Design	42
3.3	Population and Sampling	43
3.4	Research Instruments	44
3.4.1	Demographic Questionnaire	45
3.4.2	The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire	45
3.4.3	Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Supports (MSPSS-M)	46
3.4.4	Child-Parent Relationship Scale-Short Form (CPRS-SF)	47
3.4.5	Validity and Reliability of Instrument	47
3.4.6	Moderating variable	49
3.5	Data Analysis	49
3.5.1	Data Collecting Procedures	49
3.5.2	Data Analysis	50
3.6	Pilot Study	52
3.6.1	Normality Test	52
3.6.2	Reliability Test	54
3.6.3	Validity Test	55
3.7	Instrument Test of Actual Study	56
3.7.1	Reliability Test of Actual Study	56
3.7.2	Validity Test of Actual Study	57
3.8	Conclusion	58

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

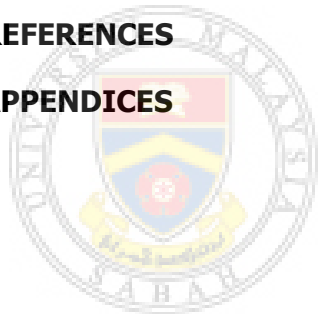
4.1	Introduction	59
4.2	Normality Test of Actual Study	59

4.3	Data Analysis	61
4.3.1	Demographic Analysis	61
4.3.2	Analysis of Research Question 1 (What is a parenting style mostly adopted by Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?)	62
4.3.3	Analysis of Research Question 2 (What extent of social support is perceived by Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?)	62
4.3.4	Analysis of Research Question 3 (What extent of child-parent relationships among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?)	63
4.3.5	Analysis of Research Questions 4 (Is there a correlation between maternal education level and parenting styles among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?)	63
4.3.6	Analysis of Research Question 5 (Is there a relationship between parenting styles and child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?)	65
4.3.7	Analysis of Research Question 6 (Is there a relationship between social support and child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?)	66
4.3.8	Analysis of Research Question 7 (Is there any significant influence of parenting styles on child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?)	67
4.3.9	Analysis of Research Question 8 (Is there any significant influence of social support on child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?)	68
4.4	Summary of Hypothesis Testing	69

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

5.1	Introduction	71
5.2	Findings and Discussion	71

5.2.1	The Status of Parenting styles, Social support and Child-parent relationship among Chinese Mothers of Preschooler in Penampang, Sabah	72
5.2.2	Maternal Education Level and Parenting Styles	74
5.2.3	The Relationship between Parenting Styles, Social Support and Child-parent Relationship	75
5.2.4	The Influence of Parenting Style on Child-parent Relationship	76
5.2.5	The Influence of Social Support on Child-parent Relationship	77
5.3	Implications of the Study	78
5.4	Recommendation for Practice and Further Study	79
5.5	Conclusion	80
<b>REFERENCES</b>		82
<b>APPENDICES</b>		97



## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1 : Chinese Preschool Name and Number in Penampang	44
Table 3.2 : Distribution of Items (Parenting Styles)	46
Table 3.3 : Distribution of items (Social support)	47
Table 3.4 : Distribution of items (Child-parent relationship)	47
Table 3.5 : The magnitude of the coefficient determines the strength of the correlation	51
Table 3.6 : Items Analyzed and Statistical Tools	52
Table 3.7 : Normality Test for Parenting Styles	52
Table 3.8 : Normality Test for Social Support	53
Table 3.9 : Normality Test for Child-Parent Relationship	53
Table 3.10 : Cronbach's Alpha for Tested Variables	54
Table 3.11 : Validity Test for Tested Variables	55
Table 3.12 : Reliability Test of Actual Study	56
Table 3.13 : Validity Test of Actual Study	57
Table 4.1 : Normality Test for Parenting Styles	59
Table 4.2 : Normality Test for Social Support	60
Table 4.3 : Normality Test for Child-Parent Relationship	60
Table 4.4 : Profile of Respondents	61
Table 4.5 : Descriptive Data of Parenting Styles	62
Table 4.6 : Descriptive Data of Social Support	62
Table 4.7 : Descriptive Data of Child-parent Relationship	63
Table 4.8 : Pearson's Correlation between Mother's Highest Education Level and Parenting Styles (N=165)	64
Table 4.9 : Pearson's Correlation between Parenting Styles and Child-parent Relationship (N=165)	65

Table 4.10	: Pearson's Correlation between Social Support and Child-parent relationship (N=165)	66
Table 4.11	: Regression Analysis of Parenting Styles and Child-parent Relationship (N=165)	67
Table 4.12	: Regression Analysis of Parenting Styles and Child-parent Relationship (Coefficientsa) (N=165)	67
Table 4.13	: Regression Analysis of Social Support and Child-parent Relationship (N=165)	68
Table 4.14	: Regression Analysis of Social Support and Child-parent Relationship (Coefficientsa) (N=165)	69
Table 4.15	: Summary of Hypothesis Testing	69



UMS  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 : Research Framework	12
Figure 2.1 : Diana Baumrind's Parenting Styles	16
Figure 2.2 : Bioecological Human Development Model	38
Figure 2.3 : Theoretical Framework of Study	40



UMS  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH



## LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
Appendix A : Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) Table	97
Appendix B : Questionnaire/ <i>Borang Soal selidik</i>	98
Appendix C : List of Experts in Validation of Instrument	107
Appendix D : Output of Descriptive Statistics	126
Appendix E : Outputs of Reliability Test for Actual Study	129
Appendix F : Output of Correlation Analysis	139
Appendix G : Output of Regression Analysis	140
Appendix H : Histogram of Residual, Normal P-P Plots and Scatterplot	142



UMMS  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

In early childhood development, the child-parent relationship is extremely important. The interaction between child and parent is constantly evolving and serves as the foundation for children to socialize and gain social support (Horstman, Hays, & Maliski, 2016), achieve emotional regulation (Lincoln, Russell, Donohue, & Racine, 2017), and learn (Callanan, Legare, Sobel, Jaeger, Letourneau, McHugh, Willard, Brinkman, Finiasz, & Rubio, 2020). There is also evidence that parent-child interaction causes infant brain changes (Sethna, Pote, Wang, Gudbrandsen, Blasi, McCusker, Daly, Perry, Adams, & Kuklisova-Murgasova, 2017).

In Malaysia's *Shared Prosperity Vision 2030*, the primary two aims for transforming human capital are 35% of the high-skilled nation's labor force and the majority of the workforce in high-skill employment and future economic sectors. Children are an important resource for the country to achieve the goal of becoming a developed country. As a result, children are regarded as one of the most important assets for achieving long-term growth (Mohamad, Mohammad, & Ali, 2014).

Moreover, several studies stated that the child-parent relationship is associated with parenting style (Schuiringa, Nieuwenhuijzen, Castro, & Matthys, 2015; September, Rich, & Roman, 2015; Hwang & Jung, 2021) and social support (Su & Hynie, 2011; Russo, 2019; Gambin, Woźniak-Prus, Sękowski, Cudo, Pisula, Kiepusa, Boruszak-Kiziukiewicz, & Kmita, 2020). Understanding the influence of parenting styles and social support on child-parent relationships may assist researchers in guiding and supporting positive parenting practices (Barlow & Stewart-Brown, 2000; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

Consequently, the present study is to investigate the status of parenting styles, social support, and child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah. It also examines the influence of parenting styles and social support on child-parent relationship.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

Malaysia, as a Southeast Asian country, has a diverse ethnic population. Sabah is the third most populous state in 2020 located in east Malaysia. Chinese is the largest non-indigenous group, accounting for 7.3% of the total population of 3.4 million people in Sabah. In addition, Penampang district has 16.2 thousand population in 2020 (Demographics of Sabah, 2022).

Concurrently, multiculturalism influences parenting through distinct childrearing strategies and interactions between parents and children, as well as among family members (Bornstein, 2013; Chen, Fu, & Yiu, 2019). Chiam asserted in *Child Care in Malaysia: Then and Now* that psychologists have long recognized that a child's first five years of life are critical for their formative years (Chiam, 2008). Furthermore, early childhood education is concerned with children aged 4-6 years (Mustafa, Nor, & Azman, 2013). The preschool children in this study are also referred to as 4 to 6 years old.

In Vision 2030, the government emphasizes human capital development and that the country needs highly skilled people to achieve its goal of becoming a developed country. Children are the future of human resources for national development. Meanwhile, the child-parent relationship plays a vital role in early childhood development (Crittenden, 2013; Berger & McLanahan, 2015). The child-parent relationship is viewed as a unique type of relationship that begins during pregnancy and is characterized by strong bonds between children and their parents (particularly mothers) (Flykt, 2014).

Researchers have suggested that parenting styles and social support are two factors that affect child-parent relationship. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that

home, school, and societal influence are all essential aspects to understand the development of humans. Social support is found that associated with the child-parent relationship. For example, Gambin *et al.* (2020) stated that social support is the best predictor of positive experiences in child-parent relationships for both mothers and fathers. Similarly, McGuire-Schwartz (2007) and Russo (2019) also suggest that there are positive relationships between family social support and child-parent bonds. On the other hand, the quality of the child-parent relationship can be distinguished from parenting styles and practices. The emotional bond formed between the parent and child (connectedness or closeness) is considered the most important characteristic across theories of child-parent relationships (Lamb & Lewis, 2011).

Furthermore, overseas Chinese parents influenced by Confucianism culture emphasised the child-parent hierarchy, demanded respect and obedience from their children, and imposed more restrictions and disciplines than Western parents rather than providing affective support (Wu *et al.*, 2002). In contrast, as new-generation parents gradually embrace Western values, their parenting styles may diverge from traditional parenting (Chan, Bowes, & Wyver, 2009; Nelson *et al.*, 2011; Way *et al.*, 2013).

It becomes clearer that parenting styles and social support have an impact on child-parent relationship. Therefore, child-parent relationship should be aware of parents' needs and provide an appropriate guide that promotes positive interactions.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

In this study, Chinese refers to Malaysian Chinese, who are Malaysians of Chinese ancestry. They are the second largest ethnic group after the Malay majority (Malaysia's Department of Statistics, 2019). Furthermore, Malaysian Chinese are the world's second-largest community of overseas Chinese, trailing only Thai Chinese. So far, there are no published studies of the child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Sabah.

Overseas Chinese are influenced by Confucianism and Chinese parents are often described as more authoritarian than Western parents when it comes to raising their children (Xu, 2007). According to evidence, a positive child-parent relationship is a modifiable protective factor in Chinese culture that can influence behavioral and academic outcomes for adolescents, as well as overall family harmony, which is a component of family functioning (Chang, Schwartz, Dodge, & McBrid-Chang, 2003; Wong, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007). In addition, Xu (2005) stated that external environmental factors, such as the resources available to parents, influence parenting styles. Cultural background may also influence parenting styles.

According to *Vision 2030*, the Chinese monthly median wage is higher than other races. Children are the foundation for future talents and labour. Furthermore, the improvement of the national economy needs high-quality talent and labour. The influence of parenting on preschool children is not a simple matter as it will not only affect children's further academic success (Chesters, 2020) but also as an important aspect of self-regulation, behavioral regulation contributes to young children's academic and social-emotional outcomes (Ren & Edwards, 2015). The interaction between child and parent is constantly evolving and serves as the foundation for children to socialize and gain social support (Horstman *et al.*, 2016), achieve emotional regulation (Lincoln *et al.*, 2017), and learn (Callanan *et al.*, 2020). There is also evidence that child-parent interaction causes infant brain changes (Sethna *et al.*, 2017). Improved and positive child-parent interaction during childhood has led to encouraging results in adolescent externalizing behaviors through parenting interventions (Kim, Schulz, Zimmermann, & Hahlweg, 2018).

In Malaysia, several researchers have investigated the child-parent relationship among parents of preschoolers. For example, Hong (2017) studied 319 mothers in Selangor with children aged three to six years. According to the findings, a child's emotionality is significantly negatively associated with the closeness child-parent relationship, whereas a child's sociability is positively associated with the closeness child-parent relationship. According to Rohini (2016), negative maternal parenting behavior has been identified as the strongest predictor of behavior problems in preschool children validating the importance of the mother-child relationship. In addition, Yap (2015) stated that conflicts in the child-parent

relationship had a moderation effect on the relationship between effortful control temperament and behavior problems. Low conflict in child-parent relationship is related to children's high effortful control.

In China, Li and Liu (2020) examined 372 families with preschool children and showed closeness mother-child relationship. Similarly, the studies of Zheng, Wang, Shen and Fang (2020), Liu and Jiang (2021), and Xu, Liu, Li, Liu and Huntsinger (2018) also support that parents and children are in closeness relationship. According to Ren and Fan (2019), the researchers examined 688 Chinese pre-schooler parents in Shanghai, China and found out that the participants adopted authoritative parenting styles and closeness child-parent relationship.

Father-child and mother-child relationships may play different balancing roles. Despite an increase in father involvement in childcare responsibilities and time spent with children, mothers continue to spend more time with their children and handle more childcare responsibilities (Parke & Crookston, 2019). Parents have had to spend more time caring for their children in general, but mothers have continued to spend more time on childcare responsibilities than fathers, and have also been more likely to reduce work hours, transition out of the workforce, and experience higher psychological distress (Zamarro & Prados, 2021). It is unclear how these new roles have influenced child-parent relationships, but it is possible that with less interaction outside the home and parents taking on more responsibilities in their children's lives, child-parent relationships have suffered.

Parental education has been consistently linked to parenting practices and styles in previous research (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009; Bejarano & Nicolas, 2016). For instance, Teti and Candelaria (2002) found that parents with higher levels of education tend to prefer authoritative parenting styles. On the other hand, Liu, Zhai, and Gao (2022) discovered a negative association between low education and positive parenting practices. In the context of Malaysia, Kiadarbandsari, Madon, Hamsan, and Mehdinezhad Nouri (2016) examined the role of parenting styles and parental education level in positive youth development in Selangor. Their findings revealed a

significant relationship between a parent's level of education and positive youth development.

The child-parent relationship has been extensively studied in various countries, showing associations with parenting styles in Singapore (Chung, Lanier, & Wong, 2020), the Netherlands (Schuiringa, Nieuwenhuijzen, Castro, & Matthys, 2015), and the USA (Hwang & Jung, 2021), as well as connections with social support in Canada (Su & Hynie, 2011), the USA (Russo, 2019), and Poland (Gambin *et al.*, 2020). In Indonesia, Riany, Cuskelly, and Meredith (2017) provided an initial examination of parenting styles, social support, and the child-parent relationship. However, there is a dearth of empirical studies specifically investigating parenting styles, social support, and the child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Sabah. Considering the significance of the child-parent relationship in children's development, it is essential to conduct research in the specific context of Sabah.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Research**

The purpose of this study is to identify parenting styles, social support and child-parent relationships among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah. It also examines the influence of parenting styles and social support on child-parent relationships among Chinese mothers of preschoolers.

The general objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the mostly adopted parenting styles among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah.
2. To identify the status of social support among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah.
3. To identify the status of child-parent relationships among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah.
4. To examine the correlation between maternal education level and parenting styles among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah.

5. To examine the relationship between parenting styles and child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah.
6. To examine the relationship between social support and child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah.
7. To examine the influence of parenting styles on child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah.
8. To examine the influence of social support on child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah.

### **1.5 Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In this paper, parenting styles and social support are independent variables that influence the dependent variable, child-parent relationships. In addition, maternal education level is the moderating variable related to parenting styles.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What is a parenting style mostly adopted by Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?
2. What extent of social support is perceived by Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?
3. What extent of child-parent relationships among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?
4. Is there a correlation between maternal education level and parenting styles among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?
5. Is there a relationship between parenting styles and child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?
6. Is there a relationship between social support and child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?
7. Is there any significant influence of parenting styles on child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?
8. Is there any significant influence of social support on child-parent relationship among Chinese mothers of preschoolers in Penampang, Sabah?