CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT AMONG MALAYSIANS AND UK MALAYSIANS: AN EXPLORATORY MIXED METHOD ANALYSIS

by

EDWARD ONG YUNG CHET

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Psychology

College of Life and Environmental Sciences

University of Birmingham

March 2018

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore how Malaysians living in Malaysia and in the UK perceive child maltreatment in relation to parenting practices and cultural beliefs/values. Chapter one, provides the theoretical frameworks of child maltreatment, background and the aims of the overall thesis. In chapter two, this chapter discussed how the Malaysian legislation, social policy, parenting practices and culture may impact on definitions and understanding of child maltreatment. Chapter three is a systematic review considering the state of the literature on how child maltreatment is being defined and identified in Asia. This review identified relatively a dearth of literature; hence Chapters four to six qualitatively explore how different stakeholders (i.e., professionals, parents and adult survivors of child maltreatment respectively) perceive child maltreatment in relation to their cultural beliefs, values and parenting practices. The findings suggested that culture may influence how child maltreatment is perceived and what is considered as abusive parenting behaviour. Chapter 7 explores how ecological factors and how cultural factors such as beliefs, perception and cultural assimilation are related to how child maltreatment is being perceived. Finally, in Chapter eight the key findings are pulled together, with an overall discussion considering both theoretical and practical implications.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Maya, a Rohingya refugee whom I worked with before this PhD. Without her, I would not be inspired to embark in this journey. I hope that works like this may increase compassion and sympathy for children who suffer, and in the hope that our world will become a less violent place in her lifetime.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, a special thanks to Dr Catherine Hamilton-Giachritsis, who mentored and supported me since Day 1 and till the end of my PhD, whilst she is Bath. I know it is not an easy process but I am thankful that she has never given up on me. I would also like to thank Dr Ruth Butterworth who stepped in and supported me in my first year and Dr Gary Law for his constructive feedback for this thesis and his coffee (that kept me sane except for choosing either the blue or orange capsules!). Thank you all for having the patience and endured all the grievances and inconvenience that I gave you. Your feedback and encouragement have certainly helped me to grow as a researcher and hopefully a better academic writer.

This thesis would also not be possible without the help of all my research participants, who took their time to share with me their stories, both inspiring and painful; who took the time to complete my surveys and above all reminded me what this project is all about. I am also very grateful to a considerable number of organisations and individuals who supported my research in different ways, especially to Dr Hartini Zainudin, Dr Farah Nini, and Dr Irene Cheah. Their assistance made my research not only productive, genuinely interesting and stimulating but also reminded me why I embarked on this journey. Till today, I still remember their words of encouragement and inspiration.

I would also like to give my wholehearted thanks Dr Hera Lukman and Professor Aaron Koh who advised me during moments of my PhD and cultural struggles and to my many friends who helped, supported and kept me sane throughout - Wei for the much needed coffee breaks; Johnny Lau for the company during some of the writing nights and checking up on me; Lailah Alidu, Daniella Nayyar, Elizabeth Schneider and Martijn De Gussem for listening and sharing my PhD struggles; and all of my friends from Malaysia who kept cheering me and never let me felt alone in my journey throughout my PhD,

especially Myke Ong, Henry Koh, Christopher Tan, Kheng Fai, Dan Chuang, Sarah Yung and Elaine Clarke. Without your friendship, help and support, I would have never able to find the strength and perseverance to complete this thesis.

Finally, I want to thank my family for always believing in me, especially my mother. Your support and encouragement have made it possible for me to study here in Birmingham and believed in my ability to succeed - Thank you everyone!

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Chapter 3 to Chapter 7 has been written as manuscripts and they will be submitted to various journals that are related to child maltreatment (e.g., Trauma, Violence, & Abuse; Child Abuse Review; Child Abuse & Neglect). As such, there would be overlapping background materials that were included in these chapters. Additionally, all of these chapters are collaborative work. More specifically, I am the primary author for all these chapters, and have solely planned and designed these studies, collected and analysed the data in these chapters. My supervisors, Dr Catherine Hamilton-Giachritsis and Dr Gary Law, are the other named authors, as they provided comments and feedback only on the drafts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	General Introduction	1
	1.1. Introduction	2
	1.1.1. Theoretical frameworks of child maltreatment	2
	1.1.2. Definitional issues of child maltreatment	9
	1.1.3. Sample definition	10
	1.1.4. The importance of cultural consideration in child maltreatment	12
	1.1.5. Child maltreatment in Malaysia	15
	1.1.6. Threshold considerations	16
	1.2. Thesis overview	17
Chapter 2	The impact of Malaysian's Social Policy, Parenting Practices, and Culture on Child Maltreatment	21
	2.1. Introduction	22
	2.2. Overview of Malaysia	23
	2.3. Malaysian legislation on child maltreatment	24
	2.4. Discipline or abuse: Cross-cultural differences in parenting practices	30
	2.5. Implication for child protection and future directions	35
Chapter 3	Defining and Identifying Child Maltreatment from Asian Perspectives: A Systematic Review	38
	3.1. Abstract	39
	3.2. Introduction	40
	3.3. Method	47
	3.4. Results	54
	3.5 Discussion	80
Chapter 4	Malaysian Professionals Perspectives on the Role of Culture in Defining and Identifying Child Maltreatment	84
	4.1. Abstract	85
	4.2. Introduction	86
	4.3. Method	94
	4.4. Results	101
	4.5. Discussion	117

Chapter 5	How Malaysian Parents Perceive Child Maltreatment: A Comparative View from Malaysia and the United Kingdom	123
	5.1. Abstract	124
	5.2. Introduction	125
	5.3. Method	130
	5.4. Results	136
	5.5. Discussion	146
Chapter 6	"Making Sense of My Abuse": Malaysian Victims' Perspectives on Parenting Practices, Cultural Influences and Child Maltreatment	151
	6.1. Abstract	152
	6.2. Introduction	153
	6.3. Method	159
	6.4. Results	164
	6.5. Discussion	181
Chapter 7	Understanding Malaysian Parents' Perception of Child Maltreatment: An Eco-Cultural Framework	187
	7.1. Abstract	188
	7.2. Introduction	189
	7.3. Method	197
	7.4. Results	205
	7.5. Discussion	213
Chapter 8	General Discussion	218
	8.1. Thesis aims	219
	8.2. Summary of findings	220
	8.3. The perception of child maltreatment, parenting practices and culture	221
	8.3. Revisiting the eco-cultural framework	226
	8.4. Revisiting threshold considerations	228
	8.5. Impact for policy and practice	230
	8.6. Theoretical implications and suggestions for future research	234
	8.7. Conclusion	236

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.0	Malaysian Child Act 2016 definition on a child in need of care and protection	29
3.0	PECO including inclusion and exclusion criteria	48
3.1	Keywords used to search literature in databases	49
3.2	Quality assessment of qualitative studies	55
3.3	Quality assessment of quantitative studies	57
3.4	Description of key methodologies in qualitative studies	61
3.5	Description of key methodologies in quantitative studies	64
4.0	Summary of professionals' demographic information	96
4.1	Example of an adapted vignette from Chan, Lam and Shae (2001) on possible physical abuse (Vignette 1)	99
4.2	Thematic categories of child maltreatment definition by Malaysian professionals	102
4.3	Behaviours described as abusive by Malaysian professionals based on type of maltreatment	104
4.4	Professionals' attitudes towards child maltreatment based on categories	115
5.0	Summary of parents' demographic information	132
5.1	Example of an adapted vignette from Chan, Lam and Shae (2011) on possible emotional abuse	134
5.2	Themes and subthemes of Malaysian parents' perception on child maltreatment	137
6.0	Example of an adapted vignette from Chan, Lam and Shae (2011) on possible physical abuse (Vignette 2)	162
6.1	Thematic categories of child maltreatment definition by Malaysian adult survivors	165
6.2	Differences in adult definition and childhood perception of the different types of child maltreatment	167
6.3	Distinguishing acceptable and unacceptable physical discipline based on type of parenting	172

7.0	The domains and contents of possible maltreatment vignettes	202
7.1	Demographic characteristics of the sample	207
7.2	Mean and (Standard Deviation) for Sample and Normative data	208
7.3	Participants' history of abuse	209
7.4	Parental perception of maltreatment based on type of domain: Kruskal-Wallis	210
7.5	Parental beliefs with history of abuse, parenting practices, cultural transmission and ecological influences: Kruskal-Wallis	212

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.0	The eco-cultural framework	6
2.0	Adaptation of the eco-cultural framework	8/196/227
3.0	Malaysian legal framework for child protection	25
4.0	Overview of search strategy	52

Chapter 1: General Introduction

Chapter rationale

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of child maltreatment, the theoretical frameworks that this thesis will be based on, the methodological difficulties of studying child maltreatment and the importance of studying child maltreatment in relation to cultural influences. Using Malaysia as a focal point, this chapter will discuss (briefly) child maltreatment in Malaysia and again, in-depth, in Chapter 2. Finally, this chapter will describe the thesis structure and the overall research questions that this thesis aims to explore.

Introduction

Children across the world and in various settings continuously experience different forms of violence, including child maltreatment. Violence to children is an issue that continues to be a major public health and social issue, with a substantial economic burden that affects the wellbeing and development of the victims (Fang, Fry, Brown, et al., 2015; Pinheiro, 2006; Taylor, Bradbury-Jones, Lazenbatt, & Soliman, 2015). However, in Malaysia, there are still limited studies on the prevalence and incidences of child maltreatment and, more importantly, how different factors such as parenting practices and cultural influences interact, and affect the perception of those that are in the child protection system (e.g., professionals and victims) and Malaysian parents in general (Cheah & Choo, 2016). Therefore, to understand how child maltreatment is perceived in Malaysia, this thesis aims to explore how child maltreatment is perceived by Malaysian professionals, parents, and adult survivors of child maltreatment, in relation to parenting practices and cultural influences, as well as how they distinguish parenting behaviours that are abusive from those that are not.

Theoretical frameworks of child maltreatment

Ecological Framework. While there have been major efforts to develop different psychological, sociological, developmental, and ecological theories and models to understand child maltreatment (Corby, 2005; Munro, Taylor, & Bradbury-Jones, 2014), arguably, one of the most comprehensive models is the ecological framework, first outlined by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 (Hamilton-Giachritsis, Peixoto, & Melo, 2011). The ecological model includes a broad range of influences on the aetiology of child maltreatment, but also recognises the interaction of factors, including the child's psychological characteristics, family interactions and societal stress, that may contribute to child maltreatment (Belsky, 1980, 1993).

The ecological framework was first developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) to understand general development of a child. However, given its versatility, the framework has been adapted and applied to many societal issues including child maltreatment (e.g., Belsky, 1980; Cicchetti & Rizley, 1981). Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) then proposed the ecological-transactional model of child maltreatment, a framework to understand child maltreatment as a social-psychological phenomenon. This model postulated that child maltreatment could be understood when the interactions between risk and protective factors at different levels of the ecological framework (i.e., macrosystem, exosystem, microsystem and ontosystem) influence each other and, in turn, influence the development of the child.

The model also suggests that factors most proximal to the child (e.g., parent-child relationship, personal resources to the family) may have a more direct impact than factors in the distal levels (e.g., cultural beliefs, economic and social policies; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993). However, distal factors such as culture and ethnicity-related variables in relation to the child, have been relatively understudied compared to variables at a more proximal levels (Cyr, Michel, & Dumais, 2013). As such, studies that typically focused on proximal factors rather than distal factors may have limited our understanding of child maltreatment; for example, studies in Western countries may have led to an over- or under-representation of child maltreatment reports among ethnic minority groups (Bang, 2008).

Furthermore, while there were some studies conducted in Asia on child maltreatment (e.g., Hong, Lee, Park, & Faller, 2011; Kohrt, Kohrt, Waldman, Saltzman, & Carrion, 2004; Liao, Lee, Roberts-Lewis, Hong, & Jiao, 2011) that have used an ecological model (e.g., Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and Cicchetti's ecological-transactional model), there is still much criticism that surrounds the use of such frameworks. For instance, Bronfenbrenner's theory has been used to explore the determinants of parenting and parenting behaviours that highlight parental psychological factors, child factors, and

contextual support systems (e.g., Belsky, 1984). However, little explanation is given on how such factors were weighted or how they interact within South Korean and Chinese communities (Hong et al., 2011; Liao et al., 2011). For example, in Hong et al.'s study (2011), they argued that it is unclear how cultural beliefs (e.g., deference to elders, Confucianism and beliefs in the benefits of using corporal punishment) are weighted in influencing parenting behaviours that may be considered as dysfunctional but not harmful from those that are considered as child maltreatment.

Similarly, the ecological-transactional model, which attempts to explore the interaction of different ecological factors (including community violence experiences) with a child's development, has also under-emphasised cultural influences. For example, the model is unable to determine the threshold between abusive parenting and non-abusive but problematic parenting when a particular parenting behaviour is seen as consistent with the cultural standards of a particular community (Kohrt et al., 2004). Thus, in relation to studying child maltreatment in Asia, Hong et al. (2011) and Liao et al. (2011) have argued that the applicability of the ecological framework in an Asian setting should begin with the examination of the macro-level factors, such as cultural beliefs that legitimise violence against children, before examining the proximal levels. Furthermore, recent studies have also argued the importance of defining parenting within its cultural context and cultural principles (such as the intersectionality theory) to understand parenting practices, parenting beliefs and parent-child socialisation strategies and more generally to understand family functioning rather than to be treated as a peripheral variable (Chuang, Glozman, Green, & Rasmi, 2018; E. a. Tajima & Harachi, 2010; Wolfe & McIsaac, 2011).

Intersectionality theory. In studying the determinants of parenting within the ecological factors, some studies have also argued the importance of conceptualising the determinants of parenting (e.g., ethnic identity, cultural traditions, socioeconomic status,

social support), as this could also be influenced by intersectionality theory, which underscores that individuals have multiple "axes of identification" (Tajima & Harachi, 2010, p. 217; Warrier et al., 2002). For example, as Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country (e.g., Malay, Chinese and Indian), Malaysians may identify with multiple social identities (e.g., relating to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, nationality, gender, culture, etc.) that could shape their parenting beliefs, perceptions, experiences and behaviours that subsequently may influence how they may view abusive parenting differently from those that are not. Furthermore, the application of intersectionality theory also suggests that individuals may identify with, and be influenced by, more than one culture (via enculturation and acculturation; (Krane, Oxman-Martinez, & Ducey, 2000; Raman & Hodes, 2012).

Eco-cultural framework. Therefore, recognising the importance of the ecological factors and the importance of understanding parenting as well as cultural influences, this thesis argues for the use of an eco-cultural framework, which includes the ecological factors but with emphasis on cultural factors to explore the perceptions of child maltreatment in order to provide further understanding of the mechanisms behind child maltreatment.

One such framework that consolidates both ecological factors and cultural factors is Berry's (1976, 2001) eco-cultural framework (see Figure 1). Berry (1993) asserted that this framework is neither a model nor a theory; rather it is a flexible framework to study human psychological diversity by considering:

- the ecological and socio-political influences
- variables (cultural and biological adaptation) that link these influences to psychological characteristics
- various "transmission variables" to individuals, which includes enculturation, socialisation, genetics, and acculturation.

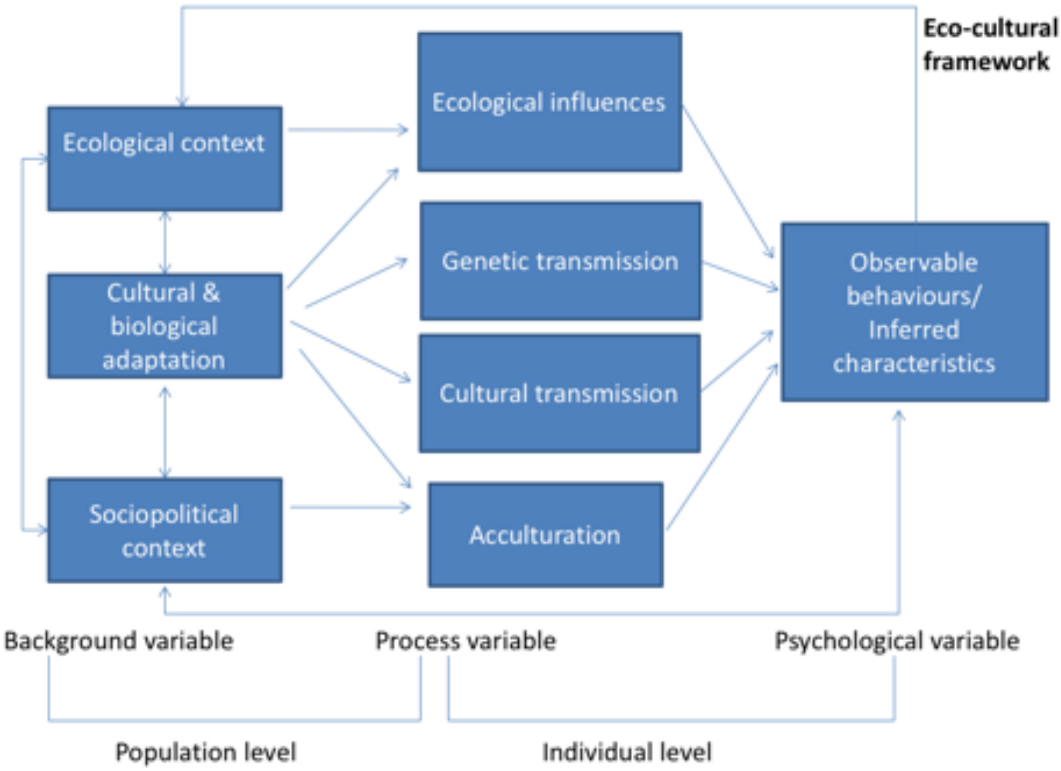


Figure 1.0: Ecological framework

The eco-cultural framework suggests that people develop and perform (as individuals) in adaptation to their ecocultural situation. The framework considers human diversity (i.e., cultural and psychological) to be a set of collective and individual adaptations to ecological context. Within this perspective, the framework views cultures as evolving adaptations to ecological and socio-political influences and views individual psychological characteristics in a population as adaptive to their cultural context. Besides that, the framework also views culture and individual behaviour as distinct phenomena at their own levels that need to be examined independently by taking into two sources of influence (ecological and socio-political) and two features of human populations that are adapted to them – cultural and biological characteristics. These population variables are transmitted to individuals by various transmission variables such as enculturation, socialisation, genetics and acculturation (Berry, 1993, 2010).

For example, from an anthropological point of view, people may develop customary behaviours to adapt to meet the demands of their ecological context by developing cultural forms to meet needs. This may include acquiring language, social structures (e.g., norms and social roles) and social institutions (e.g., marriage, justice). Similarly, individuals may share common psychological processes such as perception, learning and social relations (Berry & Poortinga, 2006).

In relation to other ecological models, the eco-cultural framework also shares notable similarities with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. For example, that the likelihood of parents displaying any form of parenting behaviour is typically shaped in important ways by the maintenance systems of a society, including social institutions like family structure, household organisation, economic organisation, local politics, and other institutions that bear directly on the survival of a culturally organised population within its natural environment (Berry & Poortinga, 2006).

However, one of the major differences between the eco-cultural framework and the other ecological frameworks is the emphasis on cultural factors that include how parenting beliefs and cultural values could influence parenting practices (Weisner, 2009) while also considering other parent-child and contextual factors that subsequently could help to understand how parents distinguish abusive from non-abusive parenting. Furthermore, the eco-cultural approach has other benefits compared to other ecological models. This framework takes on a neutral stand in describing and interpreting similarities and differences in human behaviour across cultures (Berry, 1993). This is a critical point, especially in studying how the perception of child maltreatment is influenced by culture, as the framework allows for the conceptualisation, assessment and interpretation of culture and behaviour in non-ethnocentric ways. It explicitly rejects the idea that some cultures or parenting behaviours are more advanced or more developed than others (Berry & Poortinga, 2006).

Nonetheless, although this framework to the best of the author's knowledge has never been used in relation to study child maltreatment per se, this framework potentially could help to understand child maltreatment better. Therefore, to understand how child maltreatment is being perceived in relation to parenting practices and culture, this thesis has adapted and utilised Berry's eco-cultural framework (see Figure 2) by including the ecological variables and cultural adaptions and transmissions and excluding biological adaptions, genetics and socio-political context from the original framework. Instead, this thesis included variables such as history of abuse and parenting practices as there were many studies that have discussed the influence they have on child maltreatment (Ferrari, 2002; Nadan, Spilsbury, & Korbin, 2015; Ngiam & Tung, 2016; Wang, Wang, & Xing, 2018)

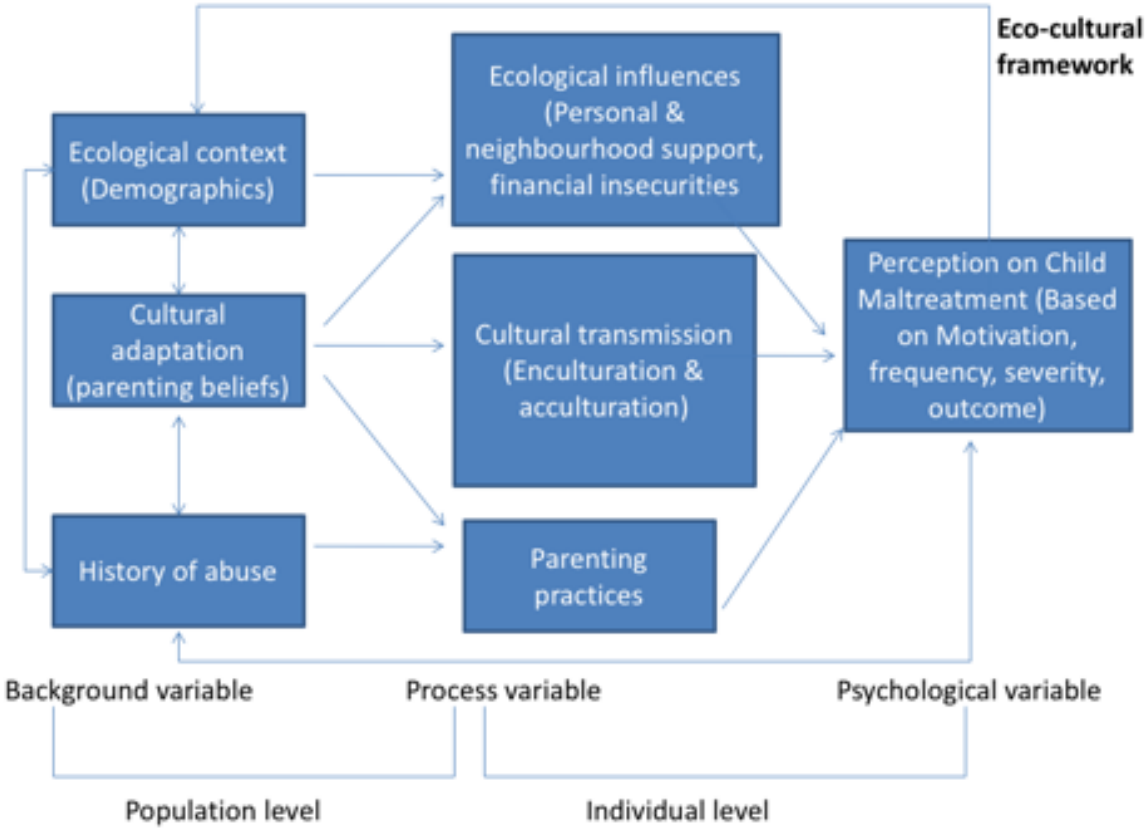


Figure 2.0: Adaptation of the eco-cultural framework

Definitional issues of child maltreatment

Like in any explorative study with a cross-cultural perspective, this thesis needs to acknowledge the many challenges presented by this approach. One such challenge is the need to understand how factors such as child maltreatment are defined, perceived or interpreted, the role of culture, and poor parental wellbeing and support (e.g., stress, poor emotional regulation, poor social support; Cyr et al., 2013; Munro et al., 2014). The study of child maltreatment is complicated by several methodological issues that may impede a comprehensive understanding of child maltreatment, in particular, how it is being defined.

Definitions are important because they specify: the problem that needs societal attention, who may intervene, whose responsibility it is and how to provide appropriate interventions for the child and the family. Although there are different definitions of child maltreatment, there is still little conceptual analysis on the term abuse and neglect, as well as who may be responsible for the abuse (Gough, 1996), which still remain an issue after 20 years. For example, although physical punishment such as spanking is considered to be child maltreatment, as it caused a degree of pain or discomfort to the child (as defined by the (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006), spanking still remain as a common form of physical punishment, and has constantly been debated for its usage, its potential benefits and consequences and still affects global policy action for the last two decades (Afifi & Romano, 2017).

To call an action ‘abusive’ is never just a description but also an evaluation. An action can be harmful but morally sanctioned. Many medical practices, for example medical surgeries, involve a degree of harm but are justified by their long term value to the child. Additionally, harm does not only refer to physical and psychological effects it has on the child but also if those actions infringe child rights. For example, in the argument against corporal punishment, such claims are not just based on its long term damaging effect but it

can be considered as treating children with less than the rights they deserve (Gershoff, 2010; Munro, 2008).

Therefore, definitions of abuse embody beliefs about what child rearing behaviour is unacceptable and dangerous and the values we place about people (e.g., relative rights of adults and children). This lack of consensus creates a major problem for the study of child abuse, as definitions concerning child maltreatment could be ambiguous, contested and shifting. However, even with an established consensus, the concept of abuse could still be problematic as child maltreatment is an intentional human behaviour, it is not possible to specify abuse just in behavioural terms. It also includes some comparison with a standard of acceptable parenting and the intention of the abuser (Munro, 2008).

Therefore, it is important that definitions and perceptions of child maltreatment are examined critically. For instance, some researchers have described the term 'child abuse' as a 'socially construct' (Corby, Shemmings, & Wilkins, 2012). However, such term needs to be critically evaluated to understand how and what does this add to our understanding. Arguably, such term may suggest the importance of beliefs and values in its definition, while for others, this may be a power issue involved – such as which societies (e.g., Western and Asian societies) are constructing it and should it be reconstructed in ways that empower other sections within a society or other societies (Munro, 2008).

Sample definitions

Currently, child maltreatment is being defined differently at an international level, as well as in different countries. For instance, the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2017) defines child maltreatment as:

> Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitations, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival,

development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (Butchart, Harvey, Mian, & Furniss, 2006).

The WHO definition of maltreatment is generally accepted by most governments and tends to intersect and overlap with definitions that are provided by other agencies, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; see Article 19). However, definitions also vary between countries and there is a complex relationship between different legal and governmental definitions of child maltreatment (Mitchell et al., 2017). For example, in the UK, the definition of child maltreatment is consistent with WHO's definition (Radford et al., 2011), and specific forms of child maltreatment (i.e., physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect) are defined in HM Government statutory guidance for professionals in Working Together to Safeguard Children (which was first published in 1988 and was then updated in 1991 to accord with the Children Act 1989). This document has been regularly updated alongside the Children Act (Department of Education, 2017). Yet, some Asian countries, such as Malaysia, do not provide either definitions of child maltreatment or specific terminologies (e.g., physical abuse, emotional abuse) for the different types of abuse (see section 17(2) of Child Act 2001; further discussion in Chapter 2; also see Muda & Alwi, 2012).

In addition, how the WHO's (2017) definition of child maltreatment is operationalised can also differ depending on individual and parental interpretations of child maltreatment. For example, culture (i.e., values, norms, and attitudes shared by a specific group of individuals) and social environments are closely related in determining parental beliefs about parenting goals and parenting method, and these shape actual parenting behaviours and parent-child interactions (Deater-Deckard et al., 2011) which subsequently may influence how individuals interpret child maltreatment. For instance, in Western cultures (e.g., USA, UK), parents may see the importance of instilling values such as independence,

individualism, social assertiveness, confidence and competence in their children (Rubin & Chung, 2006) and may see an authoritative parenting style as the most ideal to promote these values. However, traditional Asian families may tend to emphasise values that are different from Western parenting values, such as interdependence, conformity, emotional self-control and humility (Choi, Kim, Kim, & Park, 2013) and may not necessarily see authoritative parenting style as the best approach to ingrain in their children a strong sense of obligation, respect, and obedience to parents and elders (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009).

Furthermore, other factors such as poor emotion regulation strategies and low socioeconomic status are likely to contribute towards parental stress and ideas as to what is acceptable, and subsequently may increase the risk of child maltreatment (Buist, 1998; Fujiwara, Okuyama, & Izumi, 2012). Therefore, taking these factors into account, this thesis will look into how factors such as parenting practices, experiences and culture influence how child maltreatment is perceived (Cyr et al., 2013; Munro et al., 2014).

The importance of cultural consideration in child maltreatment

To understand the pathways to child maltreatment and to aid prevention, it is critical to first consider how culture shapes understanding, why it matters, and how it may influence perceptions of child maltreatment. While there exist published discussions and debates on what is considered to be 'culture' (Gough & Lynch, 2002), this thesis defines culture as "a set of beliefs, attitudes, values and standards of behaviours that are passed from one generation to the next" (Raman & Hodes, 2012, p. 31) . This definition was chosen given the importance of looking beyond ethnicity and includes intracultural variations within a singular ethnic group, but also the inclusiveness of intergenerational influences that are also related to parental interpretations of what are considered acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices (Cauce, 2008; Nadan et al., 2015).

Furthermore, in studying the importance of culture in child maltreatment with different populations (such as Asians), it is important to acknowledge that, even within Asia, there are different cultural beliefs, values and practices that fundamentally would require separate studies to understand the distinctiveness between cultural norms and attitudes towards child maltreatment and child discipline. For instance, although some studies have found similar cultural norms among the Chinese, Japanese and Koreans (Choi et al., 2013; Gough, 1996), other studies have also found differences in the disciplining methods that are being used in these countries. More specifically, methods such as physical punishments are often used as discipline techniques and seen as acceptable among Chinese and Korean societies, whereas Japanese society tends to prefer non-confrontational discipline strategies (Gough, 1996). These practices might be interpreted differently by the 'other' society (i.e., an organised group of people associated together with shared objectives, norms and values pertain to the society) and culture, such that the non-physical disciplinarians would consider anything physical as physical abuse, but those who believe in physical discipline might see its absence as a form of parental neglect or lax parenting (Bang, 2008; Gough, 1996; Maker et al., 2005).

Therefore, with regards to Malaysia, such differences in parenting and disciplinary strategies should also be expected, given its ethnic diversity and the sociocultural background. Like Singapore, Malaysia is unique in its region as it is comprised of three main ethnic populations (i.e., Malay, Chinese and Indian), which all value social order, and racial and religious harmony (Ngiam & Tung, 2016). In Malaysia, parenting practices are likely to be influenced by ecological factors as aforementioned, with differences in culture and religion playing a large role. For example, among the Malaysian (Muslim) Malays, the family system is heavily influenced by Islamic customs and practices. Patriarchal hierarchy, kinship network and flexible family boundaries exert a strong influence on family functioning,

especially on gender roles (Ziarat Hossain et al., 2005; Kling, 1995). However, these studies have also added that these traditional customs and Islamic values of the Malays could also be influenced by Western ideologies and modernisation, which may impact parental attitudes towards child rearing practices and childcare (Ziarat Hossain et al., 2005; Kling, 1995; Vong, Wilson, McAllister, & Lincoln, 2010), and subsequently may also influence what are considered acceptable or unacceptable parenting practices.

Thus, when considering the influences of culture, Raman and Hodes (2012) suggested that the impact of acculturation (the influence of a secondary culture) and enculturation (the influence of own cultural group) should also be considered; individuals often see themselves differently in different situations and may psychologically integrate themselves (culturally assimilate) for better psychological functioning, which could also influence how individuals perceive child maltreatment. For example, Australia has a political or structural level history of expecting migrants to assimilate, such that migrants who choose to migrate are expected to believe that the mainstream culture is better, and that cultures of origin should relinquish their beliefs in favour of the majority (Sawrikar, 2017). However, this level of integration may not always be the case as other studies have argued migrants still face an impossible challenge that they cannot be (or pretend to be) someone they are not (Sawrikar & Katz, 2017a, 2017b). As a result, migrants may face acculturation stress in an attempt to balance dualistic perspectives when parenting children while encouraging cultural adaptation and maintaining cultural traditions (Park, 2001; Sawrikar & Katz, 2017b).

Therefore, in relation to Malaysians, as there is no literature from the UK concerning Southeast Asians (or more specifically, immigrants from Malaysia), it would be interesting to also understand how Malaysians who have migrated to Western countries such as the UK, face the challenges in interpreting British laws concerning parenting and children, as well as parenting norms, which may vary from their native culture. It is also important to understand

how these cultural differences would influence parental perception of child maltreatment, particularly, in distinguishing cultural variations that depends on: 1) differential conceptual definitions of children and abuse; 2) differential sensitive by public and professionals to signs of abuse fitting their definition and 3) differential visibility of children's experiences and 4) differential willingness to intervene and identify a case. Additionally, by comparing Malaysians in Malaysia and to those in the UK, this thesis will minimise the risk of ethnocentrism or cultural superiority, while exploring cultural standards of what are considered abusive and non-abusive parenting practices (Korbin, 2002).

Child maltreatment in Malaysia

Background. This thesis utilised Malaysia as a focal point, as Malaysia is a former British colony with a similar child protection system (Dusuki, 2002). Malaysia is a developing country located in Southeast Asia that has seen significant socioeconomic development over the past 50 years (World Health Organisation, 2014). In a 2010 census, about 71% of Malaysians reside in urban areas, such as Kuala Lumpur (the capital of Malaysia) and other major cities in the country. With a population of over 28 million people, Malaysia largely consists of Bumiputera (i.e., Malays and indigenous Malaysians; 67.4%), Chinese (24.6%), Indians (7.3%) and other ethnicities (0.7%; Department of Social Welfare, 2017)

Legislation and policies on child maltreatment. In 1995, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by Malaysia. This Convention is a compilation of children's rights that are inseparable and interdependent, which outlines the necessary environment for and means to enabling children to develop to their full potential as a human. By ratifying the Convention, Malaysia is obliged to respect, protect and fulfil these rights by adopting or changing laws and policies that implement the provisions outlined in the Convention. The

Child Act 2016 (recently amended from the Child Act 2001) was passed as an effort to fulfil its obligations to the Convention.

While the Act outlined children who might need care and protection by using terms such as 'physically or emotionally injured' as per the World Health Organisation's (WHO, 2017) definition of child maltreatment, some authors have argued there are still many loopholes in the Act as the law may be interpreted as only including words or overt actions that cause harm, potential harm, or threat of harm but not covert actions or acts of omission (Che Noh & Wan Talaat, 2012). For example, in Malaysia, the legal recognition for verbal abuse and other forms of emotional abuse is lacking, and comprehensive child protection is still absent (see Chapter 2 for further details). Until, and unless, all kinds of child maltreatment are given equal attention by the Child Act 2016, there will still be loopholes in the act and this will hamper efforts to provide Malaysian children adequate care and protection (Che Noh & Wan Talaat, 2012). As an implication, not only do these loopholes make it difficult for clinicians and social workers that provide child protection services, like those in the Malaysian Department of Welfare, to assess child maltreatment, but it also creates challenges in providing empirically-based treatment and intervention for victims of child maltreatment (Valentine, Acuff, Freeman, & Andreas, 1984).

Threshold considerations

Child maltreatment is readily defined as a violation of children rights in Western culture and this conceptualisation of maltreatment has been gaining worldwide consensus. However, while most cultures would agree that children should not maltreated, the actual problem centres in defining what parenting practices and social norms specifically constitute as maltreatment. Furthermore, despite the differences between Western and Asian parenting beliefs, values and practices, the practice of using Western parenting theories to explain Asian parenting dominates existing family, parenting and child maltreatment research.

Similarly, Asian parents in Western cultures such as those in the UK, are also often evaluated using the Western paradigm. As a consequence, incorrectly fitting one culture into another's framework and the resulting failure to capture critical differences in parental values and practices, can lead to complex and even paradoxical findings concerning child maltreatment among Asian families (Reisig & Miller, 2009). However, where to set the threshold between ill-advised but non-abusive parenting, and child maltreatment, is a difficult question. This is the crux of this thesis. As parenting practices exist along the continuum of the cultural standards of a society (Korbin, 2002), it may seem to be the norm in many societies and acceptable (and even expected) to physically or emotionally chastise children. Given the variability of socially sanctioned parenting practices across cultures and within culture across time, adopting a universal list of proscribed acts of child maltreatment is extremely problematic.

Thesis Overview

Aims, Research Questions and Methodology

Many important aspects of different factors, including parental beliefs and values, parenting practices and the influences of culture in Asian countries like Malaysia, remain insufficiently understood, and so it is important that such perceptions are explored. In addition, it is useful to consider different groups in that society, including child protection professionals and parents, and survivors that have experienced child abuse and neglect. As suggested by Korbin (2002) and Raman and Hodes (2012), it is also important to explore how culture (i.e., enculturation and acculturation) could influence such perceptions to avoid cultural bias or to push Western cultural norms on Malaysian parenting practices, by looking at how Malaysians in Malaysia and the UK perceived child maltreatment based on the culture that they are exposed to (and potentially influenced by) in Malaysia and/or in the UK (or other Western countries). Furthermore, as Malaysia is a multicultural Asian country with

different political and sociocultural background, it would be an interesting place to explore the interplay between culture, parenting practices, and other ecological factors, to understand how child maltreatment is perceived.

As such this thesis aims to: a) explore how child maltreatment is perceived in relation to cultural influences and parenting practices; b) to explore and address the connection between culture and child maltreatment; and c) to explore the relationship between ecological factors and cultural factors using the eco-cultural framework, to understand the interplay between these factors and their relation to how child maltreatment is perceived. This thesis considers the following research questions:

1. How is child maltreatment defined and identified among Malaysians in Malaysia and Malaysians in the UK?
2. How does culture influence the perception of child maltreatment among Malaysians in Malaysia and Malaysians in the UK?
3. What is the relationship between child maltreatment and the role of culture among Malaysian parents?

To address these questions, this thesis utilised a mixed method research design; specifically, an exploratory sequential design with qualitative data collection followed by quantitative data collection.

Samples

There are multiple samples within this thesis to explore the role of cultural beliefs, values and practices in relation to child maltreatment. To obtain different perspectives, this thesis included different sample groups using both qualitative (Chapters 4-6) and quantitative approaches (Chapter 7), including:

- Malaysian professionals who are working in the area of child maltreatment (Chapter 4): 20 participants from different professional backgrounds (e.g.,

healthcare, education, law and social work) were recruited to explore how they perceived child maltreatment, specifically on how they define, identify and distinguish abusive from non-abusive parenting;

- Malaysian parents (Chapter 5): this study focusses on perceptions of child maltreatment in relation to culture in 23 parents (11 Malaysian parents living in Malaysia and 12 Malaysians parents living in the UK);
- Malaysian adult survivors of child maltreatment (Chapter 6): 12 participants were recruited into a study to explore perspectives and experiences of child maltreatment as adult survivors of child maltreatment;
- Malaysian parents in Malaysia (Chapter 7): 351 participants were recruited into a study to explore how ecological factors and how cultural factors (i.e., beliefs, perceptions, cultural assimilation), are related in the eco-cultural framework.

Overall, these different sample groups provided a broad perspective on how child maltreatment is perceived in relation to culturally-held beliefs and practices and parenting practices.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. In this chapter (Chapter 1), the concept of child maltreatment and the theoretical framework to be used in the thesis have been considered. As aforementioned, the framework is discussed to highlight the importance of including both ecological and cultural factors to understand child maltreatment in an Asian society like Malaysia. In addition, it was considered important that this chapter also outlined the methodological and cultural issues pertaining to studies of child maltreatment. Chapter 1 ended with the presentation of the research aims and questions for this thesis.

Chapter 2, a systematic literature review, addresses the first research question by considering how child maltreatment is defined and identified in Asia, in particular in

Malaysia. Chapter 3 is a descriptive chapter, outlining sociocultural factors (i.e., Malaysian legislation, social policy and culture) in relation to parenting and Malaysians' perceptions of child maltreatment.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are qualitative studies that used thematic analysis to explore how different stakeholders (i.e., professionals, parents and adult survivors of child maltreatment, respectively) perceived child maltreatment in relation to their cultural beliefs, values and practices. These qualitative studies are important as they provide an understanding of beliefs and practices that are culturally valid in relation to child maltreatment. This understanding is also crucial as it is likely to identify some of the ecological and cultural factors that may be related to child maltreatment. Therefore, chapter 7 explores how ecological and cultural factors (i.e., beliefs, perceptions, cultural assimilation), are related in the eco-cultural framework and their impact on how child maltreatment is perceived. The different elements of the thesis are drawn together in chapter 8, with summaries of the key findings and integration of the qualitative and quantitative results. Future directions and limitations of child maltreatment studies are considered and both theoretical and practical implications discussed.

Chapter 2: The Impact of Malaysian's Social Policy, Parenting Practices, and Culture on Child Maltreatment

Chapter rationale

As aforementioned in Chapter 1, one of the methodological difficulties of studying child maltreatment is how child maltreatment is being defined and how it may differ from international organisations such as UNICEF and country to country. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to explain Malaysia's legal framework and social policy regarding child protection and to discuss how this legal framework combined with cultural influences could impact parenting practices and subsequently how child maltreatment may be perceived.

Introduction

Child maltreatment includes practices that cause actual or potential harm to a child's health, development or dignity, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2017). In 2016, in an effort to make prevention of violence against children a higher priority, the United Nations called for all governments to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework (see target goal 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children and torture of children; Lansford et al., 2016; United Nations, 2017). However, many developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Malaysia, have numerous challenges in preventing child maltreatment, which include limited information on specific local situation (e.g., prevalence, incidences) of child maltreatment and limited resources dedicated to monitoring violence against children (Akmatov, 2011; Cheah, 2011; Cheah & Choo, 2016; Dunne et al., 2015; Fang, Fry, Brown, et al., 2015; Fry, McCoy, & Swales, 2012).

Furthermore, in Malaysia, there is a lack of substantial data (e.g., prevalence) to compare the rates of child maltreatment both between Malaysia and other (Asian) countries and within Malaysia itself. The lack of data adds to other various challenging factors that are known to be associated with child maltreatment (and responses to it) including socio-political influences, parenting practices and culture (Dunne et al., 2015; Kempe, 1982; Mackenbach et al., 2014; Zolotor et al., 2009). Unlike other literature that has focused on mono-cultural countries (e.g., China, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan), Malaysia is a multicultural country that may have different parenting practices and cultural influences. Therefore, in highlighting the challenges of different legislation concerning child protection, parenting practices and cultural influences, this chapter uses Malaysia as a focal point (see Chapter 1 for rationale), to (1) review Malaysian legislation on child maltreatment, (2) explore how Malaysian parenting

practices as well as culture influence perceptions of child maltreatment, and (3) how these factors have an implication for child protection.

Overview of Malaysia

Malaysia is an upper middle income country that is located in Southeast Asia and has seen significant socioeconomic development over the last 50 years (World Bank Group, 2017). In a 2010 consensus, it was estimated that 71% of Malaysians resided in urban areas, such as Kuala Lumpur (the capital of Malaysia) and other major cities in the country. With a population of over 32 million people, Malaysia is largely comprised of Bumiputera (i.e., Malays and indigenous Malaysians; 68.8%), Chinese (23.2%), Indians (7.0%) and other ethnicities (1.0%; Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). Malaysia is a former British colony, which gained independence in 1957. Given this socio-political background, the Malaysian legal system has been substantially influenced by English common law and other Commonwealth jurisdictions, which eventually formed into a plural legal system including both federal (or civil) law and Sharia (also spelled as Syariah) law that is provided under the Constitution of Malaysia (Shamrahayu, 2009).

In Malaysia, most areas of life are regulated by the federal law that applies consistently throughout the nation. However, Sharia law only applies to Muslims; Malaysia is comprised of 61.3% Muslims, 19.8% Buddhists, 9.2% Christians, 6.3% Hindus and 3.4% other or no religion (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). Sharia law provides legislative power that include personal law and matters related to religion practice and offences that are deemed to be against the precepts of Islam in a range of different areas including family laws (e.g., marriage, divorce, custody and guardianship, maintenance of children, matrimonial properties and alimony; Shuaib, 2012). As such, although under the Constitution of Malaysia, the civil court has no jurisdiction in matters such as breach of promise to marry, divorce and custody of children involving Muslims; child protection (with the exception of child

marriages and female circumcision or genital mutilation), placements of children in alternative care and juvenile justice, regardless of religion, are still under the purview of the civil courts (Dusuki, 2002).

Malaysian legislation on child maltreatment

Child Protection Act, 1991. In Malaysia, child maltreatment only widely received attention in the 1980s when a few high-profile abuse cases were highlighted in the media. It was from these incidents that formal legislation to protect children from child abuse and neglect was passed in 1991, known as the Child Protection Act 1991 (see Figure 2.0). Since then, several programmes were implemented for child protection and child maltreatment prevention under the purview of the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to protect the interest of children. These programmes aimed to provide care and shelter and/or to rescue and provide assistance to those children who were abandoned by their family, maltreated or neglected (Cheah, 2011).

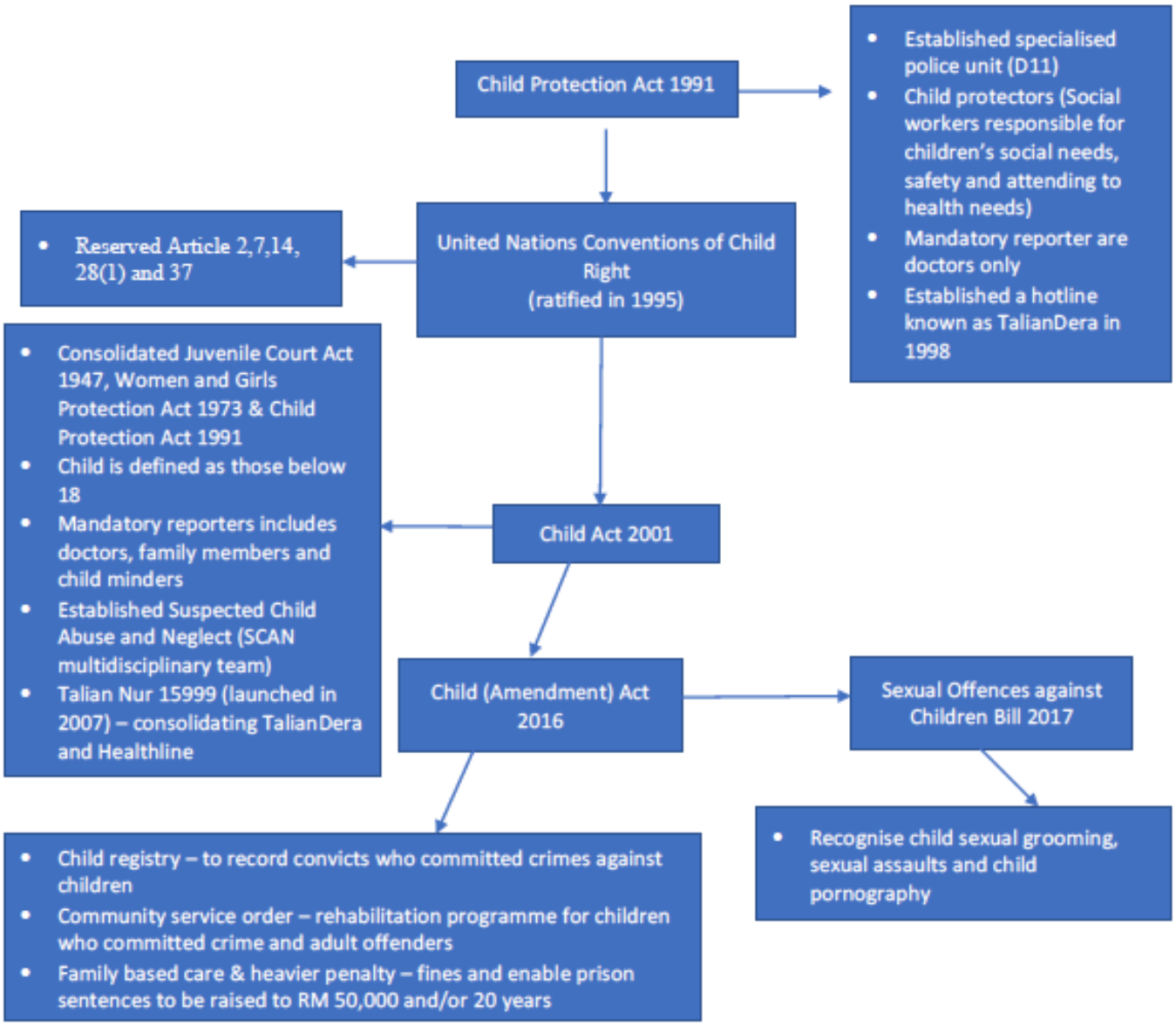


Figure 3.0: Malaysian legal framework for child protection

Under the Child Protection Act (1991), a team of different professionals are tasked with different responsibilities: social workers are appointed as both Child Protectors (responsible for looking into the social needs and safety of children) and as health workers (responsible for attending to the emotional, psychological and physical health needs of the child) as well as the psychodynamics of the family and follow up. With regards to legal protection of children and prosecution of the perpetrators, this falls within the remit of the

police and legal agencies. In addition, since this Act was introduced, only government doctors have been subjected to mandatory reporting of any suspected child abuse cases to the relevant authorities.

Besides that, One Stop Crisis Centres were also set up in government hospitals to provide services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse and a specialised police unit (known as D11) in major cities to attend to children suspected of having been abused or neglected. In 1998, the Malaysian government also initiated a public hotline "Teledera", which was subsequently integrated with other hotlines, now known as "Talian Nur 15999". The hotline aims to provide early intervention for different victims including those of domestic violence, child abuse and natural disasters.

UNCRC, 1995. In 1995, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was ratified by Malaysia with a few reservations to some of the articles (UNICEF Malaysia, 2017). The UNCRC is a compilation of children's rights that outlines the necessary environment and means to enable children to develop to their full potential as a human. By ratifying the Convention, Malaysia took on the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil these rights by adopting or changing laws and policies that implement the provisions outlined in the Convention. However, it is important to note that, although Malaysia is a signatory of the CRC, when Malaysia ratified the CRC it was with a few reservations (or exceptions) including Article 37 that prevents a child being the victim of inhumane torture or punishment. These reservations were maintained as there were discrepancies between CRC articles and Malaysian national and Sharia laws (UNICEF, 2017). For example, Malaysian Sharia law legally recognises child marriages (with consent from parents and the Sharia court; Ibrahim, Hussain, & Aziz, 2012), which would be inconsistent with Article 37 of the CRC, as this

article would consider child marriage as a form of violence (i.e., physical and sexual assault) against girls and thus violating their rights as children.

Child Act, 2001. Despite having these reservations in place, in 2001 the Malaysian government attempted to fulfil its obligation by passing an updated law to deal more effectively with a range of issues concerning children. Thus, in 2001, the Child Protection Act 1991 was superseded by the Child Act 2001, which consolidated three of its previous laws on child protection and juvenile courts (i.e., Juvenile Court Act 1947, Women and Girls Protection Act 1973 and Child Protection 1991). For the first time, in the Child Act 2001, 'children' were formally defined as those below 18 years of age and the Act outlined mandatory reporting to not only government hospital doctors but also family members and childminders for any cases of suspected child abuse and neglect. In addition, under this new Act, in government hospitals only, multidisciplinary child protection teams (known as Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) teams) were formed to coordinate the management and follow-up of suspected and actual cases of child abuse referred by the Child Protectors.

Malaysian Child Act, 2016 and Sexual Offences against Child Bill, 2017. Considering the growing number of cases of child sexual abuse highlighted by the media, the Child Act 2001 was revised and replaced by the Malaysian Child Act 2016 and a new bill was introduced, known as the Sexual Offences against Child Bill 2017 (a bill to protect children from all forms of sexual abuse including child pornography, child grooming and sexual assault). However, these Acts (especially the Child Act 2016) do not provide comprehensive care and protection to children from all forms of violence. For example, the Child Act 2016 does not recognise verbal abuse as part of emotional or psychological abuse (Che Noh & Wan Talaat, 2012) while the new Sexual Offences against Child Bill 2017 does

not ban child marriages. Furthermore, since 1991 to 2016, the Child Act has not revised the term “abuse” and it has generally been used without referring to the various types of abuse. Although recently child sexual abuse received specific mention (i.e., child pornography, sexual grooming, and sexual assault) in the Sexual Offences against Child Bill 2017; the Child Act 2016, is still silent on the other types of abuse, but speaks rather broadly by mentioning the impact of the abuse as to “cause the child physical or emotional injury”, without further explaining or describing this type of “injury” (see Table 1). This arguably may have been outlined as such as emotional or psychological abuse do not leave any physical scars, and as such may not merit special protection under the Child Act from a legislator point of view (Che Noh & Wan Talaat, 2012).

Table 2.0
Malaysian Child Act 2016 definition on a child in need of care and protection

Type of injury	Definition
Physical, emotional and sexual injury	The child has been or there is substantial risk that the child will be physically injured or emotionally injured or sexually abused by his parent or guardian or a member of his extended family OR The child has been or there is substantial risk that the child will be physically injured or emotionally injured or sexually abused and his parent or guardian, knowing of such injury or abuse or risk, has not protected or is unlikely to protect the child from such injury or abuse;
Neglect	The parent or guardian of the child is unfit, or has neglected, or is unable, to exercise proper supervision and control over the child and the child is falling into bad association OR The parent or guardian of the child has neglected or is unwilling to provide for him adequate care, food, clothing and shelter OR The child has no parent or guardian OR Has been abandoned by his parent or guardian and after reasonable inquiries the parent or guardian cannot be found

Note: In the Malaysian Child Act 2016, the pronoun 'his' was stated and did not include the pronoun 'she' in the document. See: (https://www.unicef.org/malaysia/childrights_child-act-2001.html).

However, it must also be noted that abuse and injury have two different meanings – the act (abuse) and the effect of such an act (injury). A physically abused child may suffer both physical and emotional injuries although the same cannot be said for emotional abuse, which includes verbal abuse or children who have witnessed domestic violence. By omitting to mention and describe the term "emotional abuse", the Child Act 2016 may not be sufficient to cover other forms of abuse. These inadequacies in the law not only create difficulty for practitioners and social workers who provide child protection services to assess child

maltreatment risks, but also create challenges in providing empirically-based interventions for victims of child maltreatment (Valentine et al., 1984).

Furthermore, corporal punishment (defined as the use of physical force to inflict pain but not injury, in disciplining children or controlling children's undesirable behaviour; Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore, & Runyan, 1998) is still lawful in homes (see Article 89 of the Malaysian Penal Code Act 574), as well as in a variety of other alternative care settings: foster care, children's homes, day care centres (see Article 89 and 350 of the Malaysian Penal Code Act 574); schools (see provision under Education Regulations (Student Discipline) 2006); and in penal institutions as a sentence for crime (see provisions allowing corporal punishment in Child Act 2016, the Penal Code Act 574, the Criminal Procedure Code 1976, the Sharia Criminal Offences Act and the Prison Act 1995).

Thus, despite legislation to provide adequate care and protection for children, parents or caregivers are still legally able to practice physical punishment or harsh forms of verbal chastisement on their children and corporal punishment is still widely practiced in Malaysia (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2017). This inconsistency between the details of the law and the rhetoric of protecting children's rights is likely to have its origins in the widespread acceptability of physical punishment as a means of disciplining children that continues to blur the line between what is considered as acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices for public members which subsequently creates a challenge in educating and persuading parents to abandon such practices at home (Ngiam & Tung, 2016).

Discipline or Abuse: Cross-Cultural Differences in Parenting Practices

In working with parents, it is important to note that there is a distinction between parenting style and parenting practices - the former relates to behaviours that occur over a

range of different situations while the latter refers to having specific parenting goals and specific situations in which parents perform their parental duties (Brenner & Fox, 1999; Stewart & Bond, 2002). Parenting practices may have different meanings to different cultures, for example, in one study, parental control (i.e., the extent to which parents places restriction and limits on children) was perceived as warmth and low neglect among Korean youths while Western youths perceived such practices as manifestations of parental rejection (Stewart & Bond, 2002). In addition, parenting practices could also be influenced by many factors including ecological factors (e.g., parents' behaviour, parent-child interaction), society and cultural changes, child rearing goals, family-level life stressors and social support (see Chapter 6 for further discussion on prarenting practices and parenting styles; Xu et al., 2005).

Within Malaysia, parenting practices are influenced by culture and religion (Kling, 1995; Vong et al., 2010). Although there are numerous studies considering parent-child relationships in Malaysia, many of those have focussed on parental involvement, parental roles and family quality (e.g., Hossain et al., 2005; Jafari, Baharudin, & Archer, 2016; Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2013; Kling, 1995), while studies on parenting practices, such as positive parenting (e.g., praising a child), are fewer (Vong et al., 2010). In addition, child maltreatment has been associated with negative parenting practices (Akmatov, 2011; Kempe, 1982; Runyan et al., 2009) and some Asian based studies (e.g., Cui, Xue, Connolly, & Liu, 2016; Qiao & Xie, 2015; Xie, Qiao, & Wang, 2016) have shown how parenting practices and culture can influence the perception of child maltreatment in non-Western settings. However, there is still a dearth of research that has specifically looked at the interplay between Malaysian parenting practices, culture and child maltreatment (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2015; Choo, Dunne, Marret, Fleming, & Wong, 2011).

Notably, although Asian based studies have provided valuable information regarding child maltreatment in Asia, these studies were primarily from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan - typically mono-cultural countries and comprised of Chinese ethnic majorities (Dunne et al., 2015; Fang, Fry, Ji, et al., 2015). In contrast, Malaysia is a multicultural country and has a different historical and socio-political background. For example in China, although the one-child policy was overturned in 2015, there are still restrictions on how many children a couple can have and communism principles (such as obedience and patriotism; Chen, 2003; Chuang, Glozman, Green, & Rasmi, 2018) are still widely practised and have a strong influence Chinese society. These policies and principles may have a significant influence on what Chinese parents perceive as appropriate child rearing practices (i.e., withdrawal of love and privileges, corporal punishment), which may indirectly influence their perception on what is abusive parenting or non-abusive parenting.

Similarly, in a study that was conducted on parenting practices with immigrants from the former Soviet Union, it was found that parents who were forced to adapt to the new Soviet society that promoted collectivism as a core value, tended to encourage their children to adapt and adhere to communist ideology by developing a sense of self-sufficiency, compliance, patriotism, interpersonal values such as politeness and friendship, self-discipline, individual modesty, and group orientation (Roer-Strier, 2001). Therefore, in developing such adaptive traits in children (to be collectivistic as to be in align with communism values), parents may include harsh parenting practices such as withdrawal of love and privileges, the pressure for obedience and self-sufficiency, as well the usage of corporal punishment to develop such traits in children, that parents may see it as serving the child's best interest (R Shor, 1999).

Many studies have documented the use of corporal punishment on children in Asian countries including Malaysia. Caning has been reported as a favourable method of disciplining (Chan, Chow, & Elliott, 2000; Ngiam & Tung, 2016; Runyan et al., 2009; Zhu & Tang, 2011). However, it is noteworthy that these countries do legislate against child abuse and neglect, but also provide concessions on 'reasonable chastisements' of children. In addition, many Asian families, including those from Malaysia and Singapore, also emphasise strictness and a need for control over children, as well as values such as respecting and honouring parents and the elderly. Children are often taught that their actions do not only have an impact on or reflection upon themselves, but also on the family and family honour (Ngiam & Tung, 2016). Therefore, such perception of cultural values and concessions on physical discipline such as caning, which is allowed under the law, may lead parents to use harsher punishment methods.

It is noteworthy though, that while such practices might be argued to be associated with honour-based violence (HBV; defined as violence inflicted on an individual to protect or defend the honour of the family or community; Eshareturi, Lyle, & Morgan, 2014). Some researchers have argued for the caution use of the term HBV or the word 'honour', given that the concept 'honour' is a complex one and it is not synonymous with all cultures or societies (e.g., Bhanbhro, Cronin de Chavez, & Lusambili, 2016). Additionally, although there were a number of studies that have been conducted in Western context on HBV, they tend to focus on gender-based violence rather than other forms of HBV (Mayeda & Vijaykumar, 2016). Therefore, such violence may not necessarily mean the same in other cultural context and situations of domestic violence and child maltreatment (Idriss, 2017), which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

More importantly, some scholars have argued that even in societies where physical punishment is being used as a form of child discipline, parents may have different views on what are acceptable and unacceptable practices, and those views may vary from culture to culture (Chan et al., 2000; Nadan et al., 2015). For example, in a study conducted among Singaporeans, although physical disciplining (including caning, spanking and slapping) was widely practice in the country, Singaporeans did not see all forms of physical discipline as acceptable. Rather, most Singaporeans saw methods such as caning and spanking as acceptable, while rejecting other forms, such as slapping on the face, as unacceptable (Chan et al., 2000; Ngiam & Tung, 2016).

Furthermore, given such cultural variability, identification of child maltreatment could also be challenging when cultural conflict is involved, especially ethnocentrism (i.e., evaluation of other cultures according to the standards and customs of own culture), when international organisations such as the United Nations attempt to impose some international standards in defining child abuse and neglect. To better illustrate, this conflict was seen between Malaysian and Swedish parenting in a 2014 Swedish court case, whereby a Malaysian couple ware incarcerated for caning and smacking their children. In Sweden, although corporal punishment is unlawful, Malaysians who are living in Malaysia generally perceived that the smacking was normal and perceived the approach as acceptable for the children (Pak, 2014), which highlights the challenges in educating members of the public regarding children rights and balancing the different perspectives about parenting practices.

It is important to note as well that, although there may be cultural variations in child rearing practices, not all practices should be seen as acceptable just because they align with the dominant sociocultural norm of a country. For example, in some cultures, female genital mutilation or child marriage has been defended as an important cultural tradition and as a rite

of passage to enable the child to become an accepted member of his or her community (Gangoli, McCarry, & Razak, 2009; Liang, Loaiza, Diop, & Legesse, 2016), yet is seen as abusive and illegal in many countries. Although such practices may help us to evaluate our possible ethnocentric stand on our own perception(s) about child rearing, practices such as genital mutilation and child marriage could be seen as a clear problem, when such cultural practices violate children's rights.

Therefore, although discussing parenting practices and children's rights in any culture may be challenging for practitioners and parents, it is necessary that some kind of standard in identifying child maltreatment within and across cultures is flexible, so that social and cultural differences may be respected while the child's right to be safe is protected. However, this same standard must be clear and adequate enough to enable parents, caregivers and professionals to identify child maltreatment risks in order for effective intervention.

Implications for child protection and future directions

Although professionals are typically expected to withhold their perceptions and attitudes towards their own culture and their personal perception towards parenting practices, this may be a challenging task. Many studies have demonstrated that professionals who work in the area of child maltreatment are also members of their sociocultural environment, which often times can be in conflict with their own professional values (Ashton, 2010; Jasmine S Chan et al., 2000; Whitney, Tajima, Herrenkohl, & Huang, 2006). Therefore, while it is important to identify parenting practices that may cause harm towards children, it is also important to understand how professionals understand and react to child maltreatment cases.

Without a clear understanding of child maltreatment and parenting practices that are sanctioned by customs and traditions, professionals can react to child maltreatment cases in different ways. Professionals may assess levels of abuse and neglect differently and could

make contrasting decisions about the removal of the child from his/her home environment (that potentially may further abuse the child) and/or suggest disparate intervention programmes for both the parents and maltreated child. Therefore, without proper procedures to manage child maltreatment that incorporate cultural competency, in countries like Malaysia that sanction the use of corporal punishment, many Malaysian parents from different culture or ethnic groups, may be at greater risk of being defined as abusive. Although, one would argue that it is better to err on the side of protection, it is also arguable that this in itself may also be a violation not only of the parents' rights but also of the child's right (Chan et al., 2000).

Therefore, one of the building blocks to provide better intervention to prevent child maltreatment and to promote child rights in Malaysia is to first begin to study how child maltreatment is being understood and perceived in relation to parenting practices and culture. In Malaysia, although there is dearth of literature concerning professionals' and the public's perception(s) about child maltreatment (Cheah & Choo, 2016), it is likely that Malaysian professionals and parents may have similar perceptions about child maltreatment to those from Singapore, given that Malaysia and Singapore share similar sociocultural background, values and practices. Given that it is unlikely that Malaysia will abolish corporal punishment in the near future, it would be interesting to explore how professionals manage and deal with opposing legislation frameworks and parenting practices, while promoting safeguarding among children. This would also not be comprehensive, if practitioners do not understand how parents perceived their parenting practices as to what is acceptable and unacceptable, as well as how victims of child maltreatment perceived their experiences in relation to their culture for the purpose of proper intervention (MacMillan & Mikton, 2017).

Finally, there is also a need to understand the pathway(s) to child maltreatment in Malaysia. While the child maltreatment literature has provided information on ecological factors associated with maltreatment, there is still little evidence concerning culture (Sawrikar, 2017) and how these various factors are intricately related to maltreatment; and between these factors and resilience factors that appear to reduce risk (Munro et al., 2014).

Chapter 3: Defining and Identifying Child Maltreatment from Asian Perspectives: A Systematic Review

Chapter rationale

As explained in Chapter 1, one of the key aims of this thesis is to explore how child maltreatment is being perceived in relation to the role of culture and parenting practices among Malaysians. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to investigate how child maltreatment is being understood, defined and identified among Asians as well as to explore if there are any differences in how child maltreatment is being perceived. Additionally, this chapter aims to investigate cultural influences that may affect how child maltreatment is perceived to inform how to improve upon previous research when studying other cultural groups, such as Malaysians.

Abstract

Most reviews that have been conducted among Asians, have focused predominantly on Chinese societies, which are typically mono-cultural societies, and on the prevalence, incidence and consequences of child maltreatment generally or, more often, with an emphasis on child sexual abuse. A scoping exercise failed to identify a review that looked into how child maltreatment is being defined in Asian countries, discussed methodological or definitional issues concerning child maltreatment and/or how culture could influence the perception of child maltreatment. Thus, this review aimed to systematically collate the findings from studies on these topics a. Electronic databases (e.g., Web of Science, PsychINFO) were searched to identify studies examining how child maltreatment is being defined and identified among Asians. Thirteen studies were included in this review, of which six are quantitative studies and seven qualitative studies that look at how child maltreatment is being perceived within and/or between different cultural groups. The findings suggest that while sexually-motivated acts are unequivocally seen as abuse, there is still ambiguity in distinguishing parenting behaviours that may be seen as physical and/or emotional abuse. Additionally, how child maltreatment is being understood or perceived suggest the necessary need to explore how different populations such as professionals, parents and victims perceived child maltreatment as the findings of this review seem to suggest that are many cultural variations on what may be considered as abusive and non-abusive parenting practices. There is a need to also explore how culture could influence the perception of child maltreatment and how one could distinguish between what is considered as discipline and abuse.

Introduction

Child maltreatment comes in many forms and it includes four general types of maltreatment, namely: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional (or sometimes referred as psychological) abuse and neglect (Gilbert et al., 2009; Leeb, Paulozzzi, Melanson, Simon, & Arias, 2008). Furthermore, more recently, children witnessing intimate partner violence has also come to be regarded as a form of child maltreatment (Leeb et al., 2008), which is usually contained under the heading of 'emotional abuse' (Department of Education, 2017). While many studies have documented short and long term negative effects on victims of maltreatment throughout their developmental lifespan (e.g., Che Noh & Wan Talaat, 2012; Fang, Brown, Florence, & Mercy, 2012; Gilbert et al., 2009; Hillberg, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Dixon, 2011; Tyrka, Wyche, Kelly, Price, & Carpenter, 2009; Widom & Maxfield, 2001), these studies have also demonstrated that studying child maltreatment is highly complex given the diverse methodology and definitional variability used by different studies (Dunne, Chen, & Choo, 2008).

Furthermore, while there is a huge growth in research activity undertaken on child maltreatment throughout the world in the last three decades (Pinheiro, 2006), many of these studies were based in a Western context (Segal, 2000) and fall short in taking account of a wider cultural variation (Lee, Malley-Morrison, Jang, & Watson, 2014; Raman & Hodes, 2012; Stoltenborgh, Bakermans-Kranenburg, van IJzendoorn, & Alink, 2013). In addition, comparing data and findings from resource-rich countries to other relatively resource-depleted countries (e.g., Asia, South America, Africa) is problematic (Gershoff et al., 2011) as most child maltreatment studies that were conducted from resource-rich countries (e.g., UK, USA and European countries (Gilbert et al., 2009) have a strong social science infrastructure, whereby data can be obtained and observed from multiple sites that could

provide comprehensive reviews and better estimates about what is normal for the population in richer, developed countries (Gilbert et al., 2009, 2012).

Therefore, to understand child maltreatment in Asia, this paper will start by addressing the methodological difficulties of studying child maltreatment; followed by the current issue of child maltreatment in Asia; and finally to systematically review how child maltreatment is being defined and identified in Asia.

Methodological difficulties

Studying child maltreatment is complex and difficult, which is typically supported by current estimates of incidence and prevalence that widely vary depending on the research methodology used and the country that is being studied (Gilbert et al., 2012). These varying estimates could be influenced by the definitions of child maltreatment used, type of child maltreatment studied, the coverage and quality of official statistics, and the merit of the research methods (e.g., retrospective self-report surveys from victims, parents or caregivers) (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2016).

Furthermore, each country tends to have its own definition, which may be different to those provided by WHO and other organisations (e.g., UNICEF). For example, WHO defines child maltreatment as, "…sometimes referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity" (WHO, 2017). In the UK, policies concerning safeguarding have incorporated WHO definition into statutory guidance for professionals (see Working Together to Safeguard Children, Department for Education, 2017), but also emphasised caregiver-perpetrated maltreatment, maltreatment perpetrated by others, and recognising the role of peers in sexual victimisation (Department for Education, 2017).

Moreover, it should be acknowledged that there is still an absence of a clear operational definition that has been universally defined for child maltreatment (Raman & Hodes, 2012) as one of the issues of defining each form of abuse itself is problematic and there are overlaps with other forms of child maltreatment, as well as frequent co-occurrence of more than one type of maltreatment (Higgins, 2004; Manly, 2005; Oates & Bross, 1995).

In addition, as child maltreatment is a socially constructed public health problem, it is defined differently across genders, cultures and generations (Corby et al., 2012; Macdonald, 2001), which makes comparisons of child maltreatment across cultures and studies difficult (particularly on child sexual abuse) and challenges the validity of maltreatment studies (Hulme, 2004; Rind, Tromovitch, & Bauserman, 1998, 2001). Furthermore, there are many other possible factors that could influence the perception of child maltreatment given that there are some practices that are legally recognised and acceptable in some countries but seen as illegal in others (e.g., corporal punishment is legal in the USA and Canada, but not in Sweden; Fréchette & Romano, 2017); and how other cultural values that could ascribed to males and females as well as adults and children (Munro, 2008). Thus, these complexities and challenges have a subsequent impact on the economic cost and design of policies, plans and programmes (as well their implementation) and for the development and running of services to effectively address child maltreatment.

Child maltreatment in Asia

Asia is one of the most densely populated and culturally diverse regions in the world, covering over 60% of the world's total population. Asia is comprised of 37 countries, 580 million children and nearly 27% of the total global child population. Despite the size of this region, Asia is still in its infancy stage in producing quality research on child maltreatment; there are still several Asian countries that have little to no data on the prevalence, incidence or consequences of child maltreatment due to limited verifiable, national statistical data, as

well as an absence of robust analyses of the consequences of maltreatment (Fry, 2012; Fry, McCoy, & Swales, 2012; Svevo-Cianci, Hart, & Rubinson, 2010).

Nonetheless, Asia has also seen a substantial growth of literature concerning child maltreatment in the last decade (Dunne et al., 2015) and this can be seen from numerous empirical literature reviews completed from 2012 to 2017 (i.e., Fang, Fry, Brown, et al., 2015; Fang, Fry, Ji, et al., 2015; Fry, 2012; Fry et al., 2012; Ji & Finkelhor, 2015; Ji, Finkelhor, & Dunne, 2013; Tanaka, Suzuki, Aoyama, Takaoka, & MacMillan, 2017). These complemented works that predominantly came from countries such as China, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam and other countries. Notably, these reviews have mainly focused on the prevalence and incidences of child sexual abuse, and the health and economic burden of child maltreatment.

Notably, Fry (2012) and Fry et al. (2012), conducted two of the first reviews of studies on the prevalence, incidences and consequences of child maltreatment in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region, and found that while there is some amount of high quality research produced in this region, many of those studies were conducted and documented in China (of the 106 studies identified, 34% were from China, 14% from Japan, 13% from South Korea and 3% from Philippines), while many other countries lack country-specific data (e.g., prevalence and incidence rates). Additionally, it is unclear if the reviews included child victims, adult survivors of child maltreatment and/or children and adults in general. Nonetheless, these reviews highlighted that, as a consequence of maltreatment, children in the EAP region experienced primarily physical and mental health difficulties, risky sexual behaviours, interpersonal violence, and ongoing exploitation.

While these reviews that focused on child maltreatment in the EAP region have provided a valuable contribution to help understand child maltreatment in Asia, there are other criticism that should be noted. For instance, the reviews covered articles considering a

large diversity and complexity of societies and cultures in the EAP region (i.e., 16 countries including six Pacific Island countries). In addition, different studies utilised different definitions and methodologies, which may have led to an underestimation of the prevalence of child maltreatment and its impact on children's wellbeing (e.g., retrospective self-report surveys focussing and perpetrators' reports; Dunne et al., 2015; May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005; Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gómez-Benito, 2009). Differing prevalence results may also be due to factors such as poor translatability of English words (e.g., abuse, molested), in which the meaning of these words may vary widely between cultures and languages, but also phrases (e.g., flashed private parts, made you look at private parts) that may be difficult to translate literally (Dunne et al., 2009). All of which will poorly capture a best estimation of the prevalence of child maltreatment or how the concept is being understood in different cultures.

It is also possible that some studies may not cover all aspects of abusive behaviours even when studying a single type of abuse such as sexual abuse. For example, in a review of studies between 1980 and 2008 conducted by Babatsikos (2010) on parents' knowledge and attitude regarding child sexual abuse (CSA) globally, only one out of 23 studies directly explored and assessed parents' definitions of child sexual abuse. In that one study, parents defined CSA as sexual intercourse with or without consent, but other non-penetrative forms were not mentioned (Mathoma, Maripe-Perera, Khumalo, Mbayi, & Seloilwe, 2006). Notably, most of the studies were conducted in North America, with only three in Asian countries (i.e., 16 in the USA, three in Canada, two in China, and one in each of Hong Kong and Botswana/Swaziland).

Thus, definitional issues (of what may be considered as child maltreatment) may also affect the quality and credibility of child maltreatment studies, especially alongside the influences of culture on child maltreatment. Additionally, some Asian studies that utilised

WHO (2017) definition of child maltreatment argued that it was not necessarily appropriate for the country of study due to the lack of cultural sensitivity (e.g., Liao, Lee, Roberts-Lewis, Hong, & Jiao, 2011; Zhu & Tang, 2011). Asian researchers have argued that in many Asian countries, children usually have low status in their community as they are perceived to belong or be indebted to their parents or other caregivers (Fry et al., 2012). Additionally, given that Asians can hold strong collectivistic values, victims of violence are often discouraged from speaking out and/or obtaining external support, as violence is seen as a private matter and not to be discussed publicly or reported to avoid shame (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). Additionally, social and cultural norms that may seem to support or even encourage violence against children are usually justified under the guise of child rearing and discipline (Fry et al., 2012). Consequently, child maltreatment in Asia could sometimes remain invisible (Pinheiro, 2006).

This concept of 'invisibility' was also supported by a meta-analysis conducted by Ji, Finkelhor, and Dunne (2013) on studies from China. They found that estimates of child sexual abuse were lower compared to international figures (Stoltenborgh, van IJzendoorn, Euser, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). Such low estimations could be due to methodological issues such as using simple questionnaires (e.g., Chen, Dunne, & Han, 2007), but other authors suggested that the lower estimates could be due to Asian cultural values, such as a collectivistic culture that affects how family members and victims disclose their abuse experiences and how families prevent shame (Finkelhor, Ji, Mikton, & Dunne, 2013; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011).

Nonetheless, all of the aforementioned reviews have suggested that the bulk of studies that were conducted in Asia typically focused on sexual abuse, and there are still limited reviews that included (or emphasised) other forms of abuse such as emotional abuse and neglect. It should also be noted that most of these Asian studies focused on Chinese societies,

which have different sociological and historical factors (e.g., former one child policy) that differ from other multicultural Asian countries, like Singapore and Malaysia.

Study Rationale

Thus, although there is a wide variation of what is considered child maltreatment within Asian cultures and the growing number of Asian-related literature that are related to child maltreatment, there is a need to evaluate the credibility and quality of the research in this area. In particular, it is important to consider how studies done in Asia or studies that were done on Asians, define, identify and/or perceive child maltreatment (and not just specifically those that focused on child sexual abuse and Chinese societies) and how cultural differences were being accounted for in measuring child maltreatment. This is essential as definitional ambiguity among different studies that were conducted in Asia need to be addressed to understand what sort of cultural norms or influences surround child maltreatment.

Additionally, as noted in Chapter 1, given the lack of prior critical conceptual analysis, it is also important to explore how the term 'child maltreatment' may be defined, constructed interpreted and/or perceived from an Asian setting. This is particularly important, given that many Asian countries may have less well-developed child protection system compared to some Western countries, including the amount of research that has been conducted on child maltreatment, and the differing parenting and cultural practices within Western countries. Therefore, this review aimed to consider published research and to attempt to identify unpublished research that has been conducted on the definition and identification of child maltreatment in Asian populations and were guided by these questions:

1. How is child maltreatment defined in Asian populations?
2. What are the Asian cultural beliefs and values that impact on the definition and identification of child maltreatment among Asians?

Method

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria was created based on PECO (Population, Exposure, Comparator, Outcomes; see Table 3.0 below). The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established a priori and included only original research using quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods studies. Although reviews and meta-analysis were not included, their references need to be screened for any relevant studies. Theses, dissertations, conference proceedings, and abstracts were excluded because peer review processes vary among educational institutes and scientific committees. Studies not meeting the inclusion criteria were rejected.

Table 3.0
PECO including Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Population	Children or adults (either Asian or working with an Asian population)	Studies that only involved Western samples
Exposure	Some involvement in child maltreatment, either as: a) Victim b) Family member of victim (e.g., spouse, partner, close friend, carer, parent, sibling, son, daughter) c) Professional working with victims or offenders (e.g., child protection professional, nurse, doctor, social worker, teacher, therapist)	Bullying, intimate partner violence, sibling incest, adult sexual harassment, domestic violence that does not involve child maltreatment or witnessing of interpersonal violence that does not lead to emotional abuse
Comparative groups	Cultural groups Cross-cultural differences	None
Outcome	Medical, clinical, research, and legal definitions, concepts, experiences, perceptions, views from children or adult, Asian culture	Solely focus on Western norms and/or Western culture
Type of studies	Peer-reviewed qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method studies from 1989 onwards (signature, ratifications and accession of UNCRC)	Editorials, letters, conference proceedings, theses, studies with no child maltreatment focus, no peer/critical review, case studies and commentaries. Studies before 1989. Non-English or Malay language. Systematic review and meta-analysis

Search Strategy

Five methods were used to obtain relevant studies: 1) online databases; manual search from reference list - (2) forward and 3) backward searching; 4) identifying so-called grey literature (i.e., international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations, government offices and websites); and 5) experts were contacted for

suggestions on relevant articles in the topic. Databases were systematically searched using keywords related to child maltreatment or child abuse. In addition, Boolean operators were used to combine keywords and keywords were truncated where appropriate. In all searches, terms related to geographical location, nationality or culture, finding definitions, and the type of study (see Table 3.1 for full list).

Table 3.1
Keywords used to search literature in databases

Terms related to	Keywords
Child maltreatment	"child maltreatment", "child abuse", "physical abuse", "sexual abuse", "verbal abuse", "child abandonment", "child neglect", "emotional abuse", "psychological abuse", "domestic violence", "family violence", "battered child syndrome", "Munchausen syndrome by proxy", "exploitation", "teenage abuse", "adolescent abuse", "youth abuse", "young people abuse", "child protection", "child welfare"
Geographical location, nationality or culture	"Asian Americans", "Asian immigrants", "Southeast Asian", "Chinese", "Japanese", "Korean", "Vietnamese", "Korean", "Malaysian", "Thai", "Singapore", "India", "Burmese", "Hong Kong", "Taiwanese", "Bruneian", "Sri Lankan"
Comparative groups	"culture", "sociocultural", "cultural sensitivity", "diversity", "multicultural", "racial and ethnic differences"
Definition of child maltreatment	"definition", "identification", "concept", "experience", "perception", "attitude", "medical", "clinical", "legal", "research", "attitude", "knowledge", "understand", "opinion"
Type of study	"systematic review", "meta-analysis", "qualitative", "quantitative", "mixed-method"

Before the systematic literature search was conducted, a scoping exercise checked for any existing systematic literature reviews on child maltreatment in relation to Asian samples using the following databases: The Campbell Collaboration (no parameter for time period); The Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (no parameter for time period); Cochrane Library

(no parameter for time period) and using Google Scholar (for grey literature). From this exercise, 14 reviews were found. Specifically:

a) four reviews from China (X. Fang, Fry, Ji, et al., 2015; Finkelhor et al., 2013; Ji et al., 2013; Liao et al., 2011) that focused on the prevalence of child physical abuse in China, the health and economic burden of child maltreatment, prevalence of child sexual abuse and ecological factors of child maltreatment in China respectively;

b) a review on the prevalence of sexual abuse in Japan (Tanaka et al., 2017);

c) a review from the Philippines that considered child maltreatment and child protection policy responses (Roche, 2017);

d) three reviews that examined the prevalence, incidence rates, consequences of child and health and economic burden of child maltreatment in East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region (i.e., Fang, Fry, Brown, et al., 2015; Fry, 2012; Fry et al., 2012); and

e) five global reviews that included Asian studies on physical and sexual abuse, parenting programmes on child maltreatment and the consequences on childhood violence on education outcomes (i.e., Babatsikos, 2010; Chen & Chan, 2016; Fry et al., 2017; Stoltenborgh et al., 2013, 2011).

No reviews were found that specifically focused on the methodological, definitional and/or cultural issues that are related to Asians on child maltreatment, i.e., the purpose of this review.

A systematic search was then undertaken using six electronic databases: PsycINFO (1989-2018); Allied and Complementary Medicine Database (AMED, 1989-2018); Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL, 1989-2018); Medline Index and Non-Index (1989-2018); Web of Science (1989-2018) and Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC-EBSCO, 1989-2018). As most countries in Asia signed and ratified the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) in 1989, which

impacted upon their legislation and policies, only research on child maltreatment in Asia from 1989 to March 2018 were retrieved. In addition, from the search strategy results, only three articles were found to be in a foreign language (with abstracts were in English); however, the search was restricted to English and Malay language publications (as Malaysian literature is largely published in these languages). Notably, while other foreign languages such as Chinese, Korean and Japanese language may be valuable, these languages were not included in the search as this would have involved additional cost and time for translation. Consequently, some research articles may have been missed or overlooked. For full-text articles identified from the database search that could not be retrieved (n=6), the respective authors were contacted directly, but unfortunately none responded or were uncontactable.

Study Selection

Following the electronic searches, a total of 10,101 articles were identified between the years 1989 to March 2018, which reduced to 10,076 articles after removal of duplicates (n=25). Next, all potentially relevant research articles underwent a two-step screening method: first, screening was based on the title and abstract of the articles; second, those articles that had not been excluded were considered on the basis of the full text. Thirteen studies were added from backward and forward searching, and subsequently, 133 studies were retained for full-text review and underwent a second screening. Based on this screening, 114 studies were removed (including six publications that could not retrieved full text and where authors were not contactable) leaving a total of 19 studies for the final review (see Figure 1 for a summary of this process, plus a list of the most common reasons for exclusions at the full-text level of screening). Full-text articles were screened against inclusion and exclusion criteria based on PECO (Population, Exposure, Comparator, Outcomes; see Table 3.2 below).

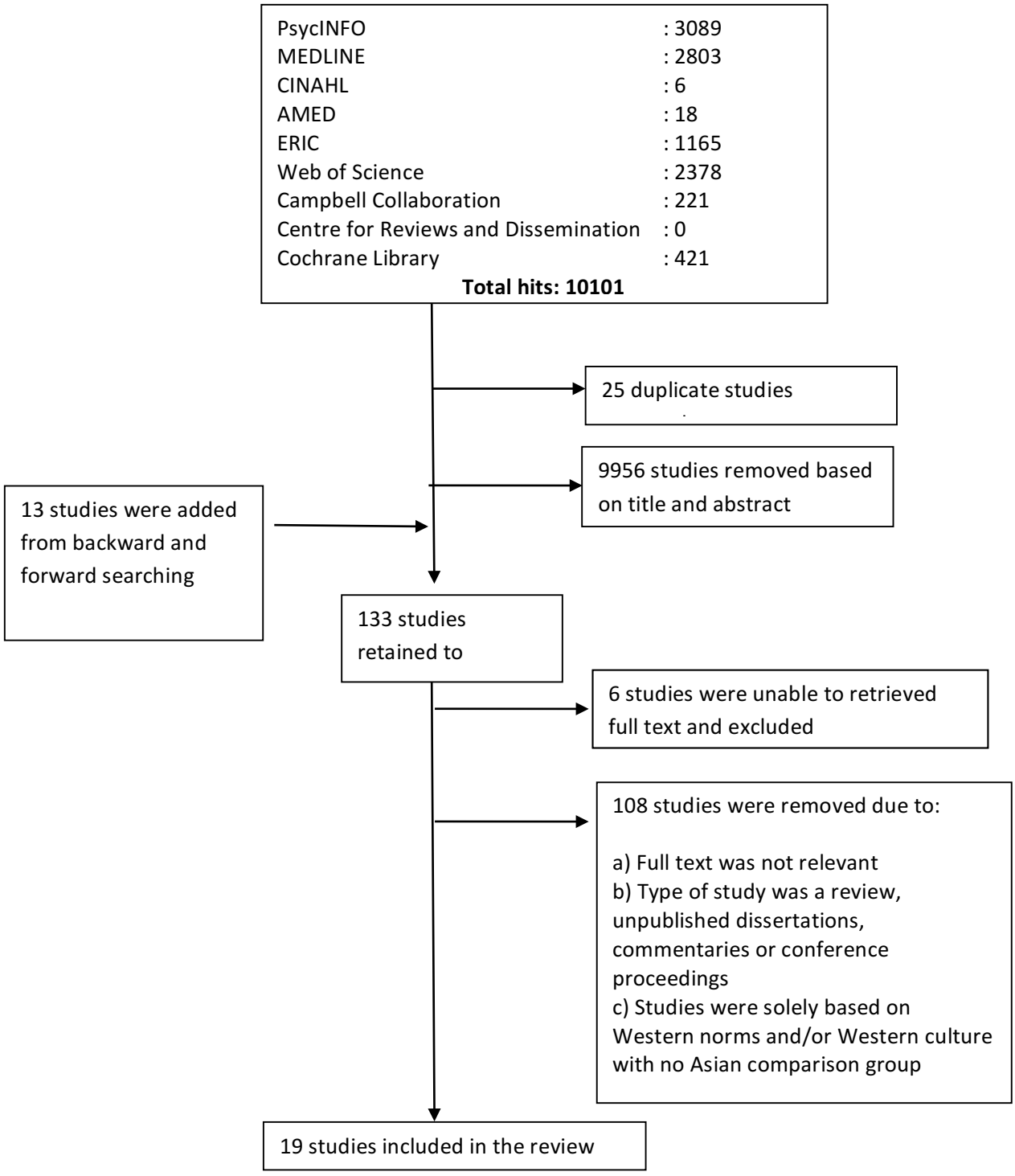


Figure 4.0: Overview of search strategy

Following study selection, quality assessment was completed prior to data extraction.

Quality assessment

Using a pre-defined checklist that was adapted from Browne, Chou and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2004) and the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2013; see Appendices A-C), each study included in the final review underwent a quality assessment to consider the results of the study, the validity and the useful of the study, as well as to check for bias based on three categories of systematic error: selection, measuring bias and attrition bias. In each category, the number of items varies between qualitative study (thematic analysis), cross-sectional and cohort quality assessment forms. All studies were scored depending on how fully they met each condition: 2 – fully meeting the condition, 1 – partially meeting the condition, 0 – not meeting the condition and U – for unclear or insufficient information.

Once each study was scored, an overall score for methodological quality of the studies were established by summing the scores for each item (2, 1 or 0). For items that were scored as unclear, they were summed up separately (with each one scored as 1). This was scored as such to see how many items were unclear and to help to resolve any disagreements or discrepancies in score between reviewers. For overall quality, cut-off scores were established to determine high and low methodological quality for each quality assessment form (i.e., thematic analysis, cross-sectional study, and cohort). A relatively high quality study was defined as one scoring greater or equal to 50% (based on the total quality score) of the items. Quality assessments were conducted independently by two researchers, in which the first author assessed the quality of all included studies, with a second reviewer independently assessing the quality of 50% of the studies (n=10) for inter-rater reliability. Differences that emerged between raters on individual studies were resolved through discussion and consensus was established. Inter-rater reliability checks were conducted by means of Intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC), in which single measure ICC, using two-way random effect model and absolute agreement type was calculated. Based on Fleiss (1986)

recommendations of ICC values, the score of .70 for the current review was indicative of good reliability between raters.

Data extraction

Each study was read a minimum of two times prior to data extraction to ensure a thorough understanding of the content. Two pre-defined data extraction forms (that covered both qualitative and quantitative studies; see Appendices D and E) were used to extract the data from the included studies prior to synthesis. The data that were extracted were based on the study characteristics (reference details, sample used, aim or purpose of the study, methodology, analysis method and reported findings).

Results

Description of studies

Quality of included studies. Due to the different methodological approaches and questions used across studies (i.e., thematic analysis, cohort, cross-sectional) total quality scores differed and, thus, were converted into percentages for comparability. Across the qualitative studies, quality scores ranged between 33.3% and 69%. For quantitative studies, the quality score ranged between 32.1% and 57.1% Overall, the majority of studies (n=13, 68.4%) scored above the cut-off criteria of 50% for quality based on the total score. However, six studies scored below the quality threshold, specifically, two qualitative studies (Alavi, Amin, Subhi, Mohamad, & Sarnon, 2012; Shang & Katz, 2015) and four quantitative papers (Chan, Elliott, Chow, & Thomas, 2002; Chen et al., 2007; Lau, Liu, Yu, & Wong, 1999; Qiao & Xie, 2015). As such, these studies were removed and were not included in this review (see Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 for detailed quality assessment for both qualitative and quantitative studies respectively).

Table 3.2
Quality assessment of qualitative studies

	(Maiter, Alaggia, Trocme, & Trocmé, 2004)	(Dongping & Yuk‐chung, 2008)	(Xie et al., 2016)	(Loh, Calleja, & Restubog, 2011)	(Zhu & Tang, 2011)	(J.-Y. Feng, Jezewski, & Hsu, 2005)	(Y. Chan, Lam, & Shae, 2011)	(Shang & Katz, 2015)	(Alavi et al., 2012)
Were the study aims(s) and objectives clear?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y
Will the study's design address the objectives?	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Is the sample size appropriate for the method of analysis?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is the sample adequately described and reflective of the population?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	P	P
Was the sample recruited appropriate to the research aims?	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	P	P	N
Did the study considered the relationships between the researcher and participants adequately?	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	N	P	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Have ethical approval been gained?	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Did the study describe how data was collected?	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Was the data collection appropriate to the research aims and research analysis?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Did the study discuss saturation of data?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Was the analysis used appropriate for the data?	P	U	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	P
Is there a clear and in depth description of the analysis process?	P	N	N	P	Y	P	Y	N	N
Did the study include reliability and validity check?	N	N	N	N	Y	U	N	N	N
Was attrition recorded?	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Are the results reported?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P
Did the study achieve their aims and research objectives?	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	P
Are the results representative of the findings?	P	P	P	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	P
Does the discussion accurately reflect the results of the study?	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	P
Were implications discussed?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y
Did the study describe its strengths and limitations?	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
Score (maximum 42)	29 (69%)	24 (57.1%)	23 (54.8%)	26 (61.9%)	35 (83.3%)	30 (71.4%)	33 (78.6%)	20 (47.6%)	14 (33.3%)

Note: Y = 2 points; P = 1 point; N = 0 point; U = Unclear

Table 3.3
Quality assessment of quantitative studies

	(Son, Lee, Ahn, & Doan, 2017)	(Segal, 1992)	(Elliott, Tong, & Tan, 1997)	(Ko & Koh, 2007)	(Y. Lee et al., 2014)	(Segal & Iwai, 2004)	(Chan, Elliott, Chow, & Thomas, 2002)	(J. Chen et al., 2007)	(Lau et al., 1999)	(Qiao & Xie, 2015)
Were the study aims(s) and objectives clear?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	Y	Y
Will the study's research design address the objectives?	Y	Y	P	P	Y	Y	N	N	Y	P
Is the sample adequately described and reflective of the population?	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	P	Y	P	P
Was the sample recruited appropriate to the research aims?	Y	P	P	P	Y	Y	P	Y	U	P
Was the sample size sufficient?	N	N	P	N	N	P	N	N	N	N
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	P	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Has ethical approval been gained?	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Is there a clear definition of child maltreatment?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	N	Y	N
Is the definition of child maltreatment comparable to other studies?	N	Y	N	P	Y	P	N	N	N	N

Did the study describe how child maltreatment is classified or identified?	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	P	Y	N	Y	Y
Was exposure accurately measured?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	P
Did the study use objective measurement(s)?	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	P	N	N
Were the measurement(s) described clearly?	P	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	P	P	N	N
Were the assessment(s) standardised?	N	N	N	P	N	Y	P	N	N	N
Were the measurement(s) comparable to instruments used in other studies?	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Was the outcome measure clearly stated?	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Have the study identified all possible (important) confounding factors?	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Were the confounding factors considered in the study design and/or analysis?	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Was drop-out/non-completion rate recorded?	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	P	N
Was drop-out/non-completion stage discussed?	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
Are the results reported appropriately?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	Y	P	P
Did the study achieve their aims and research objectives?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	P	P	Y

Was there a clear and appropriate plan of statistical analysis?	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	P	P	U	P	N
Are the results reliable?	P	Y	P	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
Does the discussion accurately reflect the results of the study?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	P	Y	P
Are the results generalizable/transferable?	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	N	U	N
Were implications discussed	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
Did the study describe its strengths and limitations?	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	P	Y	N	Y
Score (max 56 points)	32 (57.1%)	37 (66.1%)	31 (55.4%)	38 (67.9%)	39 (69.6%)	36 (64.3%)	25 (44.6%)	23 (41.1%)	23 (41.1%)	18 (32.1%)

Note: Y = 2 points; P = 1 point; N = 0 point; U = Unclear

Characteristics of included studies

After removing studies below the quality threshold, only 13 studies were extracted and were discussed as part of this review. The 13 studies included in this review were largely qualitative, including eight studies using thematic analysis and one study using content analysis. The remaining were quantitative studies, specifically, three cohort and three cross-sectional studies. Studies came from nine different countries, including: China (n=3), Singapore (n=1), Hong Kong (n= 1), India (n=1), Japan (n=1), Korea (n=1), Taiwan (n=1), Philippines (n=1), USA (n=2) and Canada (n=1). With regards to type of child maltreatment, only two studies have solely focused on physical abuse (i.e., Dongping & Yuk‐chung, 2008; Zhu & Tang, 2011) and two studies that focused on sexual abuse only (i.e., Ko & Koh, 2007; Xie, Qiao, & Wang, 2016), while the remainder looked at more than one type of child maltreatment in relation to definition, perceptions, attitude or conceptualisation of child maltreatment.

Four studies focused on professionals (e.g., doctors, nurses, social workers, lawyers and teachers) with experience of working on child maltreatment cases (Feng, Jezewski, & Hsu, 2005; Ko & Koh, 2007; Segal, 1992; Segal & Iwai, 2004), three studies sampled parents (Maiter et al., 2004; Son et al., 2017; Xie et al., 2016), two included children and parents in their study (i.e., Dongping & Yuk‐chung, 2008; Loh, Calleja, & Restubog, 2011), two explored views of the adults in general (Elliott, Tong, & Tan, 1997; Lee, Malley-Morrison, Jang, & Watson, 2014) and two focussed on child participants (with and without a history of child maltreatment; Chan, Lam, & Shae, 2011; Zhu & Tang, 2011). Details of these studies are included in Table 3.4 for qualitative studies and Table 3.5 for quantitative studies.

Table 3.4
Description of key methodologies in qualitative studies (N = 7)

Author (year) Country	Purpose/Aim/ Research Question	Methodology/Data collection/ Data analysis	Sampling and participants	Main results/Themes
Dongping & Yuk-chung, 2008; Beijing, China	To explore Chinese concepts of physical child abuse in sociocultural context of Mainland China.	Focus groups using semi-structured interviews; thematic analysis	Convenience; 60 participants (12 mothers, 8 fathers, 19 boys and 21 girls)	Western concept of 'child abuse' does not fit China's national condition; Well-meant child battering is not abuse; Biological parents would not abuse their children; Parents with higher education will not commit child abuse
Xie et al., 2016; Beijing, China	To assesses parents' perceptions and practices regarding child sexual abuse to develop and implement prevention programmes.	Individual interviews using semi-structured interviews based on an interview guide; thematic analysis	Purposive; 27 parents (14 males, 12 females; aged 30-46 years, 1 withdrawal)	Child sexual abuse defined as a) intercourse with child; b) CSA could occur without physical contact including genital peeping, showing pornographic material, using a child in the production of pornography; c) verbal sexual activities (flirting) Additional factors to define CSA activities: age of victims; victim consent; power differences between victim and perpetrator, perpetrator's intention; and perpetrator-victim relationship
Zhu & Tang, 2011; Nanjing, China	To explore how Chinese children perceived and interpreted their experiences of parental physical abuse, and what barriers impeded	Semi-structured interview, thematic analysis	Referral sampling; 9 boys (excluded: 1 underage boy (below 12) and 3 girls who experienced	- Perceived legitimacy of parental physical abuse – children's own faults and mistakes, or to teach children to behave; - Perceptions of effectiveness – abuse is well intended but not effective in teaching what's right; - Perceived images of the perpetrator(s) during (loving and kind) and after (ruthless, dragonish);

	help-seeking in mainland China		emotional abuse and light physical discipline)	- Perceptions of parents' love – abuse was done out of love; - Reasons for not seeking help – lack of societal definition of physical abuse, shame and fear of losing face.
Feng et al., 2005; Taiwan	To describe nurses' experience with child abuse in Taiwan, to explore nurses' perceived educational needs on child abuse in Taiwan and to identify nurses' perceived barrier in reporting suspected child abuse in Taiwan	Grounded theory method; Semi-structured interviews; data analysed using thematic analysis	Purposive; 18 nurses (8 ER nurses and 10 paediatric nurses)	Unaware of legal definition of child abuse and nurses legal responsibilities; Child abuse is physical harm, excessive harm; can extent to psychological damage. Experienced conflict between: a) culturally based personal values and professional responsibilities, b) between nurses and physicians and c) between nurses and parents; Feeling frustrated with: a) time and workload, b) lack of knowledge and ability, c) no feedback from child protection services, d) lack of faith in legal authority and e) lack of physician support; Nurses saw their role as: a) being sensitive, b) assessing, c) collaborating, d) caring and protecting the child, c) e) supporting colleagues
Chan et al., 2011; Hong Kong	To explore children's views on child abuse in Hong Kong	Focus group discussion using 5 flash movies developed from 5 vignettes; thematic analysis	Convenience; N = 87 (age 9-13); 39 boys and 48 females	Children's awareness of child abuse and neglect: children's views vs adult-like views; Children's view on reporting and seeking help when abused: Choose not disclose to avoid shame and protect parents and their families.

Loh et al., 2011; Philippines	To investigate opinions on what constitute as parental verbal abuse in Philippines setting	Open-ended surveys (where participants list down words/phrases said by parents that inflicted emotional pain and distress on adolescents); content analysis	Snowball; N = 88 30 high school students (18 males and 12 females, M = 16.11 age); 30 parents (11 fathers and 19 mothers, M = 41.09 age); 28 counsellors (10 males and 18 females, M = 34.2 age)	9 categories of parental verbal abuse: a) Put downs and shaming b) Rejection c) Blaming d) Fault exaggerating e) Threat f) Invoking harm g) Regret h) Unfair comparison i) Negative prediction
Maiter et al., 2004; Canada	To explore South Asian parents from Canada on their attitudes toward child discipline, maltreatment and neglect	Focus group discussing and vignette questionnaire; thematic analysis	Convenience; 29 South Asian parents (62% mothers, 38% fathers)	Attitudes towards the use of corporal punishment was neither accepted nor condoned; Attitude toward psychological approaches in discipline was mixed; Attitudes toward inappropriate supervision – perceived that such parental behaviour is inappropriate

Table 3.5

Description of key methodologies in quantitative studies (N = 6)

Authors (year) Country	Purpose/Aim	Sample	Design	Measure	Findings
Elliott et al., 1997; Singapore	To determine Singaporean public members on attitude towards actions suggesting child abuse	N = 401 Singaporeans (230 females, 171 males); aged 18-102 (M = 37.8 age); Chinese, n = 314, Malay, n = 58, Indian, n = 22, Other, n =7	Cross-sectional	Acceptability of actions suggesting maltreatment; Effect of different circumstances (situational characteristics); Attitudes to reporting child abuse; Respondent experiences with cases of abuse	a. Sexually motivated acts were strongly disapproved of b. Physical abuse or neglect were more strongly disapproved of than emotional abuse c. Situational characteristics have an effect on lesser extreme abusive actions d. Reporting of child abuse is supported but somewhat against mandatory reporting
Ko & Koh, 2007, Korea	To identify characteristics of Korean nurses' perceptions about child sexual abuse (CSA)	1029 Korean registered nurses (503 hospital nurses, 526 school nurses; all females)	Cross-sectional	IV: Vignette with situational characteristics: a. Age of the victim b. Age of perpetrator c. Cross-gender relationship of perpetrator and victim d. Victim resistance	Greatest impact on perception of seriousness of CSA: Intrusiveness of sexual act (OR = 2.170) and victim resistance (OR = 2.146) Relative impact: Cross-gender relationship (OR = 0.671) Frequency of sexual acts = (OR = 1.404) And perpetrator age (OR = 1.268) Modest impact: Victim age (OR = 1.111)

				e. Closeness of relationship of perpetrator and victim f. Frequency of sexual act g. Intrusiveness of sexual act and respondent characteristics – demographic variables DV: Perceived seriousness of child sexual abuse incidents	Non-significant: Closeness of relationship Respondent characteristics: Older hospital nurses, with more education, from larger communities, non-parents, with less intrusive CSA experience and frequent media exposure on CSA are more likely to perceive CSA seriously.
Segal, 1992, India	To assess perceptions of child abuse by Indian nationals	N = 133 (Social workers, n = 45; human services professionals, n = 46; and non-human services professionals, n = 42)	Cohort	Vignette (based on Giovannoni & Becerra's (1979) study)	Sexual abuse was considered most serious form of abuse, with child prostitution considered most abusive (M = 8.41, SD = 1.44), and housing issue is less severe (i.e., poor housing conditions, M = 5.72) Social worker and non-human service professionals' perceptions were similar across all vignettes
Segal & Iwai,	To compare the perception of child abuse among social	N = 348 (152 females, 154 males)	Cohort	45-items vignettes (based on Giovanonni	No significant differences in perception were found among participants.

2004; Japan	workers, physicians, lawyers and public members in Japan	Social work, n = 36 Medicine, n = 114 Law, n = 100 Lay people, n = 98		& Becerra's 1979 study)	Significant difference was found for gender with the severity of physical punishment and professional's age with regards to perception on emotional abuse, neglect and child labour.
(Lee et al., 2014); USA and Korea	To compare differences between European Americans, Korean Americans and Americans on what constitute as child maltreatment and how severe for each type.	N = 150 undergraduate students (62 European Americans, 26 Korean Americans and 62 Koreans)	Cross-sectional	Cross-cultural definitions of abuse in families survey (Malley-Morrison, 2004)	Fewer European Americans (77.4%) than Koreans (96.8%) identified psychological aggression as an extreme abusive type of abuse European Americans placed a greater emphasis on physical aggression (95.2%). Korean Americans (92.3%) were more similar to European Americans than to Koreans. Koreans focused more on psychological aggression (96.8%) and neglect (45.2%) No significant difference found with house chores and sexual abuse
(Son et al., 2017), USA, Japan, Korea	To examine American, Korean and Japanese mothers' perceptions of child maltreatment	N = 153 mothers (with children aged 3-60) USA, n = 48; Seoul, Korea, n = 65; Japan, n = 40	Cohort	Vignette (adapted from Ahn and colleagues' (1998) study)	American mothers reported the highest in perceiving corporal punishment as physical abuse Korean mothers displayed a dual attitude of perceiving the vignettes as maltreatment

		Japanese mothers are most permissive towards harsh parenting behaviours All mothers scored the lowest in perceiving neglect as maltreatment

1. How is child maltreatment defined in Asian populations?

In 13 of the studies that were included in this review, there were similarities and differences as to how child maltreatment has been defined and/or perceived by professionals, parents, children and adults in general. The perception of child maltreatment has also been found to be influence by other factors, specifically, the intention, severity and frequency of the act, and whether the act was sexual in nature.

Professionals' views on child maltreatment

Among the four studies that focused only on professionals, three were quantitative studies (Ko & Koh, 2007; Segal, 1992; Segal & Iwai, 2004) that utilised vignette-based questionnaires to measure the perceptions of child maltreatment in general; one study of these studies exclusively focussed on child sexual abuse (Ko & Koh, 2007), and the remaining study employed a qualitative method to investigate the meaning of child abuse among nurses (Feng et al., 2005). Although these studies focused on professionals (i.e., doctors, nurses, legal professionals, social workers and teachers) who were typically involved or trained in handling child maltreatment cases, even among professionals, there were inconsistencies in how child maltreatment was being defined or perceived.

For instance, Segal's (1992) study explored how different Indian professionals perceived the different types of child maltreatment based on the study by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). Her study also included other forms of societal abuse such as child marriage, child labour, child prostitution, and child beggary. All the professionals included in the study, perceived sexual abuse (i.e., child prostitution) and child begging as the most serious form of child abuse in India. However, when compared to other professionals, social workers views and definitions of child maltreatment were more similar to professionals not working in a human service related area, compared to other human-services professionals (i.e., doctors, nurses, teachers). Segal (1992) reasoned that this was probably because social workers may

be influenced by a lot more societal culture and values in comparison to other human services professionals. To support this view, when these Indian professionals were to be compared to USA human services professionals, Segal (1992) found that there was more agreement among social workers and human services professionals from India as opposed to those who are in the USA, and this is simply because they might share a similar professional culture and perceived things more similar to people who do not share that culture. This may suggest that even among professionals, there is variability in between and within cultural boundaries that may influence how they perceive child maltreatment. Finally, Segal (1992) noted that the differences in views between professionals could also be influenced by a culture that is mediated by middle class values. However, it is unclear as to what may be considered as 'middle class values' or "societal culture and values" in India.

Similarly to the Segal (1992) study, Feng et al. (2005) highlighted that not all nurses shared the same view on what constitutes child maltreatment; some nurses were confused about the definition of child abuse and were not able to clearly define it, usually having a narrow definition, restricted to physical abuse. Among 18 nurses in this qualitative study, all nurses perceived child abuse as synonymous to physical abuse and was mentioned in every single interview; for example, "*From my personal experiences, child abuse is physical harm. It is difficult to determine psychological harm in a short period of time. Therefore, I would define child abuse based on physical damage.*" (Feng et al., 2005; page144)

In addition, Feng et al. (2005) found that only a few nurses were able to articulate what might constitute psychological and/or sexual abuse as child abuse, and none of them mentioned neglect as a form of maltreatment. Additionally, these nurses acknowledged and expressed the impact and severity of sexual abuse that could go beyond physical injuries. These two concepts can be seen from the following two excerpts from the study:

"Not only is physical harm child abuse but psychological harm is also child abuse to me, such as criticizing and humiliating the child, saying the child is "very stupid" or belittling the child in comparison with other children. I think it will affect the child's self-esteem and psychological development."

(Feng et al., 2005; page 145)

"One sixth-grade girl, (who had) been sexually abused by her own father, was brought in for examination by the school counsellor. Sometimes, it is just so hard to believe that the abuser is her biological father who is supposed to take care of her! I always disbelieve this kind of thing when I read it in the newspapers, but she is now here in front of me. Such a poor girl! It is not only the physical harm but also the psychological damage from this…I really worry how she would cope about this psychologically."

(Feng et al., 2005; page 145)

Although this study was published in 2005, this excerpt highlights that child maltreatment was still seen as an incomprehensible social problem in Asian societies (sexual abuse and losing virginity have always been seen as significant stigma in Taiwanese culture), but also the betrayal of a caregiver who is supposed to protect a child, which is incongruent with traditional Confucian family values. In addition, it is also interesting to note that, more broadly in Feng et al.'s study, biological parents were not necessarily seen abusers among nurses. This idea was supported in another study that focused on parents' perceptions of physical abuse, in which parents do not perceive that biological parents could abuse their children:

Parents definitely wouldn't abuse their own children, though step-parents may. If biological parents batter their children seriously, surely there must be other reasons,

and they don't mean to abuse their child… At least from the perspective of rational thinking, consciousness and affection, battering wasn't a kind of child abuse

(Dongping & Yuk-Chung, 2008, page 272)

Besides definitional issues, Feng et al. (2005) also found that professionals struggled with how to identify child maltreatment, such as physical abuse, as the extent and severity of physical harm that was considered abuse were vague to nurses:

"We need to define 'child abuse'. The range of physical discipline is very broad. Parents in our old society thought 'spare the rod, spoil the child'. Nowadays, this old saying may be viewed as abuse. I still think children need to be disciplined, but how much is too much?"

(Feng et al., 2005; page 145)

With regards to defining severity of sexual abuse, Ko and Koh (2007) found that intrusiveness of the sexual act (e.g., talking in sexually suggestive ways, exhibitionism, touching or sexual intercourse) was perceived as the most severe form of sexual abuse and seemed to have the most impact on professionals' view on the severity of the abuse. This was followed by victim resistance, gender of the victim and perpetrator, frequency of the acts and age of the perpetrator. However, it is also important to note that the authors also reported that no overall mean (for each of the severity of sexual abuse) could be reported due to highly skewed and non-normally distributed data. However, in contrast to Segal and Iwai's (2004) study, Ko and Koh (2007) found less disagreement between the perceptions of child abuse among social workers, physicians, lawyers and the general public, and that age and gender were correlated with perceptions of child abuse ($p<0.01$). In regards to child neglect, all of these studies seemed to indicate that neglect is perceived to be the least serious form of child maltreatment.

Parents' and general public's view on child maltreatment

Similar to those studies that focused on professionals (i.e., Ko & Koh, 2007; Segal, 1992), Elliott et al. (1997) found that the general public tended to strongly disapprove of and see sexually motivated acts as a clear form of child maltreatment. However, when parents were asked to define what may constitute child sexual abuse (CSA), parents generally regard it as sexual activities that were done with a child and reported varying standards of what may be considered as sexual activity (Xie et al., 2016). In Xie et al's (2016) study, out of 26 parents (14 males and 12 females), only two fathers defined CSA very narrowly, as sexual intercourse with the child, while most of the participants believe that apart from sexual intercourse, non-physical activities could also be considered as CSA. This includes activities such as genital peeping, showing pornographic material to the child or using the child as part of the production of pornography. However, only one father very broadly mentioned verbal sexual activities, such as flirting with the child using sex related words. These studies may suggest that although parents and public members in general regard sexually motivated acts as a form of child maltreatment, there are still varying agreements as to what sexual acts may be defined as sexual abuse.

However, in terms of other forms of maltreatment such as physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect, there were different perceptions of what is considered abuse. For instance, actions that could potentially be seen as emotional maltreatment (e.g., calling a child "useless", criticising, saying that others are better) were often rated as 'sometimes' or 'always' acceptable. This was also found in a study conducted in the Philippines by Loh et al. (2011), who found that putting down or shaming a child was more commonly used a parenting strategy in the Philippines, compared to other forms of behaviour such as blaming, unfairly comparing the child or threatening the child. Loh et al. (2011) argued that such differences could be due to the fact that shaming and teasing a child is a common parenting method in Philippines as means of social control to discourage independence from their

children and to induce anxieties in children to conform to family norms. However, it is unclear as to why and what motivates Filipino parents to choose this type of behaviour, which may be seen by some as verbal abuse. However, the findings of this study were based on self-report and there is no way to validate if any of the negative verbal expressions were indeed verbal abuse.

The perception on what may constitute as maltreatment could also be influenced by how parents understand the concept of child maltreatment. For example, in Dongping and Yuk‐chung (2008) study, they found that parents in their study tend to reject the concept of Western 'child abuse' as it does not fit with China's national conditions. For example:

> *I think the concept of 'child abuse' is introduced from the West, but you have to consider the situations in China. The Chinese have performed battering and scolding for several thousand years, and if you now call it 'child abuse', everyone will find it unacceptable! China has not developed to that extent like the Western countries.*
>
> (Dongping & Yuk‐chung, 2008, page 270)

Further to that, Dongping and Yuk-Chung (2008) argued that Chinese parents may reject this concept could be due to how parental beliefs on the usage of the different types of disciplinary methods and the intention of the parents. Thus, may suggest that how parental beliefs on harsher parenting methods may lie in the continuum of how one perceive child maltreatment. This could be seen in the following two quotes:

> *Maltreatment always comes with malevolence and hatred…. The intention behind child battering is different from battering the old. Parents are always for their children's good no matter how severely or often they batter them. I think child abuse is only related to the intention of battering, and has nothing to do with the frequency and severity of battering.*

Abuse is another concept, like not feeding the child, torturing her/him mentally and simply disliking her/him. It's ill will. Our battering is out of love. We can't help carrying out battering for the child's good, which I think is totally different from abuse.

(Dongping & Yuk‐chung, 2008, page 271)

Nonetheless, when Asian parents living abroad were compared within that cultural context with regards to their perceptions on child maltreatment, Maiter et al. (2004) found that South Asian parents in Canada did not differ significantly from other local populations in Canada. Specifically, South Asian parents generally did not accept or condone corporal punishments as it was viewed as a form of physical abuse. Similarly, leaving bruises, hitting on the face, using an instrument to punish and slapping were considered as inappropriate. However, in contrast to a recent cross-cultural study conducted by Son et al. (2017), it was found that American mothers were more likely to perceive physical discipline (i.e., corporal punishment) as physical abuse, while Korean and Japanese mothers showed a more permissible attitude towards harsh parenting behaviours.

Additionally, to understand the differences as to why Asian parents from different cultural contexts may have different perceptions of maltreatment, Maiter et al. (2004) add that such perception could be influenced by the perceived severity of the act itself, and this was illustrated by some of the excerpts from the study:

I don't agree in hitting or beating. A little spank here or there, that's okay. But no hitting or beating in any form.

(Maiter et al., 2004; page 316)

A spank here or there…yeah…[but] you can't beat the child, like, with a shoe, that's going too far…

(Maiter et al., 2004; page 316)

As such these studies that focused on parents may suggest that there is a need not only to explore the cultural nuances as to what sort of disciplinary methods that parents used in their practices but to also understand if such disciplinary method are to be seen as abusive or not and, if it is abusive, to what extent.

Children's views on child maltreatment

When it comes to children, this review found that the results from Chan et al.'s (2011) and Zhu and Tang's (2011) studies were similar to those of Feng et al. (2005), in which children were more inclined to think of physical abuse when asked about child maltreatment and to some extent emotional abuse, but less so for sexual abuse and neglect. While it was found that children may not have a homogenous view on child maltreatment, interestingly, Chan et al. (2011) found that (as with adults), children relied on a set of considerations in deciding whether a parental act is considered abusive or not. Such consideration includes the intention of the parents and if the act caused any physical harm or injury. Nevertheless, both of these studies found that children as a group, regardless of whether they were victims of child maltreatment or had no history of maltreatment experiences, perceived child maltreatment based on two significant dimensions – the intention and severity of the abuse or injury.

Intention of the abuse. In the two qualitative studies that focused on children, it was found that children often make internal attributions, seeing physical abuse as a result of their own faults or mistakes. As such, children can view physical violence (e.g., beating) as reasonable and within their parents' right to punish them – acts of physical aggression were seen as well intentioned and a form of a parental expression of love and concern. Children who perceived that parents ignored their mistakes were assumed to not care for their child. These were illustrated by two extracts below:

It was reasonable that my father beat me so hard, as I was absent from school for a whole day without teachers' and parents' permission, and I talked back to dad. I even lied to him and when asked me the reasons for my absence. Therefore, when my father spanked me severely and even made me bleed, I realised that it was my fault for irritating him. I did not hate him at all.

(Zhu & Tang, 2011, page 580)

I don't think it [vignette of a physical abuse] is child abuse. Parents scolded and beat their kids because they cared about them. In fact, Mom beat him because he had time and again ignored her words. I don't think this is a child abuse.

(Chan et al., 2011, page 167)

However, when it comes to distinguishing between physical abuse and physical punishment among children, neither of these studies could discern what is considered (or to what extent) physical punishment becomes physical abuse. Instead, Zhu and Tang (2011) suggest that physical punishments that were more likely to cause injuries, such as bruises, scars, swelling or bleeding, were much harder to accept and could be seen as a form of maltreatment by children. This was illustrated in their study:

I had never been punished so badly before – every kick and every hit was rather forceful, which hurt my heart; I could not believe that my beloved father would treat me so cruelly. (Zhu & Tang, 2011; page 581)

Severity. Children, like most adults, have been found to focus on the severity of the abuse and the extent of harm on a child. This focus could be seen from hypothetical situations of child neglect and sexual abuse from the following excerpts:

No, it is not a case of child neglect. I think the parents (in the vignette) just went out to work. They did not cause any physical and psychological harm to them. But I think the parents are not right. Their children lack sense of security.

(Chan et al., 2011, page 167)

No, it [vignette of a sexual abuse] isn't child abuse. It is because Mr Wong has not caused her any injury.

(Chan et al., 2011, page 168)

I don't consider it as child abuse, because apart from watching the movie with Siu-Lee, Mr. Wong did not do anything to her. He did not scold at her, or beat her. But Siu-Lee is in a very vulnerable situation, because there is no one in the family except the two of them. Mr Wong can sexually attack Siu-Lee

(Chan et al., 2011, page 168)

2. What are the Asian cultural and familial values that impact the definition and identification of child maltreatment among Asians?

Apart from the similarities and differences on how child maltreatment is defined and identified among Asians, the studies in this review have also suggested that Asian culture and familial values may also complicate the understanding of what is and is not child maltreatment among Asians.

Social desirability. In two studies included in this review (i.e., Elliott et al., 1997; Maiter et al., 2004), it was suggested that participants' attempts to provide socially desirable responses may have minimised our understanding of child maltreatment among Asians. For instance, in Elliot et al.'s (1997) study, participants rated most hypothetical abusive actions such as "having sex with a child", "not protecting a child from sexual advances" and "burning a child with cigarettes" as "never acceptable" higher than "abuse". Conversely, this was also true when certain hypothetical abusive scenarios were rated as "not abuse" more as opposed to "always acceptable". The authors suggested that the term "abuse" may have different and negative connotations to it in comparison to "never acceptable". Similarly, Maiter et al. (2004) suggested that Asian participants may have felt compelled to provide

responses that were more "socially appropriate" or socially-sanctioned parenting practices, which could have biased the findings.

Shame and fear of 'losing face'. As most of these studies were based on self-report, it is possible that responses given by participants were those to avoid shame and to 'lose face' and not social desirability. Social desirability is usually associated to giving a positive image or a good impression of the individual, whereas shame and fear of losing face may not necessarily mean the same, as these constructs may be associated with cultural beliefs and values towards family. Zhu and Tang (2011) add that with the lack of definition of child maltreatment, such as those like physical abuse, and the influence of filial piety, shame and fear of 'losing face', most Asians, especially children, could not fully understand the wrongfulness and inappropriateness of abuse perpetrated by parents, and thus attributed such abusive incidents to their own faults. As such, to protect family reputation, participants would tend to show concerns for protecting family privacy. This could be seen in the following excerpts:

> *…That was my family's business. My parents have the right to discipline me. I do not think that outsiders should know these things*
>
> (Zhu & Tang, 2011; page 583)

> *I won't [disclose]. People nowadays like to gossip a lot. If you disclose it to one person, he would spread it to ten, and ten would spread it to a hundred [Chinese proverb]…Therefore, I won't let other people know about it.*
>
> (Chan et al., 2011; page 168)

Parental authority and filial piety. Apart from social desirability, this review also found that parental authority and filial piety seem to influence Asians' perceptions on what constitutes child maltreatment. Some studies, such as Chan et al. (2011), Feng et al. (2005)

and Zhu and Tang (2011), suggested that traditional Confucius teaching may strongly affect the general attitudes on what is considered child rearing compared to child abuse. According to such teachings, parents are usually seen as authoritative figures that have rights over children and expect unquestioning obedience from them. Similarly, Asian children are also ingrained with the expectations to be obedient and to follow their parents' instructions and to meet their parents' expectations of them without questioning (Hahm & Guterman, 2001). A failure of children to comply with such cultural expectations and standards is usually understood as "impious" and seen as deserving of punishment from parents. As a result, the concept of child maltreatment maybe blurred by the perception of parental authority and filial piety, such that the point or limit at which parents move beyond acceptable parenting 'rights' to committing a crime and being abusive remained unclear from the studies. These were clearly illustrated by some of these excerpts:

> *It is hard to define child abuse. In Chinese culture, parents have the right to discipline their children. But there is a limit; you can't beat to spleen rupture or some organ damage. It is far beyond acceptable*
>
> (Feng et al., 2005; page 145)

> *Actually, discipline is one way to show parental love in traditional Chinese culture. Parents sometimes don't even know they hurt their children in their criticising words*.
>
> (Feng et al., 2005; page 145)

Parental rights over children. In addition to parental authority and filial piety, Feng et al. (2005) showed that professionals have also argued a difficulty in defining and identifying child maltreatment due to their 'culture' that assumes parental rights over children and subsequently sees children as their property. This could be seen from some of the excerpts below:

People in this culture consider children as parents' property. Parents have the right to do whatever they want to do. It is our culture that makes it hard to do anything about it even with the existing law.

(Feng et al., 2005; page 145)

The father was yelling and acting out in the ER. He said, "She is my daughter, so I can take her home. And whatever [the lab exams for STDs] belong to me". We couldn't stop him.

(Feng et al., 2005; page 146)

Discussion

This review aimed to explore how child maltreatment was defined and identified among Asians, and which aspects of culture and familial values influence perceptions of maltreatment and attitudes towards potentially abusive behaviours. Although there is a growing body of Asian studies that focus on child maltreatment in terms of prevalence, outcomes etc (e.g., Fang, Fry, Brown, et al., 2015; Fang, Fry, Ji, et al., 2015; Fry, 2012; Fry et al., 2012; Ji & Finkelhor, 2015; Ji, Finkelhor, & Dunne, 2013; Tanaka, Suzuki, Aoyama, Takaoka, & MacMillan, 2017), this review found that there are very few studies that focused on *how* child maltreatment is being defined and identified. The relevance of knowing this is that how child maltreatment is understood or perceived can influence child protection processes, as well as in research (such as prevalence rates). Across different populations, in particular professionals, parents, children and the general public, there is a consistent and clear finding from the current review of the literature that when it comes to child maltreatment in Asia, the majority of studies show that actions that are either sexual in nature or sexually-motivated are considered as unequivocal forms of sexual abuse. In regards to other forms of maltreatment, physical abuse seems to be the next most consistently recognised and viewed form of child maltreatment in comparison to emotional or

psychological abuse and neglect. However, although Asians may recognise physical and emotional abuse, there is still ambiguity on what parenting behaviours may be considered abusive. This may suggest that there is a need to consider what may be considered as acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices, as well as to distinguish and to determine the threshold of what may be considered as dysfunctional parenting and maltreatment. Furthermore in trying to understand such perceptions, this review has also highlighted respondents' views on the importance of understanding the perceived intention of the abuser, severity of the abuse, as well as the nature of the abuse, all of which could also influence definitions and identification of maltreatment.

In terms of Asian cultures and familial values, there are some cultural practices that were found to be associated with the definition and identification of child maltreatment which may influence the understanding of child maltreatment and attitudes towards abuse among professionals, parents and victims. For example, in this review, it was found that cultural beliefs and practices such as parental authority and rights towards their children, filial piety, avoidance of shame and 'losing face', might bear importance within those Asian societies and may be seen as cultural-valid practices that were commonly practice in those societies. However, although these findings may help to understand cultural factors related to parenting and child maltreatment, there is still a need for further research to explore how much such cultural practices, beliefs and values are weighted in influencing what may be considered as dysfunctional parenting from those that may be considered as maltreatment, especially from professionals, parents and victims of child maltreatment. This is particularly important, given that their perception may help to provide different implication for practice (see Chapter 8 for further discussion).

Limitations of the reviewed studies

A number of limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of the studies included in this review. Although generally the quality of the included studies was good, there were a number of inherent types of bias present, in particular selection and measurement bias. A large number of studies utilised vignette-based designs in assessing attitudes to and perceptions of child maltreatment. While vignette-based studies have recognised value for the study of attitudes (e.g., Alexander & Becker, 1978; Garrett, 1982; Jackson & Nuttall, 1993), the vignettes in the current studies typically focused on the severity of abuse in hypothetical situations and less on the nature of the abuse, intention and frequency of abuse. A further limitation is that the studies often failed to detail how the respective vignettes were created or adapted, and their suitability (in terms of reliability and validity) for the populations being studied (and the degree to which they addressed and incorporated cultural components) was not always clear.

In regards to selection bias, some of the studies that were included in this review used general public members as their sample, in which it is difficult to tell if the results of their study are impacted by other factors such as their profession. Other studies that focused on professionals alone, seem to have differing perceptions on child maltreatment, when compared to children, parents and within different professions.

Nonetheless, although this review has attempted to make the search strategy comprehensive, including attempts to contact authors of studies that have unclear information for clarification in regards to inclusion criteria, this review is still subjected to publication bias, as most studies with positive results were likely to be published, apart from the overall quality and the findings of the included studies, that may differ.

Additionally, although the literature search was restricted to dates between 1989 and 2015, the studies that were included in this review could also be affected by how child

maltreatment research is being conducted to date. In particular, the robustness of research design and methodological rigour as well, as different ways of data analysis that may affect the quality and the findings of the studies. As such, given that the quality assessments were developed a priori of the included studies in this review, the methodological quality may provide different meanings to the independent reviewer and the author, in which subsequently may criticised the assessments validity. Apart from this, given that this review focused on Asian studies on child maltreatment, it is possible that other published or unpublished Asian-related languages were available, although backward and forward searching was done. Give that one of the inclusion criteria is to include only published studies in English language, this may create a bias in providing a holistic picture of this review.

Conclusions and recommendations

Although the concept of child maltreatment is complex, this review is the first to systematically assess and summarise the impact of definitional and identification issues among Asians and as well as the impact of Asian culture and familial values have in studying the perception of child maltreatment. Although there is still a gap in how we understand child maltreatment in Asia, there is a growing body of evidence that indicates the need for a culturally-sensitive definition of child maltreatment, considering intention, frequency, severity and the type of the abuse, as well as the implications of culture and familial values. Additionally, as most of the included studies were from East Asia, which typically are mono-cultural countries, there is still a need to explore how child maltreatment is being perceived by professionals, parents and victims in relation to parenting practices and cultural influences from multicultural countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. Additionally, such explorative study would also benefit from studying within and between cultural boundaries to understand the nuances of culture that influences the perception of child maltreatment.

Chapter 4: Malaysian Professionals Perspective on the Role of Culture in Defining and Identifying Child Maltreatment

Chapter rationale

Following from the aims of the thesis outlined in Chapter 1 – to explore how child maltreatment is perceived in relation to cultural influences and parenting practices, and the need to explore how child maltreatment is perceived by Malaysian professionals (Chapter 3), Chapter 4 aims to explore how Malaysian professionals perceive child maltreatment in relation to their cultural beliefs, values and parenting practices, using thematic analysis. This study is of importance as it may provide an understanding of how professionals' beliefs and practices could influence their perceptions and, subsequently, how they address child maltreatment.

Abstract

To prevent child maltreatment, professionals need to be able to define and identify child maltreatment and to discern abusive from non-abusive behaviours. Child maltreatment can be influenced by parenting practices, parenting experiences, cultural beliefs and values that may lead to different perceptions and effects of maltreatment. However, to date, relatively little is known about the influence of Asian cultures, in particular those that are multi-cultural such as Malaysia. Therefore, the aim of this study was to understand how Malaysian professionals perceived child maltreatment in relation to parenting practices and the influences of culture. Twenty Malaysian professionals (i.e., doctors, social workers, psychologists, psychotherapist, lecturers, team manager and child right activist) were recruited using snowballing and purposive sampling. Interview questions related to how child maltreatment (overall and by type) is defined and how cultural beliefs and values influence/impact the investigation and identification of child maltreatment among Malaysian professionals. Using Thematic Analysis, four themes were found: (1) textbook answers/recognised definitions; (2) having realistic working definitions; (3) cultural influences on parenting attitudes; and (4) professional-personal dissonance. The results suggest that Malaysian professionals tend to perceive, define and interpret child maltreatment based on recognised definitions. However, as child maltreatment is also being perceived as a grey area, professionals tend to distinguish abusive from non-abusive parenting based on factors such as motivation or intention of the parent, and the frequency, severity and consequences of the behaviour. Nonetheless, the identification of child maltreatment could also be problematic as professionals' struggle with society's perceived norm on parenting and their own professional-personal values.

Introduction

In child protection, it is important that a child's safety is maximised, as well as the child's welfare, and that healthy child development is promoted. To achieve this, professionals must be able to discern abusive from non-abusive parenting behaviours (Munro, 2008) and create a positive working relationship with parents suspected of child maltreatment. In deciding which children are at risk of child maltreatment, decision making processes start from how child maltreatment is understood and defined. Unfortunately, there is no universal definition on child maltreatment that has been agreed by all professionals and members of the public (Munro et al., 2014) and there are limited studies that have explored professionals' attitudes and perceptions towards child maltreatment in relation to culture, especially in developing and multicultural countries such as Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims to explore Malaysian professionals' beliefs, values, attitudes and perception towards child maltreatment in relation to parenting practices and to consider how culture influences their perception.

Why focus on professionals' perception regarding child maltreatment?

One of the factors that influence how child maltreatment is being perceived is an individual's personal beliefs of what is considered unacceptable or dangerous parenting practices, and the relative rights and values that society puts on adults and children, as well as on males and females specifically. Therefore, the beliefs people hold, influenced by a large number of factors internal and external to individuals, can considerably change what one considers to be abusive and/or neglectful parenting, both over time and between cultures (Munro, 2008; Nadan, Spilsbury, & Korbin, 2015). Thus, it has been argued that child maltreatment should be recognised as a "socially defined construct" (Corby, Shemmings, & Wilkins, 2012, p. 83). For example, in the discourse of female genital mutilation and child marriages, whereby these practices have often been defended as a cultural tradition or a

necessary rite of passage to adulthood (Gangoli et al., 2009; Liang et al., 2016), these practices have helped us to examine our own cultural perception towards these 'traditions' and determine their acceptability. These issues also do not necessarily bring any medical or developmental benefits to the child, but instead physically and mentally harm the child and violate their rights as children.

However, as professionals are part of those societies and may be influenced by those cultures (i.e., expected outcomes and perceived norms regarding abusive parenting practices; Ajzen, 2005), it is worth understanding their views on child maltreatment. For example, professionals who expect more positive outcomes and fewer negative outcomes from abusive parenting, such as physical or corporal punishment, tend to be more supportive of such parenting practices (Gagné, Tourigny, Joly, & Pouliot-Lapointe, 2007; Taylor, Hamvas, Rice, Newman, & DeJong, 2011). This may subsequently impact the services that they provide, and potentially could lead to differing standards of child protection.

Moreover, it is also important to consider professionals' perception given that parents tend to trust and seek professionals' advice, support and (sometimes) approval about parenting. For example, in a qualitative study that was conducted among black mothers, it was found that these parents were more likely to approve corporal punishment as part of their practices when they perceived professionals whom they trust for advice were supportive of the use of corporal punishment (Taylor, Hamvas, & Paris, 2011). Additionally, parents also tended to seek advice from different professionals such as medical professional (predominantly paediatricians) for parenting advice, and other professionals for mental health concerns (e.g., psychologists, social workers; Taylor, Moeller, Hamvas, & Rice, 2013; Walsh, 2002).

However, as professionals may have different views on what is considered appropriate parenting practices, they may also provide differing advice to parents. For

example a study conducted by Hornor et al. (2015) on corporal punishment in the USA with 875 medical professionals, comprised mostly of nurses, found that 82% thought spanking was sometimes acceptable, 40% felt it was a necessary disciplinary technique, 77% thought it can be abusive, and 53% felt that nonphysical discipline is more effective. The study also added that these responses were dependent on how frequently these professionals were themselves spanked (or had never been spanked) as a child (i.e., the more frequently spanked, the more likely participants felt spanking is sometimes necessary). In contrast, in a recent study that was conducted in France (a country that prohibits all forms of corporal punishment) with medical professionals using case vignettes, it was found that professionals have a higher tolerance and are 2.8 times more likely than parents to accept corporal punishment (Bailhache, Alioum, & Salmi, 2017).

Therefore, professionals can have varied opinions – despite clear definitions of child maltreatment in most countries. In addition, since professionals may have substantial influence on parents and can play a vital role in changing sociocultural norms at a population-level regarding parenting practices (or child rearing practices) that could be seen as child maltreatment, it is important to understand how factors such as professionals' attitudes, beliefs and culture interplay in influencing their perception towards parenting practices and child maltreatment (Taylor, Fleckman, & Lee, 2016). This is especially pertinent perhaps with those from Asian countries (e.g., Malaysia, Singapore) that still practice parenting techniques that are seen by some as abusive, such as corporal punishment (Ngiam & Tung, 2016).

In addition, professionals may also feel the pressure to think and act in the same way as their perception of colleagues' thinking (Taylor, Fleckman, & Lee, 2016). For example, in a study conducted by Gershoff et al. (2016), it was found that although 58% of medical staff thought spanking was an inappropriate disciplinary technique, only 39% perceived that their

colleagues thought the same way. Similarly in a study conducted by Taylor, Fleckman and Lee (2016) with members of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), it was found that these members perceived that their colleagues tend to endorse corporal punishment ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 1.0$) more frequently than they themselves did ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 1.0$; $t(568) = -10.7$, $p < 0.0001$). As such, differences in perception among professionals may lead professionals to behave differently (i.e., offering different advice to parents about discipline strategies) if they perceived that their views were not in line with the perceived norm among professionals. This could also be potentially due to many other factors, such as professionals not getting appropriate training on advising parents about discipline strategies (i.e., professional socialisation) or other forms of perceived barriers such as cultural concerns (Sege, Hatmaker-Flanigan, De Vos, Levin-Goodman, & Spivak, 2006).

How does professional socialisation influence the perception of child maltreatment?

Studies have shown that professional socialisation (defined as the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, and values through the process of respective professional education) has an influence on professionals' understanding of and competency in dealing with cases of alleged child maltreatment (Ashton, 2010). While the purpose of professional socialisation is to prepare competent and effective professionals in making appropriate judgments, many studies have shown that professionals can struggle with personal-professional values conflicts (Ashton, 2010; Chan, Elliott, Chow, & Thomas, 2002). Value conflicts may hinder professionals' ability to set personal preferences aside and/or interfere with the willingness to adopt professional values in accomplishing work with clients (Feng, Jezewski, & Hsu, 2005). These conflicts may subsequently affect professionals' views on what is considered abusive or not, and influence their decision threshold as to when and whether to intervene (Gough et al., 2002).

As professionals dealing with child abuse and neglect are also members of their sociocultural environment, they bring their personal and cultural beliefs to their work. As such, some professionals may adopt a culturally-normative model (i.e., dominant culture, ethnic group) in assessing 'normal' and 'dysfunctional' families, which may then lead to different reporting strategies, disparate decisions about placement or removal of the child from their home and potentially overlooking genuine child maltreatment cases (Chan et al., 2002). That is, professionals may adopt, whether explicitly or implicitly, the dominant cultural narrative and practices, and consequently be unable to take an objective view of certain parenting practices – and this may in turn have negative impacts on the children under their care. For example, in a study that was conducted with child protection team professionals on decision making about physical abuse, it was found that non-White professionals (i.e., Black/African American and Others) were less likely to substantiate allegations with multiple inflicted injuries (that used similar visual and written evidence on three case vignettes) as physical abuse compared to White professionals (Jent et al., 2011). The authors argued that, although the USA has safeguarding laws for children, corporal punishment or physical punishment is still allow to be practiced, which may suggest that the decision making process from these professionals may also be partly influenced by different cultural values and beliefs about children.

Child protection professionals should generally have a good fit between personal-professional values that assimilate their professional ideals, attitudes, knowledge and skills (Spano & Koenig, 2007). However, research on social work education has shown that professional socialisation is not uniform; it does not produce a homogeneous group of practitioners with the same attitudes and values towards child maltreatment in relation to parenting practices (e.g., Barretti, 2003; Costello, 2004). This then raises questions such as, what happens when there are conflicts between personal (which usually are also tightly

related to cultural beliefs) and professional values on child maltreatment, and do professionals disregard one system over the other, or is a compromise made (i.e., distinguishing abusive parenting from those that are not)?

Impact of culture beliefs and values on the perception of child maltreatment

In addition to professional socialisation, cultural beliefs and values of a society - defined as set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and standards of behaviour that are passed from one generation to the next (Raman & Hodes, 2012) - may also influence professionals' personal perceptions of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices towards children, which in turn may affect how children are identified and reported as being in need or have safeguarding concerns. For instance, in a study that focused on how culture could interplay with professional socialisation in influencing professionals' perception of child maltreatment, Ashton (2010) surveyed 808 social workers and found that these professionals might also be influenced by their individual personal attitudes, opinions and beliefs, which might affect each stage of the decision making process on whether a case constituted child maltreatment. Using case vignettes (predominantly physical abuse incidents), it was found that these social workers (i.e., Asians, Black American, Black Caribbean, Hispanic and other non-White; M= 16.0 – 20.4) varied significantly in their personal approval of corporal punishment as an appropriate form of discipline more so than Whites (M = 12.4, SD = 6.8). However, in studying their perception on the seriousness of the different maltreatment cases, there is considerably a small difference among professionals (M = 49.1 – 50.1). These results would suggest that culture and professional socialisation may influence professionals' personal attitudes towards the different parental disciplinary strategies and their perception on what constitutes child maltreatment. Ashton (2010) argued that as families such as black Americans, historically, would use harsh physical discipline on their children as a protective mechanism from the harsh reality of a White dominated society

and street dangers, and professionals who may have such views may have developed ethnocentric attitudes and may have perceived the case vignettes as less severe. As such, this study suggests that professionals' may have personal struggles between their private self (i.e., attitudes and beliefs) and their public professional self (i.e., professional socialisation; Ashton, 2001; Portwood, 1999; Whitney, Tajima, Herrenkohl, & Huang, 2006) in distinguishing abusive parenting from those that are not.

Corporal punishment is still widely practiced among Asians (Dunne et al., 2008; Feng, Chen, Wilk, Yang, & Fetzer, 2009), whereby countries such as Malaysia and Singapore have physical discipline as a prevalent and acceptable form of control and punishment of children (Choo, Dunne, Marret, Fleming, & Wong, 2011). In these countries, it is possible that such practices could be seen as a cultural norm, which may influence professionals' perception. Thus, despite the laws that safeguard children, the threshold as to what constitutes harsh discipline or violence as perceived by professionals and parents may differ from these law, and may lead to a higher level of tolerance for these harsh disciplinary strategies among parents and other adults, including professionals who work with children (Dunne et al., 2008). Therefore, the extent to which Malaysian professionals are exposed to such challenges needs to be explored in Malaysia and to be compared with other Malaysian professionals who are living in other Western based countries such as the UK, as these professionals may also be influenced by their sociocultural environment and may make different decisions in child protection whilst assessing maltreatment risk and distinguishing abusive from non-abusive parenting (see Benbenishty et al., 2015).

Furthermore, although perceptions on child maltreatment may differ among different professionals as aforementioned, it is also noteworthy that every country's child protection system depends fundamentally on multidisciplinary team and professionals' awareness (especially social workers, psychologist, doctors, and lawyers) on child maltreatment, and the

attitudes they have when intervening with children who have been abused or are at risk of maltreatment (Segal & Iwai, 2004; Shang & Katz, 2015). However, given that there is a lack of literature from Malaysia that explores how Malaysian professionals hold different perceptions of child maltreatment – there is a need to explore their perception and to explore if there are any similarities and differences and what they may be.

The Malaysian Context

Malaysia is an upper middle income country located in Southeast Asia. It is comprised of Malays (51.1%), Chinese (22.6%), Indians (6.7%), other indigenous groups (11.7%) and others (8.9%). Like many countries, Malaysia has ratified the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and has introduced the Malaysian Child Act 2016 to provide adequate care and protection for children from violence (Choo, Walsh, Marret, Chinna, & Tey, 2013). Although this Act includes mandatory reporting from most professionals (e.g., child minders, medical doctors; Choo et al., 2013), only 4982 cases (10.6% increase from 2015) were considered as children who are in need of care and protection in 2016 (Department of Social Welfare Malaysia, 2017). Due to Malaysia's lack of prevalence data (Cheah & Choo, 2016), and considering variability in estimates, research indicates that 4-16% of children per year experience physical abuse, 10% experience psychological abuse, 1- 15% are neglected and 10- 25% are exposed to domestic violence directed at a parent (Gilbert et al., 2009). With a population of approximately two million children in Malaysia secondary schools alone (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010), the government figures reported suggest a large gap between actual prevalence and official reported incidences.

This disparity could partly stem from professionals failing to recognise, report, or to respond to child abuse or neglect (i.e., misinterpreting laws concerning children's safety or fear of negative consequences from reporting; Alvarez, Kenny, Donohue, & Carpin, 2004;

Choo et al., 2013). Furthermore, as Malaysia has different historical and socio-political influences (e.g., multicultural, former British colony, legal pluralism that included civil and sharia law), unlike other Asian countries such as China (e.g., mono-cultural, communist country and former one child policy), it is possible that such influences could also lead to a different cultural perception as to what constitutes child maltreatment among Malaysian professionals.

Therefore, given the importance of studying professionals' perception on child maltreatment, and considering how professional socialisation may influence the perceptions of parenting practice and child maltreatment, as well as the role of culture in influencing personal-professional attitudes, the following research questions were explored:

1. How do Malaysian professionals define child maltreatment?
2. How do Malaysian professionals identify and distinguish the different forms of child maltreatment?
3. How do cultural beliefs and values influence and impact Malaysian professionals' investigations and identification of child maltreatment?

Method

Participants

A total of 20 participants (18 women) volunteered to participate in a face-to-face semi-structured interview. Given that this is an exploratory study and Malaysia has limited professionals who work directly in the child protection system, this study did not seek out professionals within a specific age range. In this study, participants were aged between 28-70 years old (M=42.85; SD=12.72). Although, there is a broad age range in this study, some studies have suggested there is no relationship with professionals' age and how they perceived "light" physical punishment, severe and extreme forms of abuse (e.g., Segal & Iwai, 2004). Furthermore, although this study has also considered to include equal number of

different Malaysian ethnicities in this study, this was not also not fruitful, given the limited number of Malaysian professionals (of different professions) who work directly in child protection system both in Malaysia and in the UK.

In terms of country of recruitment, although this study aimed for an equal number of participants from Malaysia and in the UK, it proved difficult to identify Malaysian professionals from the UK who work in the area of child protection. Hence, this study recruited 17 participants who were living and working in Malaysia (i.e., Kuala Lumpur and Selangor) for between 24-65years (M=42.35), but only three Malaysians who were residents in the United Kingdom (i.e., Birmingham and London) and have lived there for between 8-30 years (M=16). All participants had worked in the area of child maltreatment for between 4 to 42 years (M=13.3) and worked as: doctors (2 participants), lecturers (3), team manager (1), social workers (7), clinical psychologists (4), counsellor (1), psychotherapist (1) or child right activist (1). A detailed summary of the key demographic information is shown in Table 4.0.

Table 4.0
Summary of professionals' demographic information

Pseudonym [a]	Age (range = 28-70)	Sex	Ethnicity	Country	No. of years living in the country	Occupation	No. of years' experience
Sarah (P1)	29	Female	Chinese	UK	8	Healthcare	8
Tammy (P2)	32	Female	Chinese	UK	10	Social work	7
Ginny (P3)	30	Female	Chinese-English mixed	UK	30	Social work	5
Allan (P4)	48	Male	Chinese	Malaysia	48	Education	22
Kiara (P5)	37	Female	Indian	Malaysia	32	Social work	18
Chin (P6)	56	Female	Chinese	Malaysia	56	Healthcare	30
Chan (P7)	65	Male	Chinese	Malaysia	65	Social work	5
Nina (P8)	70	Female	Indian	Malaysia	65	Social work	42
Siti (P9)	33	Female	Malay	Malaysia	33	Social work	6
Priya (P10)	42	Female	Indian	Malaysia	37	Therapist	11
Zara (P11)	40	Female	Malay	Malaysia	40	Education	12
Aishah (P12)	30	Female	Malay	Malaysia	25	Psychology	5
Tanya (P13)	29	Female	Indian	Malaysia	29	Psychology	8
Myra (P14)	54	Female	Indian	Malaysia	54	Psychology	20
Anita (P15)	55	Female	Indian	Malaysia	55	Therapist	12
Aida (P16)	34	Female	Malay	Malaysia	29	Psychology	5
Mali (P17)	48	Female	Indian	Malaysia	48	Social work	16
Tini (P18)	51	Female	Malay	Malaysia	40	Social work	20
Kate (P19)	28	Female	Chinese	Malaysia	24	Education	4
Eva (P20)	46	Female	Chinese	Malaysia	40	Social work	10

[a] The numbers in bracket refer to participant number (e.g., Participant 1 is P1)

Recruitment

Participants were recruited using purposive and snowballing sampling; participants who were in Malaysia were primarily recruited in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor from universities, hospitals and non-governmental organisations (NGO). For Malaysians living in the UK, a similar sampling method was used and they were recruited from universities, hospitals and charitable organisations in Birmingham and London. In these organisations, information about this study was given by the first researcher and these organisations passed down the information to all potential participants. Only interested participants were referred by their respective organisation (i.e., universities, hospitals, NGOs and charities) by providing their names and contact details of the researcher. Some participants were also recruited through the professional networks to the first author. All of the participants were then contacted via email or by phone to ask if they were interested in participating in this study. Only those who expressed an interest in participating were sent further information along with the study inclusion criteria: 1) professionals either previously or currently working in the area related to child maltreatment; 2) working (or have worked) in the area of child maltreatment for at least one year; and 3) for Malaysians who are living in the UK only, they must have lived in the UK for a minimum of three years. This minimum criterion was set arbitrarily given that higher education in UK takes at least 3 years to complete. It is at this assumption, that a Malaysian who is living in the UK could have assimilated (or at least familiar) with the culture and lifestyle in the UK.

Procedure

All interviews were conducted either in participants' respective organisations (across both countries) or at a place of their choosing. Prior to interview, participants were required to provide their written consent and confirm they understood the study's aim, their rights as a

participant, and how their data would be processed and stored. Interviews were audio-recorded using a Dictaphone and lasted between 90-120 minutes.

Each participant was interviewed using an interview schedule (see Appendix F) comprised of eight open-ended questions. The open-ended questions and semi-structured interview were used flexibly, being omitted, adapted or elaborated upon according to the demands of the individual interviews and responses given. In addition, the semi-structured interview allowed participants to raise other issues that were relevant to them, while ensuring that the main areas of interest were adequately explored for each participant (Willig, 2008). The first four questions in the interview schedule asked participants to reflect on child rearing practices in Malaysia, including what influences parenting practices, how parental relationships with others affect parenting styles or practices, and how culture could also influence parenting practices.

Following the first four questions, participants were then presented with five different vignettes (see Appendix G) that were used to facilitate the discussion further. The written case vignettes were adapted from Chan, Lam and Shae (2011; see an example in Table 4.1 below) and covered the four basic types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. To avoid priming participants to give potentially socially desirable responses in relation to child maltreatment, the vignettes were only presented after participants had been asked about child rearing practices and cultural influences.

Table 4.1
Example of an adapted vignette from Chan, Lam and Shae (2011) on possible physical abuse (Vignette 1)

	Physical abuse
Vignette 1 (use in the current study)	Andrew loves to play video games and he has been playing for the whole day. Andrew has to go to school the next day but he has not finished any of his homework. His mother told him to stop playing and start doing his homework immediately. Though Andrew's mother had repeatedly reminded him to do his homework, Andrew ignore his mother's request and continue playing his games. His mother could not tolerate his behaviour anymore and abruptly turned off his video game. Andrew argued with his mother. In the heat of their argument, Andrew's mother got so angry that she fetched a cane and beat Andrew's hands and legs multiple times. Bruise marks on Andrew's hand and legs could be seen after the beatings.
Chan, Lam & Shae (2011)'s original vignette	Tai-hung has played the computer game for the whole day. Since Tai-hung had not finished his homework, Mum told him to stop playing the computer game and start doing the homework immediately. Though Mum had repeatedly reminded him to do his homework, Tai-hung just played lip service to her. Mum could not stand his behaviour anymore and abruptly turned off the computer. Tai-hung argued with Mum. In the heat of their quarrel, Mum got so angry that she fetched a cane and beat up Tai-hung. The beatings left many bruise marks on Tai-hung's legs and hands.

Upon reading each of the vignettes, participants were asked to describe their perception of the presented vignettes (i.e., what do they think the vignettes are about), their understanding of child maltreatment, the different types of maltreatment, how they define, identify and distinguish each one, as well as to explore how their culture influenced their perception. The same sequence of questions was presented after each vignette for exploration and discussion. The interviews ended by asking participants if they were aware of other types of child maltreatment that were not discussed in the interview.

Ethics

The University of Birmingham STEM Ethical Committee (Reference: ERN_14-0514) approved the study. All personal information obtained was anonymised, including any associated names that were mentioned during the interview, names of places and any other identifying features. All pre-anonymised transcripts and audio recordings were destroyed.

Participants were not compensated nor did they receive financial reimbursement for their inclusion in the study.

Data analysis

At the end of each interview, the data were transcribed verbatim. Once interviews have been transcribed, participants were provided the opportunity to add, delete or change any part of the interview. All participants were given a month (as stated in the research information and consent form) to respond to the transcript. If there are no responses, the researcher assumed that participants provided their consent to proceed with the data.

The first author listened to each recording repeatedly to ensure accuracy in the transcription and to assist in familiarisation with the data. All transcripts were analysed using NVivo 11 qualitative analysis software (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2015). Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data as this was deemed to be the most appropriate analytic method to provide a rich analysis to map the overall data and to allow key themes to be identified purely from the content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, Thematic Analysis also provides the researcher with flexibility without needing to be grounded within any one theoretical perspective and could be independent from any specific theory. However, given the exploratory nature of this research, this analysis followed closely Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines and Burr's (2003) social constructionist framework. In addition to that, this study used an inductive or a bottom-up approach, which is appropriate given the little amount of existing research among Malaysian professionals in relation to child maltreatment (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For each transcript, detailed reflexive notes were written on each one. Using NVivo 11, initial coding was performed on each transcript, with text nodes allocated to each line (i.e., every line of the data was coded). Following this, each transcript was re-coded to capture nodes created by subsequent interviews. Concurrently, at this stage, member

checking was also used to establish reasonable inter-rater reliability, and codes were reviewed by all the authors and discussed. While most of the codes that were identified by all the authors were similar, codes that were not similar were discussed and explored until agreement was reached.

After the reliable identification of initial nodes, the analysis continued to establish themes that linked the nodes. Nodes that were similar or had a shared meaning were amalgamated into one node; nodes that were related to each other were combined to create themes using tree nodes. Using data from all interviews, tree nodes gradually developed into connecting inter-related themes that formed broad patterns for between and within the data, and these codes were subsequently developed into four themes. Several thematic maps (see an example in Appendix N) were used to assist and to assess the distinctiveness of these interrelated themes. The analysis was an on-going iterative process that moved backwards and forwards between the data and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the final stages, the superordinate categories were reviewed by the authors and the themes were outlined, defined, named and reviewed further to reflect the data. Finally, data extracts that were used have been edited to remove unnecessary detail to provide better readability and comprehension. Additionally, only pseudonyms were used alongside with the quotes, instead of mentioning the specific professional and where they are from, to minimise the risk of professionals being identified from those quotes.

Results

This paper focused on data from Malaysian professionals and explored how they defined, identified and distinguish the different types of child maltreatment, together with an examination of how culture influenced their perceptions. Using the inductive method of analysis, the participants described their perception of child maltreatment based on four main themes (Table 4.2). These four themes were explicated into eight subthemes that accounted

for nuances and details of participants' descriptions and the diversity of the descriptions within each main theme.

Table 4.2
Thematic categories of child maltreatment definition by Malaysian professionals

Themes	Subthemes
1) Textbook answers or recognised definitions	-
2) Realistic working definitions	1) Motivation/Intention of the parents 2) Frequency and persistence 3) Severity 4) Consequences of the parental act
3) Cultural influences on parental attitudes	1) Perceived social norm
4) Professional-personal dissonance	1) Professionals' personal challenges 2) Professional duties within the law 3) Balancing personal beliefs with training and legal definitions

Theme 1: 'Textbook answers' or recognised definitions

In response to interview questions exploring participants' conceptualisation of child maltreatment (e.g., how do you define child maltreatment? What is physical abuse?), Malaysian professionals talked about child maltreatment in many ways. In this study, regardless of profession, the data suggest that all Malaysian professionals have a tendency to define and identify child maltreatment based on their understanding and interpretation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Malaysian law or the UK law that protects children. While all participants were aware of the four basic types of child maltreatment (i.e., physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect), and could describe a range of abusive and neglectful parenting behaviours that constitute child maltreatment (see Table 4 for examples), physical abuse and emotional abuse were discussed

more frequently in comparison to sexual abuse and neglect. Only two professionals discussed other types of maltreatment, including baby farming and child trafficking.

Table 4.3
Behaviours described as abusive by Malaysian professionals based on type of maltreatment

Types of child maltreatment	Types of behaviour	Example of quotes
Physical abuse	Hitting (including using rod, cane, belt or any tools to hit), slapping, burning, smacking	*"Physical abuse is like people beating children or adult, another human being with using an object, umm or even like whatever that could scar physically, so like can be hot water; you pour hot water or use a cane, or pushing a person down the staircase, that's all"* (Kiara)
Emotional abuse	Instilling fear in the child, threatening the child, hurting child's self-esteem or affect child's psychological wellbeing	*"…the most common form of emotional abuse, I would say is shaming. Comparing the child to their friends, to their cousins, to the peers, for example parents tell the child why you so stupid? Abe could get straight As or 10As in SPM and you got only what? 5As? How could you only get 5As? Or why did you a B in Maths, it such a simple subject. Are you stupid? Are you that dumb?..."* (Kate)
Sexual abuse	Vaginal/anal sex, oral sex, molest, exposure to pornography, sexual grooming	*"…anybody who touches child inappropriately or they keep touching or they done anything that makes the child traumatised. And in a sexual way or physically, then you know, they are not allowed to do it…. That is physical. In terms of pornography, no one should show you their private parts, or seeing sex or look at this… And it's also not allowed because it's a violation against children. And children under 18 cannot give you permission because they don't know enough. So very clinical, academic, read textbook kind of thing"* (Tini)
Neglect	Physical neglect (i.e., lack of basic needs, lack of food, water or shelter) Emotional neglect (i.e., lack of love, parental affection and/or attention and sometimes seen as emotional abuse)	*"…neglect [is when] children do not have enough food to eat, parents do not know the child has enough food to eat. Neglect could also because parents are never home. The child might have enough food to eat or roof above their head, they are just emotionally not around at all, and that is also neglect"* (Anita)

Theme 2: 'Realistic' working definitions

However, child maltreatment can be a grey area occasionally associated with uncertainty (Chaiyachati, Asnes, Moles, Schaeffer, & Leventhal, 2015) and with differing parenting practices according to different societies. Accordingly, this study found that professionals need to have a realistic working definition to guide their practice. This 'working definition' could be seen from the interviews – although professionals made efforts to use the formal, legal definition of child maltreatment to guide their practice, the data analysis also found cultural nuances in which Malaysian professionals (both in Malaysia and in the UK) showed a tendency to hold their own working definitions that were agreeable with the legal definitions when defining and identifying the different types of abuses (primarily on physical, emotional and sexual abuse) and neglect (physical and emotional). These will be outlined below. Professionals' working definitions were categorised into four subthemes: 1) motivation/intention of the parents, 2) frequency, 3) severity, and 4) consequences.

Motivation/intention of the parents. Throughout all the interviews, professionals emphasised the need to find out the motivation and intention of the parental act when defining, identifying or distinguishing (potential) child maltreatment, and this was consistent across the different types of child maltreatment discussed. Most professionals stated that information would be obtained from the child and the parent(s) to understand the intention behind the parental act. For example, Nina said:

> "I would like to find out from the boy or talk to the mother… and if they explained that he (child) did not listen or did something wrong or whatever… just a whacking from a parents' point of view… to let him learn, I think that is OK"

However, when the parental act was associated with the intention to discipline the child or to serve a corrective measure for the child, professionals seemed to evaluate the motivation and intention of such parental act as parents' personal and/or cultural beliefs. Thus, in such

cases, parental behaviours may not necessarily be seen as abusive by professionals, rather these parental behaviours maybe normalised as bad parenting strategies. For example, Chan spoke about his experience of working with a parent:

> "Let me tell you, I beat my child too… (If the child) don't listen… I am beating you because you have done something wrong, whether it is because it is not doing your homework… of course I will beat" (Chan)

However, such harsh parental behaviours, such as beating a child, *would* be seen as abusive if the professionals perceived the action as a form of displacement of anger or stress towards the child. For example:

> "My dad hardly beats us because we are girls so he *sayang* (loves) us…but my mum, (if) she is …cooking…, (and if) you do something (naughty), she will take the lid and beat you up… If she got time to take the cane, she will take it… Or if my sisters did something wrong, she will ask me to get the cane and my sister (will) hide the cane…so if I don't take the cane and she finds it, she will beat me up also." (Myra)

Frequency and persistence. Professionals unanimously stated that the motivation or intention of the parents were insufficient criteria to determine if the parental behaviour was maltreatment as most 'abusive' behaviour could not be explicitly observed and needed to be inferred. Therefore, professionals relied on how frequently and persistently the abusive behaviour was inflicted on a child as this, for them, provided evidence of more persistent injury upon a child and this was demonstrated by one of the professionals, Eva, who said "…if the child has been hit consistently over a period of time. If slapping… uses force, so if you slapped a child consistently…it would be considered as physical abuse"

Some professionals also stated that some abused victims may provide 'excuses' or provide reasons to account for or explain away their injuries. Therefore, the frequency and

the persistence of the child getting injured would also enable a professional to help identify possible maltreatment. For example:

> "If the child consistently has bruises and all…and when you ask them they say they fell down from the stairs (and) you know consistently there are excuses, then we know there is something (that is) definitely wrong," (Kiara)

Severity. Alongside frequency and persistence, professionals also considered the severity of the abuse when defining and identifying child maltreatment. However, most of the professionals stated that certain behaviours would only be seen as maltreatment if the action was 'severe'. Kiara said:

> "Physical abuse is …, it is not physical abuse unless it is really hard and the child starts to have wounds. And sometimes it is not even wounds, it is like blue-black (bruise)… or like really hard and unreasonably." (Kiara)

Similarly, severity is also being used as guide for other forms of abuse like emotional abuse. For example:

> "…well it depends on what the mother, how the mother scolds... If the child perceives the mother scolding everybody the same way, I don't think the impact is as bad as this particular child is picked on…you know by saying "You are useless, you're always the one who bring bad luck" that one will have big impact but if the mother goes around and say, all you children are so lazy, never do anything… that's the …I think that's quite common" (Chin)

When professionals were asked about how severity could be defined, professionals provided examples of a range of behaviours, from less to most severe. For example:

> "…the least severe would be like a small blue black mark or bruise. The most severe would be like hot water burn or using kettle or hanger; a mother beat her kid with a hanger until the skin tore." (Kate)

Consequences of the parental act. Although most professionals relied heavily on their understanding and knowledge of motivation and intention of the parental act, frequency and persistence as well as the severity of parental behaviours in trying to define, identify and distinguish child maltreatment, they also said that these working definitions would only be helpful for certain forms of child maltreatment or acts of commission, such as physical abuse and physical neglect. For parental behaviours that could not be observed or acts of omission, professionals tended to rely on the observable consequences of child maltreatment, such as internalising behaviours of the child, such as extreme emotional disturbance (e.g., extremely quiet, depressed) or externalising behaviours (e.g., bullying) to determine child maltreatment. For example:

> "…the child could be extremely withdrawn… they internalised the problem and they become withdrawn. On the other hand, children (could also) show externalising behaviour where they become aggressive, verbally aggressive to people because they pick it up from home, what my mother is doing to me, what my father is doing it to me, and then they released it to their peers, to other people..." (Aida)

Theme 3: Cultural influences on parenting attitudes

This study was also interested in exploring cultural nuances that may impact professionals' understanding and identification of child maltreatment, specifically if cultural influences on parenting attitudes as seen or held by professionals, may impact their understanding of child maltreatment and how they distinguish abusive parenting practices from those that are not. The data seemed to suggest that professionals' understanding was also partly affected by cultural influences on parenting attitudes in Malaysia. These cultural shaping factors could be seen from the subtheme, perceived social norm that was identified.

Perceived social norm. Professionals living and working in Malaysia in particular mentioned a 'grey area' within child maltreatment, specifically physical abuse and physical

discipline (or corporal punishment) and this would often be mentioned alongside how they perceived the social norm in Malaysia. This uncertainty as to what is and what is not child maltreatment, subsequently, could have indirectly influenced their understanding of child maltreatment and affected their threshold in determining if a parental behaviour would be considered abusive and/or may implicitly endorse culturally-approved societal parenting practices and views on how to raise children. For example, as Malaysian parents still used corporal punishment in Malaysia and it is sometimes seen as acceptable and not abusive, Kiar said: "…in Malaysia it is considered OK to beat the child because the child is not listening…" and by Zara who said "…I can bet you, if you talk to 10 Malay parents, 8 out of 10 will say its ok to hit the children…"

In addition, some professionals also justified a reasoned or accepting attitude towards child maltreatment based on societal influences (e.g., family, friends, and media). For example, a professional quoted how friends could also influence their perception towards parenting practices and may seem to endorse the behaviour if it is not 'severe': "…you will see like my generation, there are some of my friends that still beat their children but it's not like until so severe" (Chan). In other times, some professionals have also mentioned the influence of media:

> "…...some parents, the India media have so much influence on children that some parents would follow whatever the media (do)... So if the media is very vulgar, the Indian movies and all that, they will be beating their child or do whatever they want to do the child… the parents will think that is a normal thing to do." (Tanya)

Apart from societal influences, all Malaysian professionals in this study (both living in the UK and Malaysia) stated the impact of family values in a collectivistic society like Malaysia that influence how child maltreatment is being perceived. For example, the professionals in this study stated that family values in Malaysia include filial piety and

respect for elders, in which parents have a role in educating and disciplining children to follow family and religious customs. Thus, parents would tend to use certain forms of physical and verbal chastisement as means to educate:

> "Because they were beaten by their parents as well. So it's like a way of disciplining children..." (Anita)
>
> "Really it depends on how serious or badly she (mother from the vignette) hits the child. Let me tell you, I beat my child too. You don't listen, I am telling you because you have done something wrong, whether it is because it is not doing your (home)work, of course I will beat. So we are all Christians, I am a Christian, I don't know about you, we are being taught that "spare the rod, spoils the child", you know, so of course you need to use the rod but of course how you beat the child, you don't simply beat on the face, beat until blood comes out and of course after you beat you have to explain why do you beat and things like that. And so I think it is the way that is carried out, (and) how the (child is being) beat(en)…" (Chan)

Apart from filial piety and respect, some professionals also stated that this perceived acceptance of harsh parenting could also be due to 'parental love' towards a child, for example: "That is how you show love. If I don't love you, I don't hit you because I don't care." (Kiara), while other professionals reasoned that it is because children are seen as parents' property: "…So for them they feel that, if it's their own children, they can beat their children" (Mali).

Theme 4: Professional-personal dissonance

Apart from cultural influences on parenting attitudes, professionals also stated that cultural nuances such as professional-personal dissonance could also be equally challenging and affected how professionals understand, identify and manage child maltreatment cases. This dissonance could be explicated in three subthemes: 1) Professionals' challenges; 2)

Professional duties within the law; and 3) Balancing personal beliefs with training and legal definition.

Professionals' personal challenges. The diverse challenges professionals faced in their work also impacted upon their understanding and identification of child maltreatment. Most professionals reported struggling to maintain objectivity in their work, usually related to how they viewed parents or caregivers as the *sole* problem, typically when parents are stressed or angry, in causing a child's suffering, and not considering other possible factors such as poverty or economic conditions, lack of neighbourhood, or parental support. This could be seen when professionals discussed parental anger and stress that were displaced on children. For example in relation to parental stress, Kate quoted, "…when parents are tired, they are frustrated, they are stressed and that's when they are more in using the punishment…" Explaining away maltreatment as being driven solely by these parental factors could potentially lead to other contributing causes being ignored.

Similarly, parental anger was also perceived as precursor towards maltreatment, as illustrated by Priya who said: "They really like hitting and take it out on a child and you know, just using them as like a scapegoat for all their angers and yeah, their frustrations in life." Similarly, while other professionals disapprove the displacement of parental anger on the child, some also tend to weigh it alongside with the child's maturity to comprehend parents' emotion. As Chan noted:

> "…it all depends on the parents' emotions state. If they are angry, I would see it as an abuse you know… (and it depends) if the child is 6 years old, he might able to comprehend a bit more as opposed to a child who is 2"

We also found that the professional struggle to maintain objectivity was sometimes due to a lack of training or knowledge specifically in the area of child maltreatment. For example, Tini quoted:

"…because I am so emotional myself and I'm not trained as a psychologist and I am not trained as a social worker; I am just trained as someone to scoop the kids and bring them out… and that… becomes a problem for me because … I get manipulated a lot by the kids"

This comment demonstrates that, at least for some professionals, subjective judgements of motivation, intention, and cultural norms can take precedence over legal definitions of abuse.

The lack of training could also potentially affect how professionals deal with struggles concerning the grey areas within child maltreatment. For example:

"…that is often a very grey area. So even for myself I do get conflicted sometimes because of this grey area. This is a very fine line. Umm, I think personally I think that corporal punishment can actually… for a person who do corporal punishment, there can be good intentions as long as you know how to control" (Siti)

Professional challenges with the law. In addition, professionals in Malaysia have also shared similar sentiment concerning how the conflicting laws and policies in Malaysia could also affect their understanding of child maltreatment and how it is being determined. For example, a legal professional stated how such a law, which is in conflict with cultural and social norms, could affect the understanding of child sexual abuse:

"…the law allows for parents to marry off their children, who are below the age of 16, with the consent of a chief minister…how many cases have you read where children get raped and it is ok because the grown up man marries the child. Just recently there is a case, it was ok." (Zara)

Similarly, such conflict in laws might also create grey areas, especially when it concerns physical abuse and corporal punishment. A social worker lamented the confusion in Malaysian law:

"… it is interesting because in the legal definition… burning, hitting, kicking all that… is unacceptable, therefore should mean that all corporal punishment is physical abuse. But in Malaysian context, it (corporal punishment) would not be taken as physical abuse…" (Eva)

Balancing personal beliefs with training and legal definition.

In terms of attitude about child maltreatment, dissonance in professional-personal values could also be a challenge and a factor in influencing Malaysian professionals' working definition of child maltreatment, regardless of whether they were from Malaysia or living in the UK. So this may suggest that although for some professionals, they may use the legal definitions as a guiding framework, they were also influenced by their judgements of motivation, intention, severity and consequences of parental acts as well as sociocultural norms of parenting practices. However, some professionals may feel in conflict with the legal and sociocultural norms and do not necessarily agree with the sociocultural norm. In balancing their personal and cultural beliefs with their training and the legal definition, this study found three different groups of attitudes see Table 4.4).

In the first group, the 'progressive but supportive', it was found that some professionals in this group tend to take the law literally and avoid grey areas as much as possible when dealing with child maltreatment cases. However, they would remain supportive towards parents or caregivers. Professionals in this group were perhaps least flexible and reported attempting to follow structural procedures in an organisation.

In the second group, the 'moderate', it was found that some professionals from Malaysia and from the UK, tend to disagree with violent or aggressive parenting strategies but could be supportive and understanding towards parents and caregivers. However, unlike the first group, they saw 'grey' areas and tended to focus on balancing the child's safety with child's overall development and family relationships.

In the third group, ‘against the law but culturally acceptable’ it was also found that professionals are aware that certain forms of parenting practices are violent and could cause harm which is against the law but could covertly be seen as culturally acceptable. Professionals in this group also tend to be seen as most lenient, focused less on structural procedure and tended to focus more on family cohesion and/or social harmony.

Table 4.4
Professionals' attitudes towards child maltreatment based on categories

Category	Description	Supporting quotes
Progressive but supportive	Follow legal definitions; avoid grey areas but supportive towards parents or caregivers until it contravenes the legal definitions	"This kid is a bit mischievous; he is only 4 years old and that's fine… and…right in front of me, she knocks his head; he is four years old, with her knuckles. It was really hard and she walks out and I had to run out to her and tell her, "if you ever do that again, I will call the police and you will never see the child again." (Priya) "…this is…abuse... A single mother works 3 jobs and when she comes home, she found out that her 8 year old child stole money from our centre. And when we found out, you know what she did? She puts the 10 year old with the 8 year old who didn't told the 8 year old had stolen money and help to spend it. Out of the balcony, at 3am in the morning, she rubs chillies in their eyes, at their private parts and in their mouth for lying and left them there. The children were blinded temporarily and then faces were white and they were wet yeah. That, to them is discipline. To us is abuse..." (Tini) "…one of those hyperactive ADD kids, who is always getting into trouble and …her way of doing things is *rotan* (caning) because she has 3 other kids…but…I (am) absolutely abhorrent and (have an) adverse reaction towards hitting and corporal punishment. So you don't touch a child." (Kiara)
Moderate	Aware of legislation but more aware of 'grey' areas. Disagree with violent or aggressive parenting strategies but supportive and understanding to parents	"I believe also that it has to do with customs and traditions that we observed in Asian culture, where we model after what our parents have thought us and so coming from a traditional Asian parenting style, you probably have grown up and have known the wrath of the rotan or the cane. So I believe as much as the parents try to adopt the western parenting styles, they still model after how their parents brought them up or raised them. And so a lot of how parenting style are being passed down from generation to generation, umm, because of modelling behaviours, I think that it is part of our culture and so modern day parents would still have this model ingrained with them as part of their customs or traditions." (Kate) "I would say it's using the least aggressive or violent approach as a form of disciplinary method. So you try to exhaust all forms of disciplinary methods that are least intrusive, aggressive and violent. And you try to see which one will the child best responds to. Of course in a given situation, where you have a child misbehaving, you cannot say, hang on, let me think of option A on you, or option B and if option B doesn't work, we move on to option C. Of course you don't have the luxury of time. But what I am trying to say,

		every time a child misbehaves, you try an approach. If it doesn't work then the next time you try a different approach. You know, so try until a child respond to something before resorting to corporal punishment, caning, beating, spanking. But of course to be fair, there are some children who respond to that, I guess to that if a child likelihood respond better to more aggressive form of discipline, it is also important to balance it out with explaining to their child why such punishment has been inflicted upon them." (Kate) "Sometimes, I find myself swaying between them. You know, a bit of caning doesn't hurt me that much… well my mom mainly raised me. Well yeah, she could have done better. But she has done the best she knows. And I think parents these days; they do get a lot more support. They get more advice and there are a lot more information. There is bad information out there, and I think and sometimes I'm more for the… you shouldn't hit kids rule, then again, you shouldn't just hit them when you are angry. I don't know. I do vary. Because I see how my sister raises her kids and not just… I don't think she just physically chastises them, but she certainly instils a healthy amount of fear in them where they do really respect her." (Tammy)
Against the law but culturally acceptable	Tend to be lenient in applying the law, focused less on structural procedure and tend to focus more on family cohesion and/or social harmony	"…for example… the mum…took a coin burned it, heat it up on a gas stove and placed it on her son's palm. And you can see actually the burn mark, the circle, the burn mark on the child's hand. Now, if I used the definition that you can see from the text(book), it is physical abuse. But if you ask the mom, why she did it, she did it for perfectly good reason. She said that my child steals all the time. He steals from the neighbours; he steals from everybody, money especially. So I don't know what else I can do. Because I've already hit him, I have scolded him; I have done everything that I could. But he still steals. So out of desperation, out of love, I don't want my child to grow up a rotten child or a criminal. So she took the coin, heat it up and placed it on her child's palm so that the child remembers next time that whenever you steal, this is going to happen to you… So if you define it (with) the normal definition, any form of maltreatment that causes harm to the child…then I would say it is, abuse in a sense. I'm sure in the UK; the mother will get caught and got locked up for what she did to her child. But for me, I don't see the mom as abusive. It is just a very concern parent who just doesn't know what else to do with the kid. Who has just run out of option." (Allan) "So I don't believe in… you know how back home you will be like used the rattan to hit kids, to "discipline" kids. I don't believe in that. But I don't think there is anything odd to the rule of (beating) on the hand or a light spank. I don't think there is anything wrong with that." (Sarah)

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine how Malaysian professionals define and identify child maltreatment as well as to study how their cultural beliefs and values may influence their perception in distinguishing what would considered as abusive and what would not; specifically behaviours that were related to physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. The interviews were thematically analysed and four themes were found: 1) Textbook answers/recognised definitions, 2) Realistic-working definitions, 3) Cultural influences on parental attitudes, and 4) Professional-personal dissonance.

Across the interviews, it was clear that all professionals were aware of how child maltreatment was defined from a legal point of view and in agreement of what comprises child abuse and neglect. However, in discussing grey areas of child maltreatment, not all professionals were able to agree if a parenting behaviour would be considered as abusive or not. Although this study did not find substantial differences among different professionals, this study did find that all professionals, regardless of their profession, tend to evaluate child maltreatment based on four categories: motivation/intention of the parents, frequency and persistence of the maltreatment, severity of the maltreatment and the consequences of the parental act. This is consistent with many studies that found professionals tend to evaluate parenting practices with a similar lens to determine if a behaviour would be considered as abusive or not (Jent et al., 2011; Whitney et al., 2006). In addition, as the results seem to suggest that all professionals have similar working definitions to guide their practice, this similarity may suggest that perhaps equitable standards in decision making could be applied to all professionals regardless of their profession (Benbenishty et al., 2015; Jent et al., 2011).

Furthermore, professionals who participated in this study also articulated the challenges in their profession such as their poor capability in maintaining objectivity and the lack of education or training in managing child abuse cases. The lack of objectivity

emphasises the need for appropriate and continuous education and/or training in relation to child maltreatment. In addition, given that the majority of professionals focused extensively on physical abuse in their interviews, it is imperative that training moves beyond this form of abuse to include other types of maltreatment, such as emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, as well as how to maintain objectivity and to provide adequate support to parents. This is important on a few levels, as some professionals may still be advising (or implicitly endorsing) parents that the use of harsh parenting practices such as corporal punishment may be acceptable if it is not seen as severe or harmful (i.e., severe physical injury) to the child. Additionally, as professionals have a substantial role in changing parenting norms in Malaysia, perceptions that professionals hold about child maltreatment, may also delay changes to social norm (Gardikiotis, 2011).

In this study, professionals were also asked about how their culture could influence their perception of child maltreatment, in relation to parenting practices. While this study is not concerned in establishing whether or not professionals have a shared official definition(s), one of the aims of this study was to explore how and to what degree personal values influenced perceptions of child maltreatment. While the results seem to reflect professionals' beliefs in accordance with their professional training and experiences and it was hypothesised that professionals may have personal-professional values conflicts based on culture, it is intriguing to find that professionals' attitudes towards child maltreatment could be categoriesed into three distinctive groups. This could possibly be seen as professionals' ways to attempt to balance and resolve conflict between professional-personal values, or to prevent cognitive dissonance (Ashton, 2010; Festinger, 1957).

In this study while it was found that Malaysian professionals living in Malaysia tended to be spread out across these three categories. These categories may suggest that professional socialisation may not necessarily improve professional competency, rather

professionals' personal culture and beliefs might have a larger impact on how professionals view child maltreatment, whether directly or indirectly, in which they may have a lower threshold in considering an action as abusive, which is consistent with previous literature on professional socialisation and professional's cultural and personal beliefs (Ashton, 2010; Jent et al., 2011). Chan, Chow and Elliott (2000) have also argued that such differences may impact on how child maltreatment maybe reported and be dealt with, which subsequently may pose a problem as the lack of consensus among professionals may create a barrier in effectively combating child maltreatment in Malaysia. Thus, it is important that professionals are also being trained in this area to increase their understanding of how the context in which they operate (in Malaysia or in the UK) and their own attitudes influence their judgements and decisions. Training should include group discussions that involved multidisciplinary professions to explore the different attitudes toward child protection issues and the identification of the ways in which the organisational, social and cultural contexts, such as parenting norms are affecting decision making on particular cases (Benbenishty et al., 2015).

Ethnic and cultural issues

Within Malaysia, as there are three major ethnicities (i.e., Malay, Chinese and Indian), it is possible that there may be different cultural influences on how professionals in this study perceive child maltreatment. However, in any pluralistic society such as Malaysia, while ethnicity and culture may coincide, they could also be exclusive and may not necessarily be related (Chan et al., 2002). This is because interracial marriages and adoptions, together with the usage of Malay and English as common spoken and written languages used by Malaysians, could also reduce the importance of ethnic grouping or race. As a result, this study was unable to provide evidence of ethnic or cultural differences among the participants in this study. However, this study found that many of the issues that were discussed were linked to physical abuse as opposed to other forms of abuse. This was consistent with other

studies that were conducted in China and Hong Kong, which found a higher rate of physical child abuse (Ji & Finkelhor, 2015; Tang, 1998) and lower rates of sexual abuse which could be due to a myriad of cultural factors such as Confucian family values, a collectivistic culture to protect the family and definitions of masculinity (Finkelhor et al., 2013).

Strengths and limitations

Firstly, the current study has attempted to address the lack of research with Malaysian professionals by exploring professional perceptions of child maltreatment across a broad range of professional roles for the first time (to the best of the authors' knowledge). Such variety will not only help in examining how child maltreatment is perceived across different professions, but also provides a window to understand if equitable standard of care could be provided for children in the future.

In addition, unlike other Asian studies that predominantly focused on a monoculture (such as those from East Asia countries), this study is a multicultural study that involved three major ethnicities (i.e., Malays, Chinese and Indians) who were living in Malaysia and were compared to Malaysians who are residing in the UK, to explore culturally-valid parenting practices and to provide a different perspective, given that Malaysia has a different sociological and historical factors that were different from those in countries such as China (e.g., former one -child policy, Confucianism teaching). Furthermore, the inclusion of different ethnicities in this study also allowed exploration of the different ethnicities' varying perceptions and attitudes towards discipline and child maltreatment as a result of their professional socialisation (Ashton, 2010).

With regards to limitations, as this study used snowballing sampling method (via contacts from participants and professional networks), it is likely that some participants in this study may have similar backgrounds (e.g., education, income group) with each other and so may not be sufficient to effectively achieve a diverse sample. This is also true from certain

types of professions. For example from the medical field, this study only included paediatricians, which maybe limiting as there are a variety of medical professionals who might work on the front line (e.g., ER doctors, nurses) that could potentially have also worked with abuse victims, who may identify abusive cases differently from doctors that specifically received child protection training.

In addition to that, given that the professionals in this study are of different ages and have different number of experiences, it is possible that these factors could also influence professionals' perception of child maltreatment. For instance, in a study conducted among social work students and qualified social workers in assessing risk of child maltreatment, it was found that qualified social workers tend to have lower risk perceptions compared to social work students (Fleming, Biggart, & Beckett, 2014). Such differences are not typically associated with age but how certain abuses provoke strong emotional responses, especially from social work students on sexual abuse cases (Fleming et al., 2014).

Similarly, factors such as number of years living in the UK or Malaysia, and the different child protection training model that professionals may have received, could also have an influence on how professionals perceived child maltreatment. For instance, in a study conducted among immigrant social workers, it was found that social workers who were trained in China and have migrated to the USA, tend to have challenges such as needing to understand Chinese subcultures in the USA, power imbalance with clients and clients' resistance (Lin, Chiang, Lux, & Lin, 2018). However, such differences were also found to be advantageous as the researchers also found that these social workers could also provide culturally appropriate services and are able to engage and work well with parents, children and families as a whole (Lin et al., 2018). This may also suggest, that there is a possibility that Malaysians who were born or have lived in the UK for an extensive period of time, may also have different perceptions towards child maltreatment and parenting practices compared

to Malaysians who are living in Malaysia. Therefore, it is important that future research should consider studying the perception of Malaysian professionals in the UK, using a bigger sample.

Conclusion

In summary, this study has identified that Malaysian professionals have a clear awareness and understanding of child maltreatment, as outlined in recognised definitions by the UNCRC and the Malaysian law. However, in managing personal and professional values conflict, professionals may establish a realistic working definition that may be seen as agreeable with their own cultural beliefs and values. In particular, how they develop different professional attitudes towards child maltreatment may pose a problem in recognising and identifying child maltreatment and provide additional challenges in creating a much more equitable standard of care for children in the future.

Chapter 5: How Malaysian Parents Perceive Child Maltreatment: A Comparative View from Malaysia and the United Kingdom

Chapter rationale

In Chapter 3, the review highlighted that even between and within cultural boundaries, parents may perceive child maltreatment differently. Additionally, parental cultural beliefs and values could also influence their perception of child maltreatment. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to explore how child maltreatment is being perceived by Malaysian parents in Malaysia compared to those who are living in the UK. Additionally, the chapter also aims to explore how culture could influence their perception and how parents distinguish between abusive parenting practices from those that are not.

Abstract

In order to provide effective intervention and to improve relationships between professionals and parents suspected of child maltreatment, it is important to consider parents' understanding of child maltreatment, specifically their perspectives on parenting practices, parenting experiences and cultural beliefs/values that underpin their parenting. To date, no research has explored Malaysian parents' parenting practices and their views on what does and does not constitute child maltreatment. Therefore, this qualitative study set out to explore these views, and to examine the role of cultural beliefs and values in those perceptions. Using Thematic Analysis, 11 Malaysian mothers living in Malaysia (aged 29-45 years) and 12 Malaysian parents living in the UK (i.e., nine mothers and three fathers; aged 30-70 years) were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling methods. This study identified three themes which were: (1) taboo, (2) family honour and saving face, and (3) cultural assimilation. Parents from both Malaysia and the UK perceived child maltreatment differently to official definitions and tended to distinguish maltreatment based on the *intent* of the parents and *family values,* such as family honour. Furthermore, this study also found that culture could also influence parents to view harsh parenting behaviour differently, if parents have adopted harsh parenting practices as part of their parental beliefs and/or if they have been assimilated in a different culture (i.e., British culture). Implications for practitioners who work with child maltreatment are considered in terms of balancing the need to be culturally competent when working with parents and, at the same time, safeguard children.

Introduction

Parents, caregivers and families play an important role in a child's development and wellbeing; they provide children with a sense of identity, love, care, provision, protection, economic security and stability. However, while families can be the greatest support to children, they can also be the greatest source of harm (Daly et al., 2015). Children's wellbeing is often inextricably linked to parental wellbeing, attitudes, values and beliefs that significantly influence family members' roles, their interrelationships, and, consequently, how they relate to the outside world (Ji & Finkelhor, 2015; Knerr, Gardner, & Cluver, 2013). Additionally, many important aspects of parents' perceptions and practices of child maltreatment remain insufficiently understood, in particular the processes interplayed by different factors including parental beliefs and values, parenting practices and the influences of culture in multicultural Asian countries like Malaysia. Therefore, this chapter aims to explore the perspectives of Malaysian parents, in particular how these parents view their parenting experiences, parenting practices and the influence of their cultural beliefs and values.

Parenting beliefs, parenting practices and culture

To understand how parents perceived child maltreatment, it is first important to consider their parental beliefs and values and how these influence actual parenting behaviour in using the type of disciplinary method with their children. Although there are numerous studies on parental use of physical discipline and how it may effect children's development and adjustment towards adulthood (e.g., Lansford et al., 2009), little is known about how parents perceive discipline and abuse differently. Additionally, most of these studies have not defined and/or differentiate as to what may be considered as abusive disciplinary methods. While there have been efforts to make such distinction between harsh discipline and abuse within an American cultural context, there is still no consensus that has been achieved in

differentiating what is considered as discipline and abuse (Benjet & Kazdin, 2003; Fréchette, Zoratti, & Romano, 2015; Ho & Gross, 2015).

However, in a recent cross-cultural study that attempted to examine the ambiguity between child discipline and maltreatment with mothers from USA, South Korea and Japan using a questionnaire that presented 17 specific vignettes of different disciplinary scenarios (Son et al., 2017); it was found that mothers from the USA, South Korea and Japan showed similarity on parenting behaviours that constitute as emotional abuse (Kruskal-Wallis χ^2 (2) = 2.47, p = 0.291) and neglect (Kruskal-Wallis χ^2 (2) = 6.60, $p < 0.05$). However, this study found that American mothers are more likely to see physical discipline or corporal punishment as abuse in comparison to Korean and Japanese mothers (Kruskal-Wallis χ^2 (2) = 36.74, $p < 0.001$). While this study demonstrated the possibility of how culture could influence what may be considered acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices, it is unclear as to specifically why, what or how these mothers make such distinction in relation to culture. Furthermore, although Son and colleagues (2017) argued that such differences could be due to cultural influences such as Confucianism, such cultural value has only been widely documented in monocultural countries like China, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea and not in other multicultural countries like Malaysia.

Furthermore, given that most child maltreatment studies were conducted among Asians predominantly from East Asia countries such as China, Taiwan, and Japan (Dunne et al., 2015), it remains unclear (if and) how culture may apply to other (Southeast) Asian countries, such as Malaysia, given that perceptions of child maltreatment may also be different across cultures and societies (Benbenishty & Schmid, 2013). For example, Malaysia is a Muslim-majority country that does not share similar sociological and historical factors to China (e.g., Confucian teachings, former one child policy). In addition, while most Asian-based literature typically discussed their findings based on a monocultural sample (given the

ethnic composition of most East Asia countries), countries such as Malaysia and Singapore do not share similar compositions. Malaysia, for instance, is comprised of Malay, Chinese and Indians, who may have individual and shared cultures among different ethnicities. As such, Malaysian parents' cultural beliefs and values concerning parenting and how child maltreatment is being perceived in relation to parenting practices may be different from those that have been found in East Asia (Reisig & Miller, 2009). For instance, in studies that were conducted among Chinese, Japanese and Koreans, parenting methods such as physical discipline maybe seen as acceptable among Chinese and Korean societies, whereas Japanese society tends to prefer non-confrontational discipline strategies (Gough, 1996). While in some cultures, these parenting practices might be interpreted differently by considering anything physical as physical abuse, conversely, those who believe in physical discipline might see its absence as a form of parental neglect or lax parenting (Bang, 2008; Gough, 1996; Maker et al., 2005).

Moreover, in understanding how parents perceived child maltreatment, it is also worthwhile to consider the cultural barriers that may impact cultural study. For example, in a meta-analysis conducted by Ji, Finkelhor, and Dunne (2013) on 24 studies from China, the review found that prevalence estimates of child sexual abuse among female victims were lower (15.3% [95% CI – 12.6-18.0]) compared to international figures (18% for women across all countries; Stoltenborgh, van IJzendoorn, Euser, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). With regards to men, Stoltenborgh et al., (2011) estimated that the prevalence rates were 4.1% (8 studies) for Asia and 7.6% for all countries, and Asia was estimated to be the lowest among six continents (i.e., Africa, Australia, Europe, South America, and North America). While there maybe numerous factors that may contributed to such low estimates such as to methodological issues of using simple questionnaires (e.g., Chen, Dunne, & Han, 2007), other studies suggested that lower estimates could be due to Asian cultural values, such as a

collectivistic culture that affects how family members and victims disclose their abuse experiences and how families prevent shame (Finkelhor et al., 2013; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011).

Furthermore, it is also possible that laws concerning children (e.g., regarding corporal punishment) in different countries could also influence how parents perceive abusive parenting practices. For instance, although Asian countries like Malaysia have ratified the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of Children (UNCRC) and have laws that protect children (i.e., Malaysian Child Act 2017, Sexual Offences against Children Bill 2017), Malaysian laws also allow practices such as corporal punishment to be lawful in homes, schools and in penal institutions (e.g., Malaysian Penal Code Act 574 and the Malaysian Education Regulations 1959). This is also similar in the UK, whereby the law regarding "reasonable chastisement" was retained (Bunting, Webb, & Healy, 2010), suggesting that parents could physically discipline their children if it is 'reasonable' and 'moderate' in relation to its end and have considered thoroughly the welfare of the child. However, this potentially creates confusion about the levels and types of physical discipline that are acceptable or not, particularly with certain practices, such as smacking, which may escalate into the use of more aggressive and more abusive forms of disciplinary strategies (Lansford et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, it is important to note that child maltreatment is sometimes referred to as a socially defined construct (Corby et al., 2012), in which it should not be seen as a product of a particular culture and/or context that is an absolute, unchanging phenomena. Nadan, Spilsbury and Korbin (2015) have argued that what is considered abusive in one society today is not necessarily seen as such in another society. For example, in some cultures, female genital mutilation or child marriages have constantly been defended as important cultural traditions and rites of passage to enable the child to become an accepted member of

his or her community (Gangoli et al., 2009; Liang et al., 2016); yet in many countries are deemed severely abusive and contravening a child's rights. Thus such practices may help us to consider possible ethnocentric stand on our own perception(s) about child rearing, by also considering how other cultural influences such as the impact of acculturation (i.e., the influences of a secondary culture) and enculturation (i.e., the influence of own cultural group) could also influence parents (and professionals) to see themselves differently in different situations and to use different parenting methods with their children (Raman & Hodes, 2012). Such cultural influences in parents' practices regarding child maltreatment are likely to resonate with what sorts of parenting practices are considered acceptable and unacceptable, as well as how they would respond to the occurrence or the risk of child maltreatment, and how they would discuss prevention of abuse with their children (Xie et al., 2016).

Therefore, since cultural influences have been shown to be crucial in explaining parenting beliefs and values as well as parenting practices (Bornstein, Putnick, & Lansford, 2011), it is likely that cultural contexts influence the extent to which parents perceive which types of behaviours constitute abuse . Hence, following from Nadan et al.'s (2015) recommendation to promote positive working relationship with parents suspected of child maltreatment, it is worth considering how Malaysian parents living in Malaysia and in the UK perceived child maltreatment in relation to their cultural beliefs and values and parenting practices. This comparison is important as Malaysian parents who are in the UK are more likely to be exposed to other Western mainstream cultures concerning child rearing. Additionally, such comparison would enable the current study to highlight similarities and differences across cultural boundaries, which is particularly essential for understanding norms around parenting behaviours that may verge on maltreatment, so that equitable standards of child protection could be provided while respecting valid cultural differences

(i.e., preventing cultural superiority or justifying behaviours using cultural norms; Korbin, 2002; Larson & Bradshaw, 2017).

Therefore, to fill this gap, this study aims to explore how Malaysian parents from Malaysia and in the UK perceive child maltreatment in relation to their parenting practices, experiences and their cultural beliefs by exploring the following research questions:

1 How do Malaysian parents in Malaysia and the UK *define* child maltreatment?

2 How do Malaysian parents in Malaysia and the UK *identify* and *distinguish* child maltreatment?

3 What are the cultural values and beliefs that influence Malaysian parents' perception of child maltreatment?

Method

Participants and Recruitment

A total of 23 parents (20 mothers), aged 25 to 65 years old (M= 42.13) were recruited and took part in a one -to- one semi-structured interview. Eleven of the participating parents were living in Malaysia (i.e., Kuala Lumpur and Selangor) at the time of recruitment and had resided there for between 20 to 55 years (M= 17.56). The remaining 12 parents were living in the UK (i.e., Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham and London) and had resided there for between 4 to 34 years (M=30.25). Key demographic information is shown in Table 5.0.

Participants were recruited for the study using purposive and snowballing method, both in Malaysia and in the UK, and they were primarily recruited from personal contacts of the first author and contacts from different participants in this study. Potential parents were referred by their friend or a professional (i.e., names and details were given to the researcher by their friend or a professional after participants had shown interest in taking part of this study) or through professional networks known to the first author. Potential participants were then contacted via email or by phone to ask if they were interested in participating in this

study. Only those who expressed an interest in participating were provided with detailed information about the research. The following two participant inclusion criteria were set: 1) Malaysian (or with Malaysian heritage) parent or a guardian with children (18 and below) under his/her care, and 2) for participants recruited from the UK, they needed to have been resident in the UK for at least three years (a presumed minimum amount of years to adapt and adjust to a new place). In addition, participants were asked to provide their level of education as some studies have suggested that level of education could influence their socioeconomic background, which in turn could influence their perception of child maltreatment, especially those from low income and middle income neighbourhoods (Ron Shor, 2000).

Table 5.0
Summary of parents' demographic information

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Country	No. of years living in UK	Highest level of education
Amira (P1)	43	Female	Malay	Malaysia	-	High school
Aisyah (P2)	35	Female	Malay	Malaysia	-	High school
Alia (P3)	33	Female	Malay	Malaysia	-	High school
Siti (P4)	34	Female	Malay	Malaysia	-	High school
Azizah (P5)	36	Female	Malay	Malaysia	-	Higher education
June (P6)	38	Female	Chinese	Malaysia	-	Postgraduate
Lui (P15)	60	Female	Chinese	Malaysia	-	Postgraduate
Lakshimi (P16)	25	Female	Indian	Malaysia	-	Degree
Jing (P17)	29	Female	Chinese	Malaysia	-	Degree
Ariana (P18)	55	Female	Indian	Malaysia	-	Degree
Fazeelah (P19)	29	Female	Malay	Malaysia	-	Degree
Aina (P7)	29	Female	Malay	UK	3-5	Postgraduate
Halim (P8)	30	Male	Malay	UK	3-5	Postgraduate
Peter (P9)	53	Male	Chinese	UK	30 plus	Degree
Chin (P10)	65	Male	Chinese	UK	20 plus	Degree
Sarah (P11)	30	Female	Chinese	UK	10 plus	Postgraduate
Nur (P12)	31	Female	Malay	UK	3-5	Postgraduate
Mandy (P13)	54	Female	Chinese	UK	32	Degree
Lee (P14)	54	Female	Chinese	UK	30	Degree
Mei Ling (P20)	51	Female	Chinese	UK	30 plus	Degree
Cathy (P21)	56	Female	Chinese	UK	30 plus	Degree
Puva (P22)	54	Female	Indian	UK	30 plus	Degree
Diana (P23)	45	Female	Indian	UK	20 plus	Postgraduate

[a] The numbers in bracket refers to participant number (e.g., Participant 1 is P1)

The interviews

All interviews were conducted in participants' homes or at a place of their choice. Before the interview started, each participant was provided with more detailed information about the study and reminded of their rights as participants (i.e., taking breaks, choosing to refrain from answering any questions and their rights to withdraw) and the limits of confidentiality. Participants were made clear that confidentiality could not be guaranteed if reference was made to an abuse case of which the police or social welfare were unaware or a child who might potentially be at risk; in such an instance the offence and information would be reported. Interviews only commenced after consent was given and any questions had been answered.

The first author conducted each interview and all interviews lasted between 60-90 minutes; interviews were audio recorded using a Dictaphone. Each interview was based on an interview schedule (Appendix F) that followed a chronological pattern. Across the first four questions of the interview schedule, participants were asked about their parenting practices as to how they managed and encouraged their children's behaviour. Then, participants were asked about how their cultural values and beliefs might have influenced their parenting, as well as possible influences from family and friends on parenting practices.

Subsequent to the first four questions in the interview schedule, participants were presented with five different vignettes on four types of maltreatment (two on physical abuse; Appendix G) that were used to facilitate the discussion further. The vignettes used were adapted (see Table 2 for an example) from those in Chan, Lam and Shae's (2011) study and covered the four basic types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. To avoid priming participants, and to minimise socially desirable responding, the vignettes were only presented after participants were asked about their parenting practices and their cultural beliefs.

Table 5.1
Example of an adapted vignette from Chan, Lam and Shae (2011) on potential emotional abuse

	Physical abuse
Vignette 3 (used in the current study)	Linda is a 12 year old girl and lived in a single parent family. Linda always has poor academic performance as she tends to always failed in her examinations. Linda's mother did not like Linda. Sometimes her mother scolds her for her poor academic performance, other times is because Linda's refusal to help with the house chores. Linda's mother always complained that she did not like Linda because she was like her irresponsible father and thinks Linda is a useless child. Sometimes Linda's mother said that she hopes Linda is not her own child. Other times, Linda's mother will threaten her to sell her off to a stranger.
Chan, Lam & Shae (2011)'s original vignette	Siu-kin lived in a single parent family. His academic performance was poor. In fact, he always failed in the examinations. Mum did not like Siu-kin, sometimes because Siu-kin did not listen to her. Mum scolded him quite a lot for his poor academic performance. She complained that she did not like Siu-kin because he was like his irresponsible daddy. Sometimes Mum said Siu-kin was not her own child. Sometimes mum even said she would throw Siu-kin out of the window. Mum always said these things to Siu-kin who felt life rather unhappy.

After reading each vignette, participants were asked to describe their perception of the presented vignettes (i.e., what do they think the vignettes are about), what do they understand about child maltreatment and the different types of maltreatment (i.e., physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect) how they define, identify and distinguish each one, as well as how their culture influences their perception. Interviews ended by asking participants if they were aware of any other types of child maltreatment that were not discussed in the interview earlier.

Following each interview, participants were thanked and given a debriefing sheet with further information about the research, a reminder of the process of withdrawing (including contact details of the researchers), and details of a range of agencies that could provide additional support if required.

Ethics

This study was approved by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee (Reference: ERN_14-0514). All participants acknowledged and understood that data would be anonymised and that personal details (including their name, names of others, place names and any other identifying features) would be changed before analysis commenced and the study written up for publication. All references to the interview used pseudonym and anonymised information. Participants were not financially incentivised for taking part.

Data analysis

Given the exploratory nature of the study, together with scarcity of published literature exploring Malaysian parents' views of parenting and child maltreatment, Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to analyse the transcript data. TA is an appropriate choice of methodology for analysis given its ability to be flexible, its independent from any theoretical constraint, and its ability to provide rich analysis and allowing key themes to be identified purely from the content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As per Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines on using an inductive approach, and following a social constructionist framework (Burr, 2003), data analysis began by transcribing each interview. The first author repeatedly compared the anonymised transcripts with the audio to ensure accuracy of transcription and to enhance familiarisation with the data. All transcripts were then imported into NVivo 11 (QSR, International Pty Ltd, 2015) qualitative analysis software.

The first author coded each interview by allocating a text node (i.e., initial coding) on every line of each transcript. Initial coding was completed when each line of the transcript (data) had been assigned to at least one node. Then, each transcript was re-coded and was collated to capture any nodes created by subsequent transcripts. At this second stage, the second and third authors also provided their initial codes on a sample of the transcripts to

provide inter-rater reliability to ensure that the codes produced by the first author were similar. Codes that were not similar were explored further through discussion until agreement was reached. As broad patterns became apparent, thematic maps were drawn to assist and assess the distinction between interlinked codes, and this became a continuous iterative analytical process with the data until codes developed into three themes. These three themes were then defined, named and reviewed further by all authors. Finally, data extracts that are included in this study were edited to remove unnecessary information and increase readability and comprehension.

Results

This study was interested in exploring how Malaysian parents in Malaysia and in the UK perceive, define and identify child maltreatment in relation to their parenting practices, experiences and how culture could influence their perception on what is considered as abusive parenting behaviours from those that are not. In general, this study found that these parents tend to focus on some parenting practices, specifically physical discipline and verbal chastisement, and how these practices may or may not be perceived as child maltreatment. Notably, other forms of maltreatment (i.e., sexual abuse and neglect) were less frequently mentioned, or not at all. Additionally, observations by participants were mostly drawn from their own parenting practices or from other parents that they had observed. Participants' perception of child maltreatment, were captured with three main themes (i.e., ambiguity and need for certainty, family honour and saving face; and cultural assimilation; see Table 5.2), and six sub themes to capture the nuances of cultural influences on how child maltreatment is being perceived.

Table 5.2
Themes and subthemes of Malaysian parents' perception on child maltreatment.

Theme	Subthemes
Ambiguity and need for certainty	Social harmony
Family honour and saving face	Child's code of conduct Child independence Parent-child responsibilities and roles
Cultural assimilation	Enculturation Perceived societal norms and expectations

Theme 1: Ambiguity and need for certainty

From the analysis, this study found that regardless of whether these Malaysian parents were from Malaysia or the UK, they did not express a clear understanding of how child maltreatment might be defined legally (e.g., UNCRC, Malaysian law or UK law), in terms of how a parent might be classed as maltreating their child or not. Rather, parents in this study seem to struggle to distinguish what may be seen as dysfunctional parenting but not harmful and maltreatment. To most of them, maltreatment or accusations towards potential abusive were seen as a taboo as to prevent wrongly accusing another caregiver for abusing their child and to prevent shame to the person unless the abusive action is absolutely certain (e.g., seeing physical injuries on the child).

Furthermore, most parents perceived an action as 'abusive' only if the action caused significant harm (e.g., severe physical injury) on the child. However, further to discussing what may be considered as significant harm and other 'abusive' behaviours that potentially could be child maltreatment using the vignettes (e.g., caning and slapping), most participants in this study dismissed the notion that such actions are abusive, referring to them as 'bad parenting strategy' or a 'taboo subject'. For example, one parent stated that "*...abuse is worse than that…because abuse is such a big word you see. You can't just say abuse. If you said abuse, people might (have) perceived it (as) a serious case…*" (P5) This may be interpreted

as a taboo subject, as the word 'abuse', may denote accusation towards parents suspected of child maltreatment. As such, in preventing false accusation some parents may have felt that a parenting behaviour could only be considered as maltreatment if it brings significant harm (e.g., physical injuries) to the child. In a different example, after reading vignette 4 about sexual abuse, or more specifically pornography and child sexual grooming, the parent said: *"Hmm… umm… (I) don't know how to comment… in terms of what?...I think it is not an abuse. Because he didn't do anything (to the child). He only invited (the child) and it's not… (he) shouldn't have done that but it has not reach the stage as sexual harassment yet. So for me… if you ask me (about vignette 4), I don't think it is an abuse but it is inappropriate…"* (P7)

On the other hand, instead of taboo, this study also found that parents may refer abusive parenting practices as 'bad parenting strategy' or "harsh parenting". For example, a parent said: (After reading vignettes about possible physical abuse) *"Umm, I think it is a bit harsh the first one. Umm, the way you know, I think… it says the mum stop the game and he argues with his mum and got angry, fetched the cane. Well I will just let him get angry, no need to beat him. Well you just… if they argue, you just… I don't know…maybe that was a bit too harsh"* (P21).

Social harmony. In relation to taboo, this subtheme also captured the nuances as to why parents may see abusive parenting acts as a taboo subject, rather than calling it maltreatment. In this study, when Malaysian parents were asked how they would identify child maltreatment, most of them said that they would favour social harmony and would dismiss an abusive or neglectful action. Most parents perceived that abusive parenting practices were seen as a private matter and would refrain from meddling. For example, a Malaysian parent who discussed neglectful parents said, "*…your next door neighbour may*

not know your child is going to school or not, or they do but they're not reporting it because that's your own business if you don't send your children to school." (P20)

Similarly, this study also found that the focus on social harmony as a response to harsh or potentially abusive parenting practices might also be case for other forms of maltreatment, such as sexual abuse. Given that Malaysia is a collectivistic culture, some parents felt that social harmony was more important to avoid confrontation or to prevent the issue from escalating further. For example, a parent who spoke about a sexual abuse case (that had been closed) said:

> …I don't know what she was saying and I wasn't very sure. And she (grandmother) just glossed it over. She didn't even give a straight answer. But what I found out that the grandmother did not believe the child. And the grandmother also finds it really ridiculous that a child who had no physical growth could actually attract a man (P2)

Theme 2: Family honour and saving face

As perception of what may be considered abusive parenting practices and what is not, typically falls under the continuum with parents' cultural beliefs and values of parenting, participants in this study were asked to discuss parenting practices and how these practices were related to their cultural beliefs and their values. Parents in this study believed that their parenting practices needed to reflect these subthemes as they were related to family honour (e.g., how their family is being perceived by others) or saving face (e.g., to avoid shame towards the family). Within the overall theme, three subthemes were found: 1) child's code of conduct, 2) child independence, and 3) parent-child responsibilities or roles.

Child's code of conduct. Some parents mentioned moral conduct (e.g., being honest, respectful) and how children behave at home and in (e.g., good manners, polite, well behaved) as being important to them. Parents felt that physical discipline and/or verbal chastisement were acceptable if it was intended or meant to teach their children how to

behave and had a corrective purpose for the child's misbehaviour; thus, physical discipline and chastisement were seen as acceptable means to a perceived outcome of more appropriate and acceptable child behaviour. For example, a parent in this study felt that physical chastisement was justified as a means to correct the child misbehaviour and to instil obedience. After reading Vignette 1 about a child who was caned by his mother, the parent in this study said:

> Well I think that would be something that I will do as well. Because I told him to stop playing and he is not listening, ignoring me. So I don't know, he has repeatedly ignored his mother's request but I will add one more thing which is I will give him the consequences if he doesn't stop. I would say if you don't stop I will be taking the cane on you. To let him know. It is just a saying here but I would. And then basic on this, she got so angry and she fetch the cane. The fact that she fetch the cane, the cane is in the house and Andrew should be aware of it as well, that the mother will use the cane as an ultimatum. And using the cane will definitely have bruise marks. The cane never lie. There is no description of the degree of canning but I would say in a general term if it is me, being Andrew's mother I will say its fine. (P15)

However, although seen as acceptable, it was noted by some parents that physical discipline and chastisement should be actions of last resort; for example,: *"…for me it is a very important aspect…so with rudeness and respect, we believe that…when all these other methods (positive parenting) doesn't work, we do use the cane…"* (P6). When these parents were asked further, when would physical discipline become and be considered physical abuse, one of the parents justified physical discipline by highlighting the importance of having a reason to do so: *"I believe in discipline and I believe a little smacking not going to hurt the child. And that is my principal really… not because I hit them for no reason. I smack them for a reason… just to say (to the child that) this is not right."* (P15). Similarly, another

parent who was asked to distinguish between physical discipline and abuse said: *"Physical abuse is constant abuse regardless of values. You just do it because you lash out and makes you angry and the person just beats you up. Proper discipline is to let the person know and understand for the child that matter, that if you do something wrong, there is something you have to receive that is not nice for you."* (P16)

Child independence. Parents held a clear view as to how children should conduct themselves, both within and outside of the home. Malaysian parents also described that harsh parenting practices would not be considered or seen as abusive, if parents used such practices to ensure that their children strictly meet the demands and expectations of their parents. Parents in this study may view that children's independence could threaten family values such as family honour and the expectation for the child to avoid shame towards the family. As such, parents may have felt that such harsh parenting practices are necessary to ingrain and restrict children independence and power. For example, a father who is living in the UK believed in restricting the child's independence said:

> …when he (son)…left for London to study, we (told) him to keep…three things well in mind. The first thing (is) whatever you do, does it glorify the name of the God? The second thing, (is it) worth doing? The third is understand that your father is a church minister. Do not disgrace the name of your family…so this is binding to the son (P9)

Interestingly, when parents were asked about the importance of education or academic achievement, some parents stated: *"... I expect my child to work hard and... we expect them to do their best rather than to expect them to do the impossible."* (P13). Similarly, a British-Malaysian parent who were asked the same question regarding the importance of academic achievement, said:

> Yes and no. I think it is important to direct them to the position where they can learn but at the same time I feel that I can't force them. So… If that makes sense? But yeah

> I do not have issue with their study. I am very blessed and fortunate. The fact that I don't need to do anything. I have taught them and umm, sort of guide the through their primary school but after that, I have no involvement with their studies (P20).

This may be interpreted that while parents may see academic achievement as important, but they may not necessarily see it as important as family honour.

Parent-child responsibilities and roles. To parents in this study, teaching their children responsibilities and making sure children play their roles (e.g., house chores, study, prayers) at homes and outside is important both as a family value and culturally. In their (parents') view, children who 'fail' to learn and perform their responsibilities and roles, tend to be viewed as a parental failure and thus may be perceived as bringing shame to the family. Thus, to protect family honour, parents in this study seem to view that parenting behaviours such as physical chastisement may not be viewed as maltreatment. In the interviews, parents noted how some parenting practices that might be seen as 'abusive' in other countries (e.g., smacking) may not be perceived as maltreatment if they are intended to teach children about their responsibilities and roles at home. For example, after a participant read Vignette 2 about a grandparent who slapped a child for not cleaning the mess that the child made, she said: *"Well I supposed he is 12 years old. He is old enough to understand really. And he is old enough to be able to pick up some cloth or tissue or wipes. He is just plain lazy. He can't be bothered. He chooses to be defiant. Umm, and I think there should be consequence. So disobedient and defiance are basically… I don't really think slapping him once across the face is abuse"* (P13).

Furthermore, given that Malaysia is a Muslim-majority country, it was interesting to also see if parent-child responsibilities may also extend to other practices such as religion as most Muslim parents may see the importance of teaching their children to follow religious

practices at a very young age such as reciting prayers. A parent justified her actions by stating:

> …as you know for Muslim, my eldest (daughter)…is now nine years old…she is lazy to pray and sometimes (when) we talk to her (nicely)…that you must pray and do this and that… she refused to listen and be lazy (and) we have to force her. If (telling her) two, three times (and) she doesn't move, then… you will tend to get angry with them…if we don't fulfil the five times prayer, we have to be harsh on them." (P5).

Similarly, for other parents, physical and verbal chastisements were justified if they were meant to teach children to take on some roles at home and to do some house chores. For example, a parent justified this by relating her earlier experiences as a child:

> Well we were all given different tasks to do. Because we are a big family and …she (eldest sister) was schooling herself. I think she was only 14 or 15 years old. I (was) 6 or 7 years old, cooked some rice, fried some omelette before I go to school. I lit the fire. You know, at that age… Over here, you use matches, you don't trust an 8 year old, 10 year old with a match. I was doing that at the age of 7, standard 2. (P13)

Theme 3: Cultural assimilation

Perhaps surprisingly, one major comparison between Malaysians parents in Malaysia and in the UK is that not all parents view any forms of harsh parenting practices as justifiable if it causes distress or harm to the child, regardless of whether the purpose of the behaviour was to teach the child. From the data, degree of cultural assimilation was seen to influence participants' understanding of child maltreatment and their parenting practices if they had lived in a different country and were exposed to a different culture(s) (e.g., British or other Western culture) in comparison to their own Malaysian culture. This overall theme of cultural

assimilation encompassed two subthemes: 1) enculturation, and 2) perceived societal norms/expectations.

Enculturation. In this study, all parents described experiencing harsh parenting when they were children (e.g., beaten with the cane or belt, slapped, verbally shamed). While most parents claimed that they were physically and mentally healthy as an adult, they also lamented how they resented those parenting practices that they themselves considered as abusive and hurtful. While on the surface the parents' comments might resemble aspects of resiliency, the interpretation from the nuances of the data suggest otherwise. Instead, it seemed that parents in the study had acquired this cultural practice and integrated it with their own personal values. As a result of enculturation, some parents reported that harsh parenting practices were necessary for the teaching of children, but would only be acceptable and may not be seen as abusive if they were used with the right intention to educate or to correct a child's misbehaviour. For example, a parent said:

> …when I was growing up, my parents definitely used the cane and it was done in a manner where I think (it) wasn't good. So, it was always done in a way whereby they were angry, very emotional and after that not much explanation was given. So, it left us very angry and so you will feel revengeful at some point of time. So, I remember very clearly that at one point of my time, every time when those things happened, I always tell myself, these are practices that I will not do with my kids. But by having my own kids right now and evaluating it, I think it can be used to a certain extent if it was done in the right context and when the child understands it. (P6).

Similarly, this study also found that parents from the UK shared similar values regarding parenting practices that involved physical discipline. A parent said: *"If it is a younger child, I would use less force. Perhaps a tap a little bit. Tap that is a bit more*

uncomfortable. Where else, if its older, it's a harder tap. So just they feel a little bit of pain. That is what discipline is all about. No pain, no gain" (P11).

Perceived societal norms/expectations. Regardless of early experiences as a child, not all Malaysian parents saw physical discipline and verbal chastisement as acceptable and many perceived these practices as child maltreatment. In this study, it was found that British-Malaysian parents also seem to perceive that there are different societal norms and expectations concerning child rearing. For example, (after reading a vignette about a grandmother who slapped a child), a British-Malaysian parent said:

> Well you see in the Malaysian culture, the grandma could do it but not here. Here, they dare not touch another person's child. Whether it is relative or not. But in Malaysia, it is expected. Uncle, aunty, you can discipline each other's child, way back then... But in that case with the grandma, yeah, she is still an immediate family isn't she? But not here (UK) though. Here they won't do it (P21).

Furthermore, Malaysian parents in the UK reasoned that British societal norms and culture did influence how they would perceive parenting practices and made them reflect on how they were brought up as children in Malaysia. For example, a Malaysian-British parent said: "*I think generally, people (here) are less harsh to their children. They are more loving to their children. They have more concern for their children. It's a big thing, I think. About caring for their children and treat children*." (P22).

Some parents also mentioned how this perceived societal norm and expectation in the UK would see as abusive parenting than those that are not, as well as influenced their own parenting practices. For example, a Malaysian parent mentioned how she assimilated with British culture: *"Experiencing both culture, I learned that my boys can be taught how to be man, respecting woman and respecting me without using harsh methods… I see how the teachers used token economy, rewards and punishment, which I find it useful…"* (P12)

Discussion

The aim of this qualitative study was to explore how Malaysian parents in Malaysia and in the UK perceived, define and identify child maltreatment in relation to their parenting practices, experiences and how culture could influence their perception on what is considered as abusive parenting behaviours from those that are not. In order to explore how these factors interplayed with their perception of child maltreatment, Malaysian parents from Malaysia and the UK were interviewed about their parenting practices, and how their cultural beliefs and values influenced their perception in discerning what is considered as abusive and what is not, with particular focus on specific types of child maltreatment (i.e., physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect). Data from the interviews were analysed thematically and three themes were identified: 1) Ambiguity and need for certainty, 2) Family honour and saving face, and 3) Cultural assimilation.

Across the data, similarities could be seen in how parents perceived child maltreatment. Firstly, *ambiguity and need for certainty* was one of the key themes - a cultural belief that influenced how parents defined and identified child maltreatment. Although other studies have suggested that parents may demonstrate social desirability (e.g., Chan, 2015), presumably to protect family honour and avoid shame, this may not necessarily always be true, as some parents may genuinely see the subject as ambiguous or a 'taboo' rather than attempting to make a good impression to the researcher. This might be the case, as some studies that focused on other cultures such as African and Arabian cultures tend to see child maltreatment such as sexual abuse as a taboo (e.g., Abu-Baker, 2013; Mathoma, Maripe-Perera, Khumalo, Mbayi, & Seloilwe, 2006), which may also provide an insight as to why Malaysian parents commented more about physical and verbal chastisements but less about other forms of maltreatment, such as sexual abuse and neglect. These studies have found that discussing or educating children about sexuality is a taboo, and if a female victim

became pregnant, these victims were usually asked to be silent and avoid narrating their abusive experiences or to provide a camouflage story to cover up the abuse.

This study also found that family honour or saving face is an important value when it is related to parenting practices. Some disciplinary strategies may not be considered as abusive by some Asian societies and this was consistent with other studies that conducted in Asia, in which parents tended to evaluate a parenting behaviour through their family reputation lens rather than evaluating it based on the health or the rights of the child (Xie et al., 2016). While this arguably could be related to honour based violence in some ways, but given that the concept of 'honour' is complex (Bhanbhro et al., 2016; Idriss, 2017), it is unclear how it may relate to the findings of this study which deserve more research. Furthermore, the analysis reported here found a parental emphasis on social harmony. This social harmony may be related to how Malaysia subscribed to the importance of collectivism rather than individualism, which emphasised family and interpersonal relationship harmony that may influenced how Malaysian parents identify child maltreatment, as it is often associated with 'losing face' for the whole family that is involved (Xie, Sun, Chen, Qiao, & Chan, 2017).

In this study, it was also found that parents who themselves experienced physical discipline and verbal chastisement as a child, tended to approve of such practices and used similar disciplinary strategies with their children. This is consistent with previous literature that found parents who had experienced spanking as a child (but did not report feeling threatened, humiliated or ridiculed) and believed that such punishment would not result in injury, tend to favour spanking with their children (Bates, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Lansford, & Pettit, 2003; Bell & Romano, 2012; Gagné et al., 2007). In addition, other studies (e.g., Bower-Russa, Knutson, & Winebarger, 2001; McCarthy, Skowronski, Crouch, & Milner, 2017; Rodriguez & Price, 2004) have also found that parents who felt that they deserved to

be punished when they were a child, were more likely to punish their own children with similar types of punishment and disciplinary strategies that they experienced.

However, in terms of differences, Malaysia parents from Malaysia and the UK viewed child maltreatment differently when they were exposed to different societal norms. For example, Ngiam and Tung (2016) have pointed out the differences in parenting norms from a highlighted 2014 Swedish court case, where two Malaysian parents were incarcerated by the court for caning and smacking their children. In Sweden, corporal punishment is unlawful, however, Malaysians in Malaysia have generally sympathised with the incarcerated parents and felt that their children deserved the spanking and would have considered it as normal in a Malaysian society (Pak, 2014). In this study, Malaysian parents who were residing in the UK, tended to view that there are better and positive alternative parenting methods that can be used, instead of harsh parenting practices and this is probably due to the acculturation effects that they have been exposed to while living in Britain. While this study did not explore the length of living in the UK, which may be beneficial to this study, studies such as Tajima and Harachi (2010) suggest that acculturation could affect parenting practices and perhaps their perception towards child maltreatment. They found that Vietnamese parents who were accompanied by greater acculturation to the United States, were more likely to place emphasis on independent thinking with their children as it is linked to the individualism culture in the US. Similarly, this may suggest that acculturation effects may interact with sociocultural factors that shape parenting beliefs among Malaysians who were living in the UK (Reisig & Miller, 2009).

Strengths and limitations

Several strengths of the study are to be noted. Firstly, although the issue of how child maltreatment is being defined and perceived by parents is not new, particularly in the West, this study is among the few that have highlighted definitional issues from an Asian context,

that particularly focused on Malaysian parents' cultural beliefs and values in relation to their parenting practices, using a qualitative method. As aforementioned, with the limited studies in Malaysia, most of the research that focussed on child maltreatment, are often times related to prevalence and incidences or how professionals perceived or respond towards child maltreatment, but do not include perceptions from parents or public views. In addition, while there are some studies in Malaysia that have focused on parenting, none to date have provided a particular focus on maltreatment.

Furthermore, as most Asian studies that came from East Asia, tend to focus on a singular ethnicity, this study provides a different perspective, given that it involved three major ethnicities who were living in Malaysia and were compared to Malaysians who are residing in the UK, to explore culturally-valid parenting practices. While it would be beneficial to this study to explore the differences in perception among the three different ethnicities (i.e., Malay, Chinese and Indian), this study did not explore any differences between the ethnic group. In addition to that, some studies have suggested that in studying a pluralistic society like Malaysia, it also possible that the line between ethnic grouping or race, often may coincide with culture (Chan, Elliott, Chow, & Thomas, 2002) that may have led to an absence of such differences in perception towards child maltreatment.

In terms of limitations, as this study utilised a snowballing sampling method (via contacts from participants), it is likely that some participants in this study may have similar backgrounds (e.g., education, income group) meaning that the sample may not be as diverse as it might have been had we used a more random sampling method. Besides that, from a methodological point of view, although the analytical method of this study provided key themes that were purely derived from the data and were presented at the most basic level of the researchers' interpretation, it should be acknowledged that the extraction, collation, interpretation and presentation of this data was intrinsically subjective to the positions of the

researchers. The key themes of this study do not simply 'emerge' but were actively sought out that were influenced by researchers' preconceptions', personal and theoretical orientations. Furthermore, this analytical method also prevents us from making claims about the language that Malaysian parents in this study used, or the function of certain words when they narrated their perception (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Malaysians were able to speak more than two or three languages (i.e., Malay, English, and/or own mother tongue) this could possibly affect understanding, as certain words that were related to abuse may be called or perceived differently in different languages.

Conclusion

In summary, this study found that Malaysian parents' living in the UK and in Malaysia do share similarities but also had differences in how they perceived child maltreatment in relation to their parenting practices and culture. This study suggests that Malaysian parents do hold culturally valid practices such as family honour and avoidance of shame, regardless of whether they are in Malaysia or in the UK. This also included the importance of how they view their children (e.g., their conduct, responsibilities, roles, etc.) and how their children's behaviour is a reflection of their parental duties. As such, these may influence how parents view what may be considered as appropriate parenting practices, dysfunctional parenting practices but not harmful and maltreatment. However, this study also found that such parental views were influenced by enculturation and how they view societal expectations towards children such as those in the UK which is different from Malaysia.

Chapter 6: "Making Sense of My Abuse": Malaysian Victims' Perspectives of Parenting Practices, Cultural Influences and Child Maltreatment

Chapter rationale

As (potential) child victims and adult survivors of child maltreatment are part of the child protection system, it is important to understand how they perceive child maltreatment, in relation to parenting practices and cultural beliefs and values. These perceptions can be compared to other stake holders in the child protection system, with an aim to addressing child maltreatment effectively (i.e., intervention). Thus, the aim of this chapter is to explore perceptions of child maltreatment held by Malaysian victims of childhood abuse and neglect, to examine how their parenting and cultural beliefs may influence their perception.

Abstract

As studies on child victims or adult survivors of child maltreatment in Malaysia are limited, it is unclear how factors such as parenting practices and cultural beliefs/values influence perceptions on child maltreatment. Although Western studies have demonstrated how these factors are associated with child maltreatment, it is unclear if (and how) this may apply in Malaysia, given the country's multicultural diversity and its sociopolitical background. Therefore, this study set out to understand how Malaysian adult survivors of child maltreatment make sense of their child maltreatment experiences, parenting practices, cultural influences, and how they distinguish abusive and non-abusive behaviour. Using purposive and snowballing sampling methods, 12 Malaysian adult survivors were interviewed to explore how (1) they perceive and define the different forms of child maltreatment, (2) they distinguish behaviour as abusive or not, and (3) their cultural beliefs and values influence their perception on child maltreatment. Using Thematic Analysis four themes were identified: (1) adult definition vs childhood perception of child maltreatment; (2) perceived family values; (3) perceived sociocultural norm; and (4) the outcome of child maltreatment on adult survivors. This study found that survivors tend to view abusive parenting differently as an adult to retrospectively as a child, and have different views on what is considered as acceptable and unacceptable physical discipline when participants described experiencing authoritative or authoritarian parenting style. The findings also suggest that family values and sociocultural norms do exist and may influence survivors' perceptions of child maltreatment and may subsequently be used to normalise or justify potential abusive parenting.

Introduction

Child maltreatment is prevalent across the globe (Fry, McCoy, & Swales, 2012; Pinheiro, 2006; Radford et al., 2011) and it has been estimated that a quarter of adults worldwide have experienced maltreatment as a child (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2014). However, in Malaysia, there is relatively little research that has examined the prevalence of child maltreatment (Cheah & Choo, 2016) and almost none that has focused on understanding the processes interplayed by different ecological factors with victims' perception of their maltreatment experiences, including culture and parenting practices (Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Ping & Sumari, 2012). Therefore, this paper aims to explore the perspectives of Malaysian adult survivors of child maltreatment and parenting practices, as well as cultural issues that may influence perceptions of child maltreatment. In particular, what are the consequences of child maltreatment on survivors' views of parenting practices, and how do cultural beliefs and values influence their perception?

Consequences of Child Maltreatment and Subsequent Parenting Practices

Research in Western societies has shown that child maltreatment often has severe and negative consequences for children's wellbeing and predicts other adversities in later life. For instance, studies have found that victims had increased risk of developing difficulties in various domains such as mental health (e.g., depression, eating disorders, addictions, suicide attempts and risky sexual behaviour; Norman et al., 2012), physical health (e.g., stress level, illness; Brown et al., 2010; Johnson, Riley, Granger, & Riis, 2013) and social relationships (e.g., social withdrawal, aggression; Alink, Cicchetti, Kim, & Rogosch, 2012; Boyda & McFeeters, 2015). In Asia, although evidence is scarcer and the quality of methodologies vary (Dunne et al., 2015), similar consequences of child maltreatment have been found in the Asia Pacific region (Fry et al., 2012). Fry et al's (2012) review found that Asian children who have been maltreated showed a twofold increased risk of physical and mental health issues,

including a median of fourfold increased risk of suicidal ideation and attempts, as well as having a median of twofold increased risk of exposure to future violence including intimate partner violence as an adult. However, Fry et al. (2012) also emphasised that there were still gaps that existed in understanding the impacts of child maltreatment in Asia, given the diversity and complexities of different societies and cultures.

Furthermore, although many studies have demonstrated a link between child maltreatment and subsequent parenting practices (e.g., DiLillo & Damashek, 2003; Ehrensaft, Knous-Westfall, Cohen, & Chen, 2014; Kim, Trickett, & Putnam, 2010), countries like Malaysia lack similar studies. As survivors reach adulthood and may have children of their own, these children may be vulnerable to the negative consequences of their parents' history of child maltreatment if that history affects both parenting behaviours and parenting environment (Fujiwara et al., 2012). Similarly, studies on child sexual abuse victims, specifically, have demonstrated that childhood victims who are at increased risk of experiencing later parenting stress, may reduce parenting-related activities and social support that subsequently makes parenting more difficult (Roberts, O'Connor, Dunn, & Golding, 2004; Ruscio, 2001).

It must be stressed, however, that most adult survivors do not go on to maltreat their children (Dixon, Browne, & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005, 2009; Dixon, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Browne, 2005) and many are able to either develop resiliency (Marriott, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Harrop, 2014) or engage protective factors to mitigate risks. Thus, a history of child maltreatment in an adult survivor should be considered a risk factor that can lead to an increased risk of an intergenerational cycle of maltreatment (Thornberry & Henry, 2013), but it is not inevitable.

However, there are many reasons as to why later parenting practices may be related to earlier experiences of child maltreatment. For example, some studies on child sexual abuse

have argued that victims, particularly those who experienced intrafamilial abuse, were more likely to come from a dysfunctional family environment that exposed them to ineffective models of parenting (Godbout, Briere, Sabourin, & Lussier, 2014; Kim et al., 2010; Trickett, Noll, & Putnam, 2011), while other studies have found that the increased risk of later mental health issues (such as anxiety, borderline personality disorder and depression) following child maltreatment can also potentially impact on parenting (Chen et al., 2010; Levey, Apter, & Harrison, 2017). Anxiety and depression can lead parents to be emotionally distant, permissive and have difficulties establishing boundaries with their children that subsequently affect parenting confidence (DiLillo & Damashek, 2003) and may create dysfunctional or unhelpful attitudes, such as feeling inadequate, incompetent or having unrealistic and rigid expectations of their children (Banyard, 1997; Banyard, Williams, & Siegel, 2003).

Moreover, recent studies have also suggested that parenting practices should be seen separate from parental efficacy, which refers to parents belief in their ability to effectively manage the varied tasks and situations of parenthood (Gross & Rocissano, 1988). Studies have shown that child maltreatment may not necessarily be associated with parental efficacy, but rather with parents' poor parenting practices such as behaviours related to maternal sensitivity (i.e., responding to a child's distress), harsh intrusiveness (i.e., parental control, manipulation, inhibition) and absent boundaries (de Jong, Alink, Bijleveld, Finkenauer, & Hendriks, 2015; Zvara et al., 2015).

Parenting practices have also been associated with survivors' attitudes (e.g., perceptions) towards their maltreatment experiences (May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005; Steele, 1997). For example, in a study conducted by Kiser et al. (2014) that assessed children's relationship with their perpetrator(s) and the outcome on their mental health following child sexual abuse or physical abuse, they found that victims tended to have higher levels of posttraumatic stress, depression, dissociation and internalising (e.g., over-control of

emotions) and externalising (e.g., under-control of emotions) difficulties (McCulloch, Wiggins, Joshi, & Sachdev, 2000) when victimised by a non-caregiver compared to a caregiver. Additionally, although in Kiser's study there were more caregivers who were perpetrators compared to non-caregivers, the inconsistency in Kiser's study may suggest the relationship between the perpetrator and victim may have an influence on how victims perceived the abusive acts. For example, some studies have argued that perpetrators who are caregivers to the victims may ascribe different meaning to the child such that the abusive act was done out of love and care or for the child's best interest (Lang & Frenzel, 1988). Conversely, to non-caregivers, victims may perceive non-caregivers' abusive acts with different characteristics such as higher levels of violence and invasiveness, being treated in an inappropriate and unfair way which may result in different symptom outcomes (Kolko, Brown, & Berliner, 2002).

Moreover, studies have also suggested that such perceptions and attributions (i.e., seeing abusive acts as love, care or discipline) may not necessarily be exclusive to abused children, but also shared by non-abused children. For example, in a study from Hong Kong (Chan, Lam, & Shae, 2011), it was found that non-maltreated children (age 9-13) held similar views to those of adults such as the need to consider the importance of the "intent" of behaviours (i.e., doing out of love or care for the child) and to consider if the parental actions (or inactions) may cause harm or injury to children. Additionally, the study also found that these children perceived that their views, generally, were often neglected by adults and perceived as "immature" or "childish" by adults, and that parental actions, such as scolding, have a negative impact on their feelings. For example, Chan and his colleagues found that children have different views from their parents as they do not perceive money and parents being at work constantly to be as important as having their parents around. Parents on the other hand perceived their children's views as immature as parents are more concerned about

employment to sustain the family's financial (Chan, Lam, & Shae, 2011). These authors further argued that the similarity in views between non-abused children and adults towards harsh parenting practices could potentially stem from the influences of the sociocultural environment. Specifically, Chinese children are taught to inhibit the expression of negative feelings and keep family secrets, as problems in a family should be confined to the family itself in order to avoid family shame. Therefore, although prior research has demonstrated links between child maltreatment and subsequent parenting practices, it is also important to study how these associations (i.e., child maltreatment and subsequent parenting practices) could also be influenced by culture, especially from Asian countries like Malaysia, which are multicultural.

Cultural influences on Parenting Practices and the Perception of Child Maltreatment

While studies on child maltreatment victims, especially those who have experienced sexual abuse, have been increasing particularly in Western countries (Gilbert et al., 2009; Munro et al., 2014), there is still relatively little comparison with children in other societies or children of different ethnic backgrounds within those countries (Chan, Lam, & Shae, 2011). For instance, in Asian countries like China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia, while there is a legal system to protect children from physical violence, corporal punishment is still widely considered a cultural norm and a legitimate means of inculcating child discipline; there is a high tolerance for the use of physical discipline among Chinese parents (Ji & Finkelhor, 2015; Ngiam & Tung, 2016; Tang, 2006; Tang, 1998; Zhu & Tang, 2011). In turn, this cultural acceptance of physical discipline may influence the perception of child maltreatment survivors (and non-abused children) of what is seen as abusive or acceptable (Kolhatkar & Berkowitz, 2014). Notably, such cultural norms on the use of corporal punishment should not be seen as acceptable or a necessity as recent studies (e.g., Lansford et al., 2016) have demonstrated that parenting beliefs about the use of corporal punishment can

change over time when a country legally bans all forms of violence, including corporal punishment. Nonetheless, there is still a need to understand how survivors of child maltreatment attach meaning to their parents' disciplinary strategies in relation to their culture and child maltreatment, as some studies have found that cultures that support physical discipline, such as corporal punishment, may influence how such behaviours were being perceived by the public, which subsequently may influence child victims to perceive these violent acts as less aversive and as part of normal parenting practices in their culture, like those in Asia (Gershoff et al., 2011; Lansford et al., 2009, 2015).

Although Western-based research has shown how parenting practices have an impact on children, which can be generalised to some extent, these results may not provide a full picture of Asian (e.g., Malaysian) child maltreatment victims where family dynamics are different. For example, many studies from developed countries have suggested that children who lived with single parents, step-parents, divorced or separated parents or parents who used illegal substances may have a higher risk of child victimisation (e.g., Gilbert et al., 2009). However, this increased risk may not be significant in conservative Asian cultures, such as Malaysia, where substance abuse by parents, divorced parents, single parenthood or non-marital cohabitating are still relatively rare (Nguyen, Dunne, & Le, 2010).

Instead, some studies have suggested that cultural influences, such as religious values (Chan, Tan, Ang, Kamal Nor, & Sharip, 2012; Ping & Sumari, 2012), may influence survivors' perception of child maltreatment (i.e., both of their own experience of being maltreated and more generally) and subsequently may affect victims' disclosure and reporting behaviour (Cheah, 2011; Fontes & Plummer, 2010). For example, Chinese traditional beliefs, such as that it is shameful for family matters to be disclosed to others, means that child maltreatment (especially sexual abuse) is a taboo topic in many Chinese communities (Tang, 2002), which may also affect how victims perceive their experiences and

their perpetrator, especially if the perpetrators were also caregivers (Davies, Patel, & Rogers, 2013; Kiser et al., 2014). Additionally, other factors such as fear, stigma, and a lack of open dialogue about the different types of violence in society may also contribute to how child maltreatment is perceived, reported and measured (Cheah, 2011). Notably, however, studies in Asia have mainly focused on professionals, parents or public members, with few studies on how adult survivors or child victims perceived their maltreatment (Chan et al., 2011).

Similarly, in Malaysia, most studies have been cross-sectional surveys, which focused on patterns, prevalence and risk factors for child maltreatment, while qualitative analyses of the experiences of adult survivors of child maltreatment are rare (Cheah & Choo, 2016). Therefore, to fill this gap, this study aims to evaluate how Malaysian adult survivors perceive and interpret their experiences of maltreatment in relation to parenting practices and their cultural beliefs by exploring the following research questions:

1. How do Malaysian adult survivors of child maltreatment *define* child maltreatment?
2. How do Malaysian adult survivors *identify* child maltreatment?
3. How do Malaysian cultural beliefs and values influence and impact adult survivors perception of child maltreatment?

Method

Participants

Twelve Malaysian adult survivors of child maltreatment (10 females and two males) volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews. Participants were aged between 23-50 years old (M=31.5, SD= 9.37). In terms of ethnicity, seven participants were Chinese, four were Indians and one was Malay. Three participants were parents/caregivers and nine were non-parents/caregivers. In terms of type of child maltreatment, four participants self-reported experiencing sexual abuse, two participants self-reported being neglected, but all 12 participants self-reported experiencing physical and emotional abuse. This study did not

obtain the age when survivors were abused, frequency of the abuse, duration of the abuse or the specific type of abuse, as to avoid the risk of identifying them.

Recruitment

The 12 adult survivors were recruited using purposive and snowballing sampling, primarily from universities, hospitals and non-governmental organisations (NGO) in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia. Participants were referred by a friend or a professional (i.e., names and details were given to the researcher by a friend or a professional after participants had shown interest in taking part of this study) or through professional networks known to the first author. Potential participants were then contacted via email or by phone to ask if they were interested in participating in this study. Only those who expressed an interest in participating were sent further information along with the study inclusion criteria, such that participants needed to be: 1) Malaysian or have a Malaysian heritage background; 2) aged 18 and above and be an adult survivor of child maltreatment; and 3) a parent or a caregiver (with or without own children).

Procedure

All interviews were conducted at a place where participants felt comfortable (e.g., home, coffee shops, public spaces). Each participant was interviewed once only and prior to each interview they provided written consent and confirmed that they understood the study's aim, their rights as a participant, and how their data would be processed and stored. They were also given the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns before the interview began. All interviews were audio recorded using a Dictaphone and were between 90- 120 minutes long.

Each participant was interviewed based on an interview schedule which comprised of eight open-ended questions. These questions were used flexibly, adapted or elaborated according to participants' individual responses during the interviews. In addition, based on

Willig's (2008) recommendation, the interviews provided all participants with an opportunity to raise other relevant issues to them, while ensuring that the main interest of this study was adequately explored for each participant.

The first four questions in the interview schedule asked participants to reflect on childhood experiences, their relationship with their parents when they were a child and to reflect on their parents' parenting practices (e.g., disciplinary methods, parenting styles), including what they thought influenced parenting practices (or their own), how their parenting and maltreatment experiences affect their relationship with others, and how their culture influences parenting practices.

Participants were presented with five different vignettes that were used to facilitate discussions. The written case vignettes were adapted from Chan, Lam, and Shae's (2011) study that covered four basic types of child maltreatment: physical abuse (2 vignettes on this type of abuse), emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect (see Table 6.0 for an example). In addition, to avoid priming participants to give socially desirable responses in relation to child maltreatment, the vignettes were only presented after participants had been interviewed about parenting practices and cultural influences.

Table 6.0

Example of an adapted vignette from Chan, Lam and Shae (2011) on possible physical abuse

	Physical abuse
Vignette 2 (used in the current study)	Ahmad is a 12 year old boy and he stays with his grandmother when his parents are at work. His mother always allows him to do whatever he wants at home. For example, Ahmad loves to eat ice cream at home and always makes a mess, which his mother doesn't mind. However, at his grandmother's house one day when Ahmad made a mess of his ice-cream, Ahmad's grandmother told him to clean it up. Ahmad refused and argued with his grandmother; Ahmad's grandmother slapped him.
Chan, Lam & Shae (2011)'s original vignette	Tai-hung has played the computer game for the whole day. Since Tai-hung had not finished his homework, Mum told him to stop playing the computer game and start doing the homework immediately. Though Mum had repeatedly reminded him to do his homework, Tai-hung just played lip service to her. Mum could not stand his behaviour anymore and abruptly turned off the computer. Tai-hung argued with Mum. In the heat of their quarrel, Mum got so angry that she fetched a cane and beat up Tai-hung. The beatings left many bruise marks on Tai-hung's legs and hands.

Upon reading each of the vignettes, participants were asked to describe their perception of the presented vignettes, their understanding of child maltreatment, the different types of maltreatment and their view of it, as well as to explore how they felt their culture influenced their perception. When necessary, the researcher also encouraged participants to use their own examples if clarification was needed. The same sequence of questions was presented after each vignette for exploration and discussion. At the end of the interview, participants were asked if they were thought there were other types of child maltreatment that were not discussed in the interview, followed by debriefing participants.

Ethics

The University of Birmingham Ethical Committee (Reference: ERN_14-0514) approved the study. All personal information obtained was anonymised, including any associated names that were mentioned during the interview, names of places and any other

identifying features. All pre-anonymised transcripts and audio recordings were destroyed. Participants were not compensated nor did they receive any financial reimbursement. .

Data analysis

At the end of each interview, data were transcribed verbatim and participants were given the opportunity to read them to check for accuracy and suitability; there were no written objections to the use of the transcript (or parts thereof) or amendments suggested, so all 12 transcripts were analysed in full. The first author listened to each recording repeatedly to ensure accuracy in the transcription and to assist in familiarisation with the data. All transcripts were analysed using NVivo 11 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2015) qualitative analysis software.

Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to analyse the data as this was deemed to be the most appropriate analytic method to provide rich analysis to map the overall data and to allow key themes to be identified purely from the content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA also provided the flexibility to be independent from any specific theory or to be grounded within any theoretical perspective. However, given the exploratory nature of this research, this analysis followed closely Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines and Burr's (2003) social constructionist framework to take on an inductive or a bottom-up approach, which is appropriate given the little amount of existing qualitative studies among adult survivors of child maltreatment in Malaysia (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For each transcript, detailed reflexive notes were written. Using NVivo 11, initial coding was performed on each transcript, with text nodes allocated to each line (i.e., every line of the data was coded). Following this, each transcript was recoded to capture nodes created by subsequent interviews. Concurrently, at this stage, member checking was also used to establish reasonable inter-rater reliability, and codes were reviewed by all the authors

and discussed. While most of the codes identified by all the authors were similar, codes that were not similar were discussed and explored until agreement was reached.

After the reliable identification of initial nodes, the analysis continued on to establish themes that linked the nodes. Nodes that were similar or had a shared meaning were amalgamated into one node; nodes that were related to each other were combined to create themes using tree nodes. Using data from all interviews, tree nodes gradually developed into connecting inter-related themes that formed broad patterns for between and within the data, and these codes were subsequently developed into four main themes. A number of thematic maps were used to assist and to assess the distinctiveness of these interrelated themes. The analysis was an on-going iterative process that moved backwards and forwards between the data and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the final stages, analysis was reviewed by the authors and the themes were outlined, defined, named and reviewed further to reflect the data. Finally, data extracts that were used have been edited to remove unnecessary detail to provide better readability and comprehension. In addition, quotes that were added in this paper also included box brackets ([ ]) as interpreted by the author and to improve clarity without editing the actual word used by participants or changing the meaning. This is necessary as English is not Malaysia's first language and participants tend to use 'code-switching' (i.e., the use of two or more linguistic varieties inclusive of dialect changes and style), a communication style in Malaysia as majority of Malaysians have several languages and dialects at their disposal (Vong et al., 2010).

Results

Participants described their perception and experiences based on four main themes (see Table 2) that were related to child maltreatment. Nine subthemes were also identified, which accounted for nuances and details of participants' descriptions as well as the diversity of the descriptions within each main theme.

Table 6.1

Thematic categories of child maltreatment definition by Malaysian adult survivors.

Themes	Subthemes
Adulthood definition vs childhood perception of child maltreatment	-
Perceived family values	Perceived parental attitudes and practices Expectation and need to be a good child Family values and beliefs.
Perceived sociocultural norm	Unsupportive community Expectation or views about children
Outcome of child maltreatment	Resentment Resiliency Internalising the problem Justifying the maltreatment experiences and selective reporting

Theme 1: Adult definition vs childhood perception of child maltreatment

As this study was interested in how adult survivors defined child maltreatment and what parenting practices may be considered as abusive, this theme captures the perception of adult survivors on what they considered as child maltreatment and if they were any different when they were children. Under this theme, the study found that adult survivors tended to relate their experiences as a victim differently when speaking from their adult perspective compared to their childhood perspective. As an adult, all survivors communicated an awareness and understanding of child maltreatment, with specific ideas about definitions for physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect. While all adult survivors were able to consider a variety of abusive actions that may be considered as physical abuse and emotional abuse (as shown in Table 2), only two participants have mentioned other indirect forms of sexual abuse such as watching pornography or sexual grooming. Similarly for neglect, only

two participants mentioned acts of omission such emotional neglect, medical or education neglect, etc.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, when adult perceptions were compared retrospectively as children, survivors do not recall having a clear conception or understanding of the different types of abuse and neglect. They highlighted their lack of awareness as a child and tended to ascribe different meaning to the parental abusive acts, and respond to the different types of abuse and neglect with different feelings such as a sense of guilt and sadness, abandonment, while some perceived it 'positively' as a challenge or a form of affection (Table 3).

Table 6.2

Differences in adult definition and childhood perception of the different types of child maltreatment

Type of maltreatment	Adult definition		Childhood perception	
	Description	Example	Description	Example
Physical abuse	Defined as hitting (including using cane, belt, or any tools to hit), slapping, 'whacking'.	"*… when you actually…hitting the child out of anger. Like what has been done to me by my teacher was physical abuse. It was clearly abuse because she didn't do it with the right intention to teach me. She went on giving on [me] a few strokes and she was angry. And she slapped hard on my face and my ears went deaf for a few seconds. So that was abuse*" (P5). "*Umm, like beaten with whatever objects. Even physically by (hands). Can be burned… Been thrown chemicals…*" (P2) *"…the use of belt… or the whip, what you call, the rotan (cane)? And yeah… or slap or things like that"* (P9)	A challenge Perceived as parental care or affection; a form of discipline	"*Because when she hits, she really hits you until you feel the pain and had a lot of scars and the words that she used towards me will completely shred me…I never let my parents know because I took it as a challenge and …my education was very weak.*" (P5) *"… well caning (by) my dad…I take it as disciplinary… because I know he loves me and the reasons as to why he is disciplining me"* (P3) [after reading vignette 2 about a grandma who slaps the child] *"I see it in my own life. At home, we can touch anything. But when we are at our grandmother's place, we are not allowed to touch… if we touch it, we will definitely get a slap. It confuses the child but over time the child does learn…"*(P2)

Emotional abuse	Instilling fear in the child; hurting child's self-esteem or confidence	*"Rude words, swear… just criticise you… like don't act stupid… and things like that*." (P1) *"this mother instead of calling names or putting down the child…she says things like that, she made the child feel shameful or guilty… in a way like, I have given you this and that and now you refuse to help me to do this… those kind of things. Or things like, your mother said, oh you did this and now your father wants to do this. Put a sense of guilt on them…"* (P4)	Feeling a sense of guilt and sadness	"I *would feel sad… and I will feel sad and guilty… because it is guilt tripping so I will feel guilty… and I try to correct things in the capacity that I can. The thing is I (felt) like (I am) often times in between my dad and mum"*. (P3) *" (my mom have said)…you ungrateful child. I forbade the milk that she has given me. So in Malay, that is equivalent to the end of the world [lack of filial piety] if your mom said you were a disobedient child… because she said I have caused their (parents) to divorce"* (P11)
Sexual abuse	Molest, rape, inappropriate touch, telling sexual stories to the child, grooming	*"Inappropriate touch and touch that you are forced into."* (P6) *"Fondling, even just telling dirty stories, grooming… getting to the act, making the child perform certain oral acts…"(*P8)	A form of affection Unsure how to articulate	*"(He told me) I will protect you if you do this for me (have sex)…and I believe that"* (P6) "*It was like, you know, I like this…. I had this puppy love with this person… So it was about that kind of feeling. If you asked me how I felt… what was my experience… I don't really know how to tell you how I actually felt… at the moment*." (P7)
Neglect	Physical neglect (i.e., lack of basic	*"This is child maltreatment (as) you are leaving the child*	A sense of abandonment	"*At the age of 15, before my mom got stroke and before I came to KL [to a]*

	needs, food, water or shelter)	*unattended. The child is 10 years old (from the vignette). They don't have the knowledge or the capability to fend for themselves if anything untoward happened to them… they might get injured"* (P2) *"Physical neglect is like overlooking the child's physical needs like going to the doctor, having clothes… like the child physical needs. Emotional neglect is like ignoring the kid, not giving warmth…"* (P8)		*welfare home, I…work and pay for my own rental. Paid for my own food… and I didn't attend school for the first 2 months... So to me that's a major abandonment where your parents didn't play a role in actually at least fulfil your basic needs."* (P6) *"You are lucky that I have not left you (after father's suicide). I didn't do like what other mothers did…Other mothers would have left you. So in a sense that she can abandon me but she doesn't. So that gives you a feeling as a kid, oh my god I don't want to left alone by my parents…so that kind of impact me"* (P8)

Theme 2: Perceived family values

Participants seemed to interpret parenting practices as abusive or not based on their experiences as a child with their parents and their expectation as to what is considered a 'good child'. The 'perceived family values' encapsulated three subthemes: 1) Perceived parental attitudes and practices; 2) Expectation and need to be a 'good child'; and 3) Family values and beliefs.

Perceived parental attitudes and practices. In exploring participants' experiences as children with their parents, the interviews found that participants tended to describe their experiences and their perception of parental attitudes based on the parenting style and strategies that they remembered their parents using. These two contrasting styles broadly fell into the categories of 'authoritative' and 'authoritarian'.

With the *authoritative* parenting style, participants defined and associated this concept with a 'Western' or 'liberal' parenting style, which usually utilised strategies such as reasoning or rationalising with the child or positive reinforcement (such as token economy). On the other hand, participants who experienced an *authoritarian* parenting style, tended to define and associate that concept as an 'Asian' or 'harsh' parenting style, which usually involves physical discipline, verbal chastisement, controlling through fear, etc.

In addition, although participants who experienced *authoritative* parenting style and generally have positive views about this style, participants in this group also described experiencing physical discipline but tended to see it positively, as acceptable, and not as a form of abuse. Participants in this group perceived that physical discipline is seen as acceptable when the action is perceived to be reasonable and fair to the child (e.g., to help them learn; see Table 4). In contrast, this same group of participants may see the parental act as abusive when it is done out of anger or without control and the child has no knowledge of why he/she is disciplined.

Conversely, participants who had experienced *authoritarian* parenting style and physical discipline, seemed to view such parenting practices more negatively. However, in distinguishing what is considered as acceptable and unacceptable physical discipline, participants in this group see physical discipline as acceptable when immediate correction to the child is necessary and there when they felt that reasoning is futile to the child. They also felt that it is acceptable when physical discipline is done fairly among siblings. Additionally, participants who experienced *authoritarian* parenting style would see physical discipline as abusive when the action left physical marks like bruises and scars.

Table 6.3

Distinguishing acceptable and unacceptable physical discipline based on type of parenting

		Type of parenting		
	Description	Authoritative	Description	Authoritarian
When physical discipline is acceptable	When punishment is used as a form of correction, mindfully done and the child has been explained why the punishment was necessary.	*"Physical discipline is…when you are hitting the child… when you are hitting the child, you are very mindful that you are training the child and when you are doing it, you are not angry. You are telling the child: papa is giving you a stroke on your hand because what you did was wrong. You cannot beat your brother. You cannot beat you sister. You cannot dirty the room. So you are telling the child, what (the child) did was wrong. You hit and you are telling them why you are doing it...give clear reason as to why… (I) consider (this as) physical discipline"* (P5) *"… after you hit the child, the parents should explain why they hit the child."* (P8)	Punishment is used for immediate correction, especially when reasoning with the child is useless. Children must also perceive a sense of equality among siblings.	*"… The kids do something wrong and it doesn't help by explaining. Then a (physical) punishment is needed*" (P1) *"I think (if) it is a little form of caning, it's not that bad. As long as the child knows that it is also applied to other siblings also… and… not he or she alone"* (P4).
When physical discipline is considered abusive	When parents physically hit the child in a state of anger with little or no control and without the child knowing why.	*"…you are not doing it because of your own emotional… oh I'm angry so that's why I am hitting you or the child screams and you hit the child. That is abuse. When you are angry, you go out of control and you tend to abuse your child. Because your child*	When children are aware that it is abuse and there is physical injury	*"I think abuse is when… there is two way… if a child recognised it is abuse… like I have a bleeding nose… if the child recognised that is abuse, then it would be abuse… if the child recognised that the parents is disciplining me, then it is… or if*

		sometimes…don't understand. They don't know why you are hitting (them)…" (P5) *"Well, it's like… put out your hands and I will beat you. That… I know… (is) a discipline act. For her, she will start scolding me and she will start whacking my head with her knuckles. That is not a form of discipline… that was…frustration"*(P12) *"Physical abuse, this is a case when I was in high school. Umm, I was a prefect (at) the time, we caught a girl who played truant… and so she was beaten by her father on the previous day. So when we touched her leg, she was screaming in pain… so we rolled up her skirt and we saw the nastiest bruise. The side of her thigh, and we asked her what happened. And she said her father caught her go [went to see] to another guy and used a stick and club on her. And NOW that is physical abuse. Because number 1, it is so painful. The girl need to limp because we were wondering if there is a broken leg. And 2, it was done irrationally. There was no explanation, there is no follow up to it. Its just… an explosion of rage which the poor girl had to face… so that's how I differentiate between the two".* (P8)		*you hit the child and they got hurt, physically you can see bruises and scars, whatever, then it is physical abuse… it is not discipline…"*(P1)

Expectation and need to be a good child. Apart from participants' perceived parental attitudes and practices, all participants in this study seemed to articulate an expectation of what is considered to be a 'good child' and mentioned explicitly the need to be one. All participants in this study associated being a 'good child' with values concerning filial piety, social conduct, respect and having good manners, which may also have influenced their perception of child maltreatment and what is considered abusive or not. For example, when discussing the vignette on possible physical abuse, a grandmother slapped the child, a participant dismissed the abuse and highlighted the importance of respect for elderly, saying, "…*in other people's house, even in your grandparents, you need to behave. I don't think grandparents should clean up your mess. And I don't think the grandmother did anything wrong... I agree with what the grandmother did*" (P1). Similarly, another participant said:

Well I don't mind *rotan* (caning). The kids shouldn't shout or anything to the (grandparent). He can talk [politely] but not (shout or argue back)…. So yeah…in our culture, you shouldn't [wouldn't] do that. It is not good to shout towards your grandparents. They don't owe you anything (P11).

Family values and beliefs. In this study, adult survivors related their childhood experiences and experiences based on family values and beliefs. Survivors from this study seemed to relate their early experiences being ingrained with the belief that parenting practices and family affairs were considered private matters and were a reflection of family honour and shame and should remain as such to avoid being re-victimised. For example, a participant talked about her experiences of being blamed by her mother for shaming the family as she was assumed to let out family secrets and had caused her parents to argue which led her father to attempt suicide. She said:

… my mom tells me never tell anybody what is happening at home. Otherwise she will beat me. So… there is one time, someone sent a letter to my mom saying, I know what is going on at home… (and) my mom…went berserk and …I just stood there and I felt that I was the cause of it. And then after that, my mom was like… because of you that your dad wants to jump from the house…. (P4).

Apart from that, other participants have felt that these should be kept private as it is also a reflection of poor parenting. For example, when discussing the vignette on possible emotional abuse, one participant said that the mother was to blame:

How she (child) behaves is how the parents treat the child. It is all the parents fault. Why is the parent blaming the kids? If the kids didn't do well in academics, it is (the parent's) fault. She (the mother) didn't teach well if she (child) don't want to help in your household. Failed mother! (Referring to the mother in the vignette) Your kid don't want to obey you and you want to blame the kid! (P1).

Theme 3: Perceived sociocultural norm

Aside from perceived family values, participants perceived that the sociocultural norms in Malaysia influenced their perception of what is child maltreatment and how that related to their experiences as a victim. This could be seen from two subthemes: 1) unsupportive community; and 2) expectations or views about children.

Unsupportive community. Some of the adult victims felt that they were living in an unsupportive community and were given very little support following their abuse or neglect. Relating their experiences as a child, they felt that their abusive ordeal was dismissed and/or their cry for help was not heard, but also that there was a lack of avenues from which to seek help. For example, a survivor said:

… it would be like beating that causes bruises all over the body and when I was in primary school... my teacher made a report but it didn't turn out to be… and it was published in newspaper… and that was it. That was how the case ended. (P6)

Similarly, when other survivors discussed their experiences of seeking help, they found their cry for help was dismissed and sometimes they were blamed for the acts done by the abuser. For example, a survivor who experienced emotional abuse said:

…I didn't steal it. It was mine. But they (teachers) didn't want to believe in those things. It was mine. I don't know why. Maybe it's something about me…when I tell, the teachers don't want to listen. I feel like they are judging me based on how I look. (P5)

In another example, a survivor who experienced sexual abuse felt that it was pointless seeking help as she did not know who to tell or trust and had fear that her cry for help would be dismissed. She said:

…. I have no one to tell. I don't know who to tell. And there is no one I can actually trust… because [the] last time I tend to lie a lot when I want to avoid her (mother) beatings… so basically I get beating worst when she knew. [the mother will listen with] So just… one ear in and one ear out [heard but unheeded]. So I wouldn't talk things that bothers me. Like how is my school, or whatever. I wouldn't tell her at all. I just journal it all down. (P6)

Furthermore, some participants also described that such community may seem unsupportive towards parental practices such as physical punishment as it is part of the 'culture'. She said:

I think it is just culture… Especially Chinese culture. They don't give a big F about… what people think. If they want to abuse their child in front of everybody, like you stupid, or you hit the head… then I would say… it is the culture that contributes to that. And you can see a pattern. If you see facebook… or you see youtube… it's the Chinese who don't care. I am just going to hit you on the head. (P7)

Some participants also believe that instead of promoting safeguarding among children in their community, they felt that their communities might do more damage and harm than good by re-victimising the child as it is viewed to bring shame to the family that subsequently could impact the child negatively. Therefore such child maltreatment might be seen as a problem that should be contained within the family, as to avoid spreading rumours. For example, a participant said: "*...because families are afraid… in the Indian community, it is very quick to spread rumours. You just need to tell to one person and the whole neighbourhood will know…*" (P2)

Expectations or views about children. Most adult survivors felt that the expectation or views that parents put on children could also influence children's perception of child maltreatment. The adult survivors in this study felt that, in general, adults tend to perceive children as lacking the mental ability and maturity to comprehend their family circumstances (e.g., work to keep family afloat, older children taking up responsibilities as a young caretaker). For example a participant said: "Yeah because they (children) are not stupid you know. …They (adults) think that children are stupid and they can't understand. But actually they understand more than you think…" (P2).

Yet, despite this view, participants also stated that parents (and participants themselves) could also have contradictory expectations on children and expect them to be well-behaved, able to be independent and able to be understanding towards their parents and family affairs. These contradictions perhaps reflect the importance that parents placed on children to train them to have responsibilities and to play their roles at home (Sorkhabi, 2005) For example, when a survivor was relating his perception on neglect, he felt that many young children are capable of being independent at home and to that he added: "Spoiled! They have money and don't know how to use elsewhere. Just go (out) and buy food" (P1). Similarly when discussing about a neglect vignette whereby children were being left at home alone, a

participant felt that adults should explain to their children why they were being left alone at home and hope the children would be understanding of their family economic circumstances. The participant said:

… someone [needs] to talk to them [children]. They need to understand…I also took a long time to understand that… (or) the child will feel neglected… But a lot of … kids are very understanding because they are very poor. The poorer kids will be very understanding. They will be a very good children. (P12)

Theme 4: Outcome of child maltreatment

Across all interviews, participants described how their experiences negatively impacted upon them. In particular, they mentioned social functioning, such as being sensitive and vigilant of potential harm by the authority figure, and attempting to avoid conflict or undesirable consequences throughout childhood and towards into adulthood. For example:

Be more careful because I learnt since young not to make people angry… if not, bad things might happened to you. So you learnt that. You will be a very nice person basically… (P1)

In addition to these negative outcomes of child maltreatment, this theme encapsulated four subthemes: 1) Resentment; 2) Resiliency; 3) Internalising the problem; 4) Justifying the maltreatment experiences and selective reporting.

Resentment. Participants reported resentment towards their parents who they perceived as the abuser(s): participants in this study seemed to implicitly express unresolved anger and strong views about using violence. For example, when discussing the vignette about neglect, a participant said in a harsh tone, *"Parents shouldn't be parents. If the phone is the only means of contacting them and if the child can't reach them, it is really bad*" (P1). Another participant who believes violence begets violence said:

I believe… I can fight back. I won't be scare about you (the abuser), I could fight back. I can talk back to my uncle now… I am not scare anymore. I could [would] fight [argue] back

(and) I won't lose [be defeated]. You see this is what parenting (has) done to me! I use violence to settle things but to me it's something that is the last resort. (P11).

Resiliency. Nonetheless, although some participants in this study seem to demonstrate resentment, this study also found that many participants were not being impacted similarly. Instead, the study found that some participants were also able to demonstrate resiliency. For example a participant said:

…and since I worked with children, most of my life, I tend to be much more caring and I don't use the same way (physical discipline) because I know what the impact is…I think it has taught me a lot. Because I won't use what was taught to me on the child… I wouldn't use physical means to punish a child or verbally… downgrade them. But it became better… (P2).

…I can't share the same sentiments or feelings that I have. I respect my parents, I respect them but I don't love them. Like how you would to your mom and dad. So I don't love them. No I don't. But I respect them. If there is anything wrong or things like that, I will definitely go and help them. There is no hatred whatsoever. But of course there is hurt. I have forgiven but you cannot forget (P4).

Apart from being resilient, some participants had also developed an ability to empathise with other abused children and being aware how culture could influence disclosure behaviour. Some participants also felt the need to protect other children who have been maltreatment. For instance a participant said:

Actually for me… it all boils down to personal experience. Because I was abused from age 4 to 18… so its kinds of makes me vigilant when a child is involved. Because I don't want them to face like what I faced. And when you talk about Indian culture, we tend to be very secretive. In the sense that when something like this happens, we don't want the outside world to know, because it brings shame to the family (P3).

Internalising the problem. In this study, some participants also related how they internalised their feelings following their maltreatment. They do not want to talk about what has happened to them (the maltreatment) and find it difficult to disclose the abuse. Additionally, some participants reported that they saw the abuse (such as receiving physical discipline for academic failures) as a personal challenge to prove the abuser wrong. For example, a participant discussed her inability to relate to their parents and saw the abuse as a personal challenge:

… (when) my grandparents passed away I… didn't tell my parents. At that time, I felt the emptiness with my parents… I couldn't be open to my parents. I had difficulty opening up to my parents… I was depressed but I never disclose them (*depressed feelings*) to my parents and other thing, those marks (*the bruises*) were not here and it was here (*pointing to an inconspicuous area of the body*). She beat me here. So those things you can only see if I undress. You cannot see with dress on. That's why my parents never know and when she hits me and all that, I take it as a challenge. I felt like, oh, you are calling me a buffalo, she never calls me by name, she calls me a buffalo. So I took it as a challenge and I said, ok, I'm going to show you that I could do. Because I was very offended by the way she treated me… (P5)

Justifying maltreatment experiences and selective reporting. Given the negative impact of child maltreatment, participants in this study adopted different strategies to help them make sense of the abusive experiences and to make peace with themselves. One of the common ways that participants seemed to make sense of their abusive experiences was by justifying the maltreatment experiences as non-abusive, as if the act was common within the family and seen as acceptable within the society. For example a survivor described that it is a "classic" Asian parenting where all Malaysian would have experienced being caned as child and it is seen as 'acceptable' as such practices is being passed down from one generation to the other. She said:

> It's a very classic Asian parenting… Don't we all go through that before? So not only my mom does it but aunties and my grandmother do it… If I happened to be rebellious, which I happened to be as a child… umm, what I have this called "itchy" fingers. I like to touch everything and I like to run around and I like to argue, so I was a destructive child… it grew to a point, [that] even the slightest mistake can grew [lead] into a full blown caning episode… I remember I was arguing with my brother and my mom can't take it. She whacked me and I was bleeding through the caning and my teacher saw… and my teachers didn't ask anything about it… (so) what came to my mind was in Asian parenting style, this is acceptable... (P8)

In contrast, other participants seemed to justify their maltreatment experiences on the basis of maintaining relationships, for the purpose of social harmony and peace. For example, a participant (who experienced sexual abuse) described her experiences of reporting her foster father but not the other perpetrator who is the son of a family friend's simply because she would like to preserve relationships and not eliminate all forms of social support for her mother's sake. She said:

…He [foster-father]… lightens up her (mother) days you see… she is the woman who needs a man in her life. Even though she is very independent, she is career woman, but you know… the man lightens up her days. They are like best friends. They can talk for hours. So when you ask me, I already took (him) way from her… and she had lost her sister to cancer and her sister was one of her best friends… and she already lose her best friend (life partner)… and (so) if I tell what her best friend's son (baby sitter) did to me, she had totally had no one. I would rather not say anything… (P7).

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to explore how Malaysians adult survivors perceived their maltreatment experiences, in particular how they define and identify child

maltreatment in relation to parenting practices and their culture. Through the interviews, which were thematically analysed, this study found four themes as to how these survivors perceived their maltreatment experiences: 1) adult definition vs childhood perception, 2) perceived cultural norm, 3) perceived social norm and 4) outcomes of child maltreatment.

The present study found that how these adults defined what is child maltreatment was different to how they believe they perceived it as a child. As these adult survivors were mostly referred by professionals, it is possible that these differences could be due to the fact that these adult survivors have been made aware of what constitutes child maltreatment and have received some form of support from professionals. However, given that one of the themes in this study demonstrated that there are differences on how adults survivors perceived child maltreatment and compared to their childhood, their childhood perceptions were consistent with Chan et al. (2011) in which most of those child participants did not recognise their experience as child maltreatment, but tend to think that parental action or inaction was not done on purpose and perceived maltreatment on the basis of "harm standard" (i.e., children must experience some harm or injury from maltreatment) rather than "endangerment standard" (i.e., suspicion of being endangered by any form of abuse and neglect) as suggested by Sedlack and Broadhurst (1996).

Notably, although most of the adult survivors in this study were able to articulate what constitutes physical and emotional abuse, this was not the case for sexual abuse and neglect. For instance, direct sexual assaults (such as molestation and rape) were discussed, but there was little mention of indirect assaults (such as sexual grooming and watching pornography) even though one of the vignettes included watching pornography; hence it is unclear if these behaviours were considered abusive to these survivors or not. Similarly, when discussing neglect, only physical neglect was mentioned, but not other forms, such as emotional, medical, educational or nutritional neglect.

In terms of how culture may influence the perception of child maltreatment, the findings of this study suggest that socio-cultural norms do exist and may influence the perception of how child maltreatment is being perceived by these adult survivors. For instance, although survivors in this study attempted to distinguish between what is considered abusive or not based on their prior experience of being parented, much of this distinction was made based on their rationalisation and intent of the parental practices and not parenting style as argued by Zhu & Tang (2011). Although all participants in this study made reference to 'authoritarian' or 'authoritative' parenting style to distinguish abusive parenting practices, the data suggest that this reference may not necessarily be valid in considering what are acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices. Rather what is seen as acceptable and legitimate is more closely relate to "loving punishment" as argued by Zhu and Tang (2011), as participants who were beaten felt that their parents had good intention to correct their misbehaviour, while unacceptable punishment would be when children felt that their punishment was undeserved or not reasonably fair. These two kinds of treatment were perceived as different and subsequently influence the perception on what is considered as abusive or not.

Consistent with De la Cruz et al.'s (2001), this study found that survivors' views on abusive parental action not only depends on its intensity and severity, but also on whether the spanking is 'for no reason' and if survivors were physically and emotionally hurt by their parental physical abuse (Dobbs & Duncan, 2004). The perception of parental physical abuse as 'loving punishment', which is the main barrier to survivors' help seeking and disclosure, highlighted participants' awareness of the societal norm on physical abuse and how it is perceived as culturally acceptable and normal. Such a stereotype toward harsh parenting is possibly prompted by cultural beliefs (specifically family values) such as filial piety, respect and strict discipline, as well as how physical punishment of children is construed as a normal

socialisation practice. This is in addition to other cultural-familial values such as family honour and avoid-losing-face that were mentioned by participants in this present study.

As Malaysians may commonly associate with the culture of shame, rather than a culture of guilt as in most Western countries, Malaysian survivors may have been "trained" since childhood to keep family shame within the confines of the family and not expose it to the public. This high level of concern about losing individual and family face further supports Smith and Bond's (1993) contention that the concept of 'face' in Asian culture is not only an individual but also a collective concept. This may have encouraged survivors to internalise the problem and inhibit the expression of negative feelings, as well as attempt to provide rational explanations for their maltreatment experiences and perceive it differently (Chan et al., 2011). There may also be an element of self-protection, where it is easier to consider a parent has not harmed you but acted in your best interests or out of love than to consider they have deliberately harmed you.

Strengths and limitations

Although studies on the perception of child maltreatment are not new, the existing research is predominantly from Western societies and there is still a lack of research with victims of child maltreatment from Asia, including Malaysia. This study not only helps to provide an insight into how adult survivors perceive their maltreatment experiences, which may differ from professionals who worked in the area of child maltreatment and members of the public, but also to understand the cultural influences that may affect their perception.

However, like any research, this study has limitations. While there are a growing number of studies that have involved adult survivors of child maltreatment, much of the qualitative research (including quantitative research) had focused exclusively on the experiences of female survivors (Sorsoli, Kia-Keating, & Grossman, 2008). In this study, we found it difficult to recruit male participants and only managed to include two male

participants; hence there are a disproportionate number of female voices over male voices in the analyses, which make it difficult to discern men's experiences. This could be seen as problematic, as some studies have shown that men's experiences could potentially be very different than females, especially in terms of disclosure and their unique support needs (Mitchell et al., 2017; Sorsoli et al., 2008). However, men are often reluctant to participate in psychological research and less likely to seek help from mental health professionals, especially when it concerns abuse (Sorsoli et al., 2008).

Furthermore, this study did not include specific information about participants' age when they were first abused, how frequent, how severe, how long, by whom and how. This information may be useful in teasing out how different experiences could have an impact on the specific type of maltreatment they have gone through. In addition, it is also noteworthy that these adult survivors were interviewed several years after they experienced violence and they therefore may be living in different circumstances at the time of the interview. As such, their attributions and accounts of their experiences are their retrospective reflections, which may be different if they were interviewed as a child or as they were growing up in their original environment. Nonetheless, this present study demonstrated that adult survivors (and potentially child victims) may have their own views on child maltreatment and child protection, as these populations are also active agents in their own sociocultural environment that they live in.

Conclusion

This paper focused on data from Malaysian adult survivors of child maltreatment and explored how they perceived their maltreatment experiences, in particular, how they define and identify child maltreatment, together with an examination of how culture influenced their perceptions. This study found that participants do have different perceptions of child maltreatment, as an adult and as a child, and distinguish abusive behaviours from those that

are not differently when they make reference to authoritarian and authoritative parenting style. In addition, this study also found that culture does play a role in influencing survivors' perception and attitudes towards parenting practices, their expectations towards children and how culture is being used to normalise or justify potential abusive parenting. As such, much needs to be done to improve professional intervention for (potential) abused children and to also take on a child-centred perspective to understand better how Malaysian children perceive and respond to the different forms of child maltreatment.

Chapter 7: Understanding Malaysian Parents' Perceptions of Child Maltreatment: An Eco-Cultural Framework

Chapter rationale

Following from the qualitative findings from Malaysian professionals, parents and adults survivors (refer to Chapter 4 to 6), this chapter aimed to explore how ecological factors and the cultural factors of parental beliefs and cultural assimilation influence the perception of child maltreatment, using a larger sample group of parents, with the guidance of the eco-cultural framework.

Abstract

As Malaysia has limited studies on the perception of child maltreatment among Malaysian parents, this study aimed to fill that gap by examining how child maltreatment is being perceived in relation to parental beliefs, practices, cultural and ecological factors. Using snowballing and purposive sampling method, 351 Malaysian parents were recruited for this study. They comprised of 214 females and 111 males, as well as 26 who declined to say. Using self-reported measurements (paper or online survey), parents were asked about their perception towards the different domains of maltreatment, history of childhood abuse, parenting styles, parental beliefs, acculturation, neighbourhood support, social support and financial security. Using Kruskal-Wallis test and Bonferroni correction, the analysis found that in terms of maltreatment perception, parents' own history of childhood abuse had an effect on their perception of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, and influenced by parenting practices such laxness and over-reactivity. In terms of parental beliefs, parenting style such as over-reactivity and laxness seem to have a relationship with parental beliefs that is consistent with Asian literature. Additionally, given that Malaysia's parenting practices could be influenced by Western cultures as suggested by some literature, it is not surprising that a secondary (European-American) culture could influence parenting beliefs and the perception of child maltreatment. In summary, as parental perception towards child maltreatment are associated with different parental and cultural factors, and such importance should be given in future research when examining the risk factors of child maltreatment among Asians.

Introduction

Since parents play an important role in the child protection system, it is important to examine their perception towards child maltreatment, as their perception not only has an impact on how they identify the risk of child maltreatment from other parents but also how they protect and educate their children about abuse by others adults but also how they protect and educate their children from abuse by others. However, perception of child maltreatment remains an area that has been infrequently examined despite its relevance to understanding the risk factors of child maltreatment and its value in predicting perpetration or the propensity for an individual to perpetrate maltreatment (Bammeke & Fakunmoju, 2016; Fakunmoju & Bammeke, 2013; Madu, Idemudia, & Jegede, 2002). Furthermore, although there are numerous studies that have suggested how parental perception on child maltreatment could be influenced by a myriad of factors such as parental beliefs and parental practices (Shor, 2000; Tajima & Harachi, 2010; Wolfe & McIsaac, 2011),(Shor, 2000; Tajima & Harachi, 2010; Wolfe & McIsaac, 2011) as well as environmental, sociodemographic and cultural factors (Begle, Dumas, & Hanson, 2010; Berger, 2005; Jasmine S Chan et al., 2000; Frechette & Romano, 2016; Rodriguez, 2008), few studies have examined how these factors are related in a multicultural Asian country such as Malaysia. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between Malaysian parents' perceptions of child maltreatment, parental beliefs, parents own history of experiencing childhood abuse, parenting practices, cultural and ecological influences.

Parental beliefs, parenting practices and child maltreatment

Parental beliefs and parenting practices have an influence on a child's developmental outcome. Parents typically have different beliefs and values regarding parenting (disciplinary) strategies and these beliefs typically stem from their earlier (childhood) family culture (Son et al., 2017). Parental discipline has often been debated in terms of its efficacy

and the effects that it has on children, with disciplinary methods such as the use of corporal punishment most controversial (Holden, 2002; Vittrup & Holden, 2010). However, some studies that examined parents use of corporal punishment have suggested that parental discipline and abuse may exist on a continuum (Son et al., 2017), which subsequently may affect how parents perceived child maltreatment.

Furthermore, there are many other factors that may influence how parents perceive child maltreatment. Some studies have suggested that parental perception of child maltreatment could be associated with how parents interpret and evaluate their child's behaviour (Beckerman, van Berkel, Mesman, & Alink, 2017). For example, according to Milner (2003) and Milner (1993), when parents have biased perceptions towards their children, the quality of parenting strategies could be compromised which subsequently might also lead to abusive parenting. Milner argued that parents who have biased perception towards their children tend to attribute more responsibility and hostile intention to the child (e.g., "he is refusing to do this homework because I did not get him his toy"), in which parents may evaluate their child's behaviour as more serious, wrong and blameworthy. In addition, Milner also states that these parents were less likely to think of alternative explanations for the child's behaviour (e.g., he breaks the glass because he is too young to hold the glass straight") and were more likely to associate their child's negative behaviour as part of the child's internal, stable and global characteristics. As such, parents who have such biased perception towards their child were more likely to use harsher disciplinary methods as part of their parenting practices, and subsequently may perceive that abusive parenting is acceptable and may not necessarily see it as a form of maltreatment (Gracia & Herrero, 2008; Ngiam & Tung, 2016; Tajima & Harachi, 2010).

Furthermore, parental perception towards child maltreatment could also be influenced by their experiences in balancing parental duties and managing challenging child behaviour.

For example, some studies on child sexual abuse have argued that victims, particularly those who experienced intrafamilial abuse, were more likely to come from a dysfunctional family environment that exposed them to ineffective models of parenting (Godbout et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2010; Trickett et al., 2011). As such, parents may experience different beliefs and attitudes towards their parenting competence and their ability to meet the demands of parenting. This can also lead parents to be emotionally distant, permissive and have difficulties establishing boundaries with their children that subsequently affects parenting confidence (DiLillo & Damashek, 2003) and may create dysfunctional or unhelpful attitudes, such as feeling inadequate, incompetent or having unrealistic and rigid expectations of their children (Banyard, 1997; Banyard et al., 2003).

However, recent studies have also suggested that parenting practices should be seen as separate from parenting competency (which refers to parents belief in their ability to effectively manage the varied tasks and situations of parenthood; Gross & Rocissano, 1988). Some studies have shown that child maltreatment may not necessarily be associated with parenting competency, but rather with parents' poor parenting practices such as behaviours related to maternal sensitivity (i.e., responding to a child's distress), harsh intrusiveness (i.e., parental control, manipulation, inhibition) and the absence of boundaries with their children (de Jong et al., 2015; Zvara et al., 2015).

Besides parenting experiences, parents' perception towards child maltreatment could also be influenced by their own history of child maltreatment (Berlin, Appleyard, & Dodge, 2011). Some studies have shown that parenting attributions and expectations fully mediates the relationship between own experience of childhood maltreatment and going on to maltreat one's own children or not, where consideration of risk factors for abuse only partially mediate the relationship (Dixon, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Browne, et al., 2005).

It must be stressed, however, that most adult survivors do not go on to maltreat their children (Dixon, Browne, & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005, 2009; Dixon, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Browne, 2005) and many are able to either develop resiliency (Marriott et al., 2014) or engage protective factors to mitigate risks. Thus, parents' history of child maltreatment should be considered a risk factor as it can lead to an increased risk of intergenerational cycle of maltreatment (Thornberry & Henry, 2013), but it is not inevitable. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Tajima (2000) with a nationally representative community sample, the researcher found that although parents who have a history of abuse as a child was a consistent predictor in perpetrating physical abuse with their child, such cases are still relatively rare (less than 10%); while other studies have also found that as many as 70% of parents who have been abused before as children were typically able to break the cycle of abuse (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Zigler & Hall, 1989). Therefore, this suggests that parents' history of child maltreatment has a limited role in abusive parenting practices and is one of several risk factors in examining the parental perception of child maltreatment.

Nonetheless, cross-cultural studies have indicated that while there are variations on parental beliefs and practices (e.g., Lee, Malley-Morrison, Jang, & Watson, 2014; Son et al., 2017), these studies have indicated that there is no universal standard that could be agreed by both professionals and parents on what is considered as optimal childcare, and therefore no universal agreement on what is considered as child maltreatment. However, as some studies have demonstrated the role of culture in explaining parent-child relationships or parenting practices (Bornstein et al., 2011), it is likely that culture could also influence how and to what extent parents perception on what may be considered as abusive from those that are not.

Cultural influences on Parenting Practices and the Perception of Child Maltreatment

Studies with Asian parents have found that parental beliefs and practices were often linked to cultural influences such as Confucianism. These cultural influences suggest that the

importance on authoritarian, patriarchal and hierarchical family structures that emphasised that a child needs to have a close bond with their family, interdependent and have mutual family roles. As such, Asian children are expected to be obedient, respectful to parents and elders, demonstrate humility and be academically successful (Bavolek, Kline, McLaughlin, & Publicover, 1979; Larsen, Kim-Goh, & Nguyen, 2008). In contrast, in Western cultures, parents tend to emphasise values such as individualism, and independence with their children (Rubin & Chung, 2006). Thus, Asian parents are more likely than Western parents to use harsh parenting practices and may see it as an acceptable form of discipline to instil children compliance and respect (Ngiam & Tung, 2016; Son et al., 2017), which may influence their perception on child maltreatment. For example, in a recent study (Kesner, Kwon, & Lim, 2016) that was conducted among college students examining their perceptions of corporal punishment and maltreatment, it was found that Asian students were more likely to perceive severe physical discipline as not abusive, whereas White and African American students perceived that corporal punishment was a form of abusive parenting practice.

However, given that most child maltreatment studies that were conducted among Asians were predominantly from East Asia countries such as China, Taiwan, and Japan (Dunne et al., 2015), it remains unclear (if and) how these cultural influences may apply to other (Southeast) Asian countries, such as Malaysia, given that perceptions of child maltreatment may also be different across cultures and societies (Benbenishty & Schmid, 2013). For example, Malaysia is a Muslim-majority country that does not share similar sociological and historical factors to China (e.g., Confucian teachings, former one child policy). In addition, while most Asian-based literature typically discussed their findings based on a monocultural sample (given the ethnic composition of most East Asia countries), countries such as Malaysia and Singapore do not share similar compositions. Malaysia, for instance, is comprised of Malay, Chinese and Indians, who may have individual and shared

cultures among different ethnicities (S. Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009; Ngiam & Tung, 2016). As such, Malaysian parents' cultural beliefs and values concerning parenting and how child maltreatment is being perceived in relation to parenting practices may be different from those that have been found in East Asia (Reisig & Miller, 2009). For instance in studies that were conducted among Chinese, Japanese and Koreans, parenting methods such as physical discipline maybe seen as acceptable among Chinese and Korean societies, whereas Japanese society tends to prefer non-confrontational discipline strategies (Gough, 1996). While in some cultures, these parenting practices might be interpreted differently by consider anything physical as physical abuse, conversely those who believe in physical discipline might see its absence as a form of parental neglect or lax parenting (Bang, 2008; Gough, 1996; Maker et al., 2005).

In addition, while it is also important to note the role of culture, some studies have suggested that the conceptualisation of the determinants of parenting could also be influenced by intersectionality theory, which underscores that individuals have multiple "axes of identification" (Nadan et al., 2015). For example, as Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country (e.g., Malay, Chinese and Indian), Malaysians may identify with multiple social identities (e.g., relating to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, nationality, gender, culture etc.) that could shape their beliefs, perceptions, experiences and behaviors. Besides, the application of intersectionality theory also suggests that individuals may identify with and be influenced by more than one culture (via enculturation and acculturation; Krane et al., 2001, Raman & Hodes, 2012). Therefore, arguably, Malaysian parents' beliefs and practices could also be influenced by their own cultural group but also other cultures within Malaysia or cultures outside of Malaysia.

Present study

Therefore, while this study recognised the ecological factors (see Belsky, 1980, 1993; and Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993) that may affect child maltreatment, this study would also emphasise on the role of culture, in order to provide further understanding on the mechanism behind child maltreatment among Malaysian parents. Hence, this study utilised an eco-cultural framework that combines both ecological and cultural factors that could be used in understanding the perceptions of child maltreatment. One such framework that consolidates both ecological factors and cultural factors is Berry's (1976) eco-cultural framework. Berry asserts that this framework is neither a model nor a theory; rather it is a flexible framework to study human psychological diversity by taking into account:

- the ecological and sociopolitical influences
- variables (cultural and biological adaptation) that link these influences to psychological characteristics
- various "transmission variables" to individuals which includes enculturation, socialization, genetics, and acculturation.

In 1986, Berry and his colleagues reformulated his framework to be a more general cross-cultural framework that could employ ecological and social political contexts as independent variables, in which it could be useful to study their influence on a number of psychological variables such as children's developmental pathway (Weisner, 2002).

Therefore, this study is adopting Berry's eco-cultural framework with specific modifications (see Figure 7.0) that will allow us to explore and understand how child maltreatment is perceived among Malaysian parents, in relation to ecological factors (i.e., ecological context and ecological influences, history of abuse) and cultural factors (parenting beliefs, parenting practices and cultural transmission).

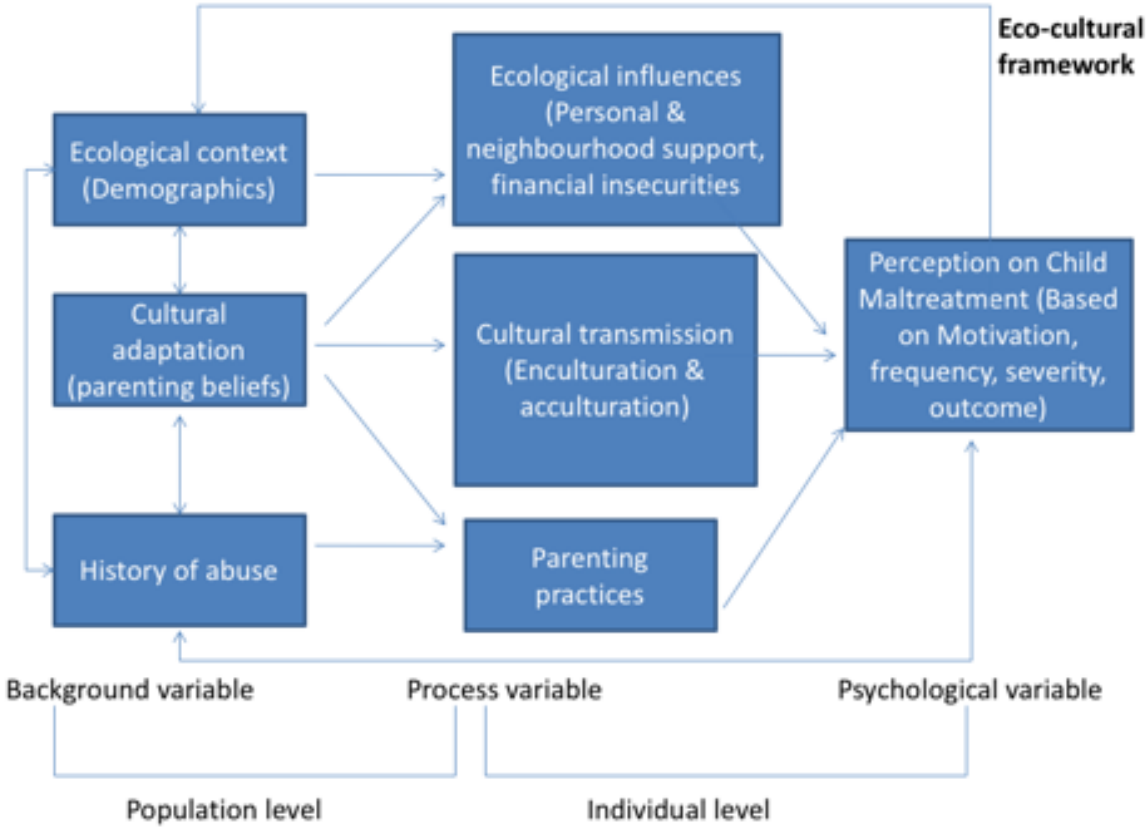


Figure 2.0: Adaptation of the eco-cultural framework

Building upon previous research, the present study responds to a gap in the literature by investigating cultural perceptions of child maltreatment by examining the ecological factors, cultural factors, parental beliefs and practices, as well as parents' perception of child maltreatment. This paper seeks to identify how these factors are related to how child maltreatment is perceived among Malaysian parents.

Research questions:

1. What is the relationship between Malaysian parents' perception of child maltreatment with parental beliefs, parental history of abuse, parenting practices, cultural transmission and ecological influence?
2. What is the relationship between Malaysian parental beliefs with parental history of abuse, ecological influences, cultural transmission and parenting practices?

Hypotheses:

1. Malaysian parents' perceptions of child maltreatment will be associated with:
    a. parental history of abuse
    b. parenting practices
    c. cultural transmission
    d. ecological influence
2. Malaysian parental beliefs will be associated with:
    a. parental history of abuse
    b. ecological influences
    c. cultural transmission
    d. parenting practices

Method

Participants and Design

In this study, purposive and snowballing methods were used and 351 participants consented to participate in this study. This sample comprised of 214 females, 111 males and 26 participants who did not disclose. In terms of participants' age, participants were aged between 18 and 72 years (M = 48.12; SD = 10.13). Additionally, 14% of these participants were Malays, 53% were Chinese, 13.4% were Indian and 11.1% were other ethnicities. This study employed a cross-sectional design using a survey method.

Material

Demographics variables. This study included several demographic factors. These were participant's age, ethnicity, marital status, income, gender, education, household structure (see Appendix H for full list). Means of the subgroups are presented in Table 7.2.

Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2; Bavolek & Keene, 2001). This is a standardised inventory (see: https://www.assessingparenting.com/assessment/aapi) used to

assess parental beliefs about parenting and child rearing. Responses to the inventory provide an index of risk (i.e., 1-3 for high risk; 4-6 medium risk; and 7-10 low risk) for parenting behaviours known to be risk factors for child abuse and neglect. This inventory measures five specific risks – expectations of children (i.e., appropriate expectation on children growth and development), parental empathy towards children's needs (i.e., understand and values children), use of corporal punishment (i.e., values alternatives to corporal punishment), parent-child family roles (i.e., having appropriate family roles) and children's power and independence (i.e., value children's independence; see Bavolek et al., 1979). Although, the AAPI-2 has been widely used in US and among other Western nations, it is likely to be usable with many cultural groups as it has been used with different ethnic groups and in other nations, with internal reliability of 0.70-0.86 (among US Indian samples) and internal consistencies as follows: Expectations = 0.70, empathy = 0.75, corporal punishment = 0.81, child role and independency= 0.82—the test–retest reliability of the inventory indicated an appropriate level (0.76) (Bavolek & Keene, 2001).

History of Child Abuse Questionnaire (see Appendix I). This self-report measure was adapted from the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Test-Children (ICAST-C). This test was used to assess history of child abuse among parents when they were a child. This measure specifically looks into physical assault (which included minor, severe and very severe forms of assault), psychological aggression (minor and severe), sexual coercion (contact and non-contact), neglect (physical and emotional) and if they experienced negotiation as a child. Additionally, given the simplistic use of the language in this measure (as it was meant for children), this measurement was chosen to ensure Malaysian parents understood each abusive related item. For each item, respondents only need to tick the appropriate box if they have been abused a) ≥ 50 times, b) 13-50 times, c) 6-12 times, d) 3-5 times, e) 1-2 times and f) 0 times. However, as this questionnaire assess parents' history of

abuse as a child (from age 0-18), the average score was obtained for each item for ease of interpretation. For example, for the purpose of analysis and to ensure a linear variable, if a participants ticked 3-5 times of experiencing physical assault, participant scores were recoded as 4 times, to provide an easier interpretation of the frequency that they have experienced such abuse throughout their childhood. These scores were then averaged for each scale for each type of abuse.

Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS; Gim Chung, Kim, & Abreu, (2004); see Appendix J). This 45-items scale allows complex assessment of acculturation and enculturation among Asians and the relationship with psychological functioning. The scale looks into three different cultural dimensions, which include culture of origin (α = .89), Asian American culture (α = .94) and European-American culture (α= .91). Although this scale is typically used among Asian Americans (e.g., Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese), it is likely to be usable with many other cultural groups because this scale has also been used with several Asian ethnic groups in their country of origin and able to retain basic conceptualization and operationalization used for this scale. This scale has reliability between 0.78 and 0.87; and has a moderate concurrent validity with SL-ASIA (-.75).

Parenting Scale (see Appendix K). The Parenting Scale (Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, & Acker, 1993) is a 30-item questionnaire measuring three parenting styles: laxness (permissive discipline), over-reactivity (authoritarian discipline, displays of anger), and verbosity (overly long reprimands or reliance on talking). Each item has a more/less effective anchor, and parents indicate on a 7-point scale, where they feel their behaviour sits. The scales had good internal consistency with the current Malaysian sample (α = .725, .771, and .295 respectively).

Ecological influences (see Appendix L).

Personal support. Perceptions of personal support were measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988; This 12-item scale measures respondents' perceptions of personal support by their significant other (α = .897), family (α = .894) and friends (α = .834). Response options ranged from 1 to 7 (1 = very strongly disagree, 2 = strongly disagree, 3= mildly disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = mildly agree, 6 = strongly agree and 7 = very strongly agree).

Neighbourhood support. Three items adopted from Tajima and Harachi (2010) were used and averaged to create a scale measuring perceptions of neighborhood support. Respondents were asked the extent to which people (a) help, (b) trust, and (c) get along with their neighbours. Response options range from 1 to 4 (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree), with a good reliability (α = .866).

Financial insecurity. Six survey items-scales were adopted from Takima and Harachi (2010) to fit the British benefits system and were used and averaged to create a scale measuring financial insecurity within the household. Respondents were asked (yes–no) whether in the past year anyone in the household received:

- Temporary income support
- Disability support
- Housing benefit
- Tax credits
- Free school lunches for children
- Use of a food bank or charitable support (food, bedding or furniture etc.) (scale: α = .661)

Perception of Child Maltreatment (see Appendix M). This self-report measure was adapted from Shanalingigwa (2009), Budd et al. (2012) and Fakunmoju and Bammeke (2013). This measurement assessed perception of child maltreatment by looking at how

participants respond to a list of vignettes on different parenting practices. This 37-items measure includes vignettes (see Table 7.0) that potentially were considered as abuse (i.e., physical domain, $\alpha = .883$; emotional domain, $\alpha = .798$; sexual domain, $\alpha = .912$; and neglect domain, $\alpha = .714$). For each item, respondents circle one of five possible response options: 1) acceptable parenting practices 2) somewhat acceptable 3) neither acceptable nor unacceptable 4) minimally acceptable, and 5) unacceptable parenting practices. For ease of interpretation, each item was recoded into a dichotomous dummy variable (0 for unacceptable parenting practices, 1 for neutral and 2 for unacceptable parenting practices). While this study understood by recoding into dichotomous variable may lost some details, this study regard it as appropriate for the analyses, as unacceptable-acceptable variables are intuitively understood.

Table 7.0
The domains and contents of possible maltreatment vignettes

Domain	Item No.	Vignette Contents
Emotional	1	The parents of a 12 year old boy scold the child for failing his exams
	2	The parents of a 7 year old girl tell her that she doesn't deserve to be part of their family because she lied to them
	3	The parent of a 5 year old child yells at the child when the child refuses to do his/her homework
	4	The parents of a 12 year old girl call her "useless child" when she repeatedly refuses to help with house chores
	5	A 3 year old boy soils his pants and his parents smell the odour. They call him "stinky boy".
	6	A 5 year old boy is overweight compared to his siblings. His parents call him "the little fat one"
	7	When a 2 year old boy gets up in the middle of the night, his parents tell him to go back to bed. After he continues to bother them, they tell him they won't love him anymore if he doesn't leave them alone
	8	The parent of a 12 year-old child sees the child refusing to pray. The parent shouts at the child to pray
	9	An 11 year old boy forgets repeatedly to take out the rubbish. His parents threaten to give him away the next time he does not do his chores
	13	The parents of a 6 year old girl make her leave wet clothes on after she wets herself in public even when a change of clothing is available.
	17	The parents let their 11 year old daughter stay at home from school when one parent is ill and the other is working so that she can baby sit her younger sister
Neglect	10	A parent locks a 10 year old boy in his room all day for talking back to an adult.
	11	An 8 year old girl is often left alone at home for four hours during the day because her parents work and cannot be home right after school
	12	The parents of a 10 year old child often leaves their child alone during the day while searching for a job
	14	The parents ignore their child all the time, seldom talking with or listening to him/her
	15	The parents of a 3 year old child feed the child with little food with nutritional value due to lack of awareness.
	16	The parents of a 2 year old child waited for two days before seeking urgent medical attention
Physical	18	The parents of an 11 year-old boy punish him by caning his hands when he steals from a shop
	19	When a 4 year old boy throws a rock at his brother's head, his parents whip him on his bare legs with a leather belt, breaking the skin.
	20	The parents of a 7 year old spank him on the buttocks with a belt when he misbehaves

	21	The parents of a 4 year old child hit the child with a wooden spoon for being talking back to an adult
	22	The parents of a 9 year-old girl place spicy sauce on her tongue when their daughter uses vulgar or obscene words.
	23	The parents of an 8 year old boy wash his mouth with soap (place soap in his mouth) when he uses obscene words.
	24	A 2 year old boy keeps pinching his parent, so the parent pinches the boy's arm back
	25	The parents of a 10 year old boy pinch his arm when he keeps flipping his pencil around instead of doing his homework
	26	A 9 year old boy is supposed to be doing his homework but is reading a magazine. When his parents find him with the magazine, they take it away from him and pull on his ears.
	27	When their 1 year old child throws food on the floor, the parents slap the child's hand
	28	When the parent of a 10 year old girl learn that she has been lying to them about where goes after school, they slap her on the face, leaving red mark
	29	The parents spank their 5 year old child with their hand on the child's rear end when the child misbehaves.
	30	The parents spank their 13 year old son when he refuses to pray
	31	A 5 year old girl throws toys at her parent. When she won't stop, her parent throws the toys back to her.
	32	The parent of a 14 year old was beaten with a cane for intentionally skipping school.
Sexual	33	A parent touches their child's genital area
	34	The parents have sexual intercourse where their child can see them
	35	The parent and a child engage in mutual masturbation on one occasion
	36	The parent and the 15 year old son watch a pornography video together
	37	The parent suggested to a girl to engage in sexual relations

Procedure

Using purposive and snowballing sampling methods, potential participants were identified through researcher contacts in different Malaysian organisations (i.e., day care, schools, universities, non-governmental organisations, etc.) and Malaysian and UK personal contacts (via Facebook and contact numbers). Information sheets and details about the study were then forwarded by those individuals to others who fit the criteria, directing them either to an online survey or how to obtain a paper copy.

Parents who choose to complete the survey online were given a link to LimeSurvey (an online tool hosted by the University of Birmingham). By clicking on that link, participants were taken to the participant information sheet, which provided further details about the study. If they then decided that they wished to participate, they completed a consent form, stating that they have read and understood the information and they consent to participate. The survey was set up so that someone has to give consent before they are allowed to proceed. If they refuse consent, the survey went to an end page thanking them for their time.

Participants who choose to answer the survey using paper and pen were given the study's information sheet and consent form by the researcher. Once they had provided consent, the researcher provided them an envelope containing the survey. Participants were not required to disclose their identity on the questionnaires/survey and were reminded not to do so. Once they had completed the survey, participants returned the survey to the researcher in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

In order to allow all participants the chance to withdraw their data, a pre-agreed time was given to participants, and all participants were asked to provide a nickname on their survey. If they choose to withdraw up to that thepoint, they could send the nickname from an anonymous email or in a letter without their name and the data associated with that nickname would be removed.

At the end of the survey, all participants were given a debriefing form that summarised the study, their rights and some contacts if they needed additional professional support. The study took approximately 30-60 minutes.

Ethics

The University of Birmingham Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Ethical Committee (Reference: ERN_16-0224) approved the study. All personal

information obtained was anonymised and were kept confidential in a locked cabinet. Participants were not compensated nor did they receive any financial reimbursement.

Analyses

Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistic 24. Analysis included a descriptive analysis to examine the key demographic characteristics of the participants and also participants' history of abuse. However, as the data was not normally distributed, a non-parametric analyse, specifically, Kruskal-Wallis test was used, which analysed the mean rank. When a significant difference was found, Bonferroni corrections were applied to all pairwise comparisons. The alpha level was at 0.05 for all analyses.

Results

Descriptive analysis

The key demographic characteristics of the Malaysian parents who participated in this study are presented in Table 7.1. In this study, parents were aged ranging from 18 to 72 (M = 48.12, SD = 10.13), with Chinese making the largest group (53%), followed by Malay (14%), Indian (13.4%) and others (11.1%). In terms of highest level of education, most parents have a degree (33.6%) and the least have at least gone through primary school education (1.7%). In terms of monthly income, most parents earned between RM3000 to RM5000 (30.2%; approximately £500-£900) and were married (83.8%). Of the participants who completed the survey, 10 were not parents and seven participants were not Malaysians; hence, they were excluded from further analysis. Table 7.2 shows the mean and standard deviations for each measure used in the study and normative data, where applicable, for comparison.

In terms of parents' history of abuse (see Table 7.3), specifically physical assault, most fathers have experienced severe assault (82%), while mothers experienced minor forms of assault (81.8%). In terms of psychological aggression, both fathers and mothers experienced minor psychological aggression the most (89.2% and 93% respectively). In

terms of sexual coercion, there were higher rates of non-contact sexual coercion for both males and females compared to contact (e.g., exposure to pornography; 16.2% and 11.2% respectively). In terms of neglect, a greater percentage of fathers had experienced physical neglect (39.6%), while mothers had experienced emotional neglect (41.6%). In terms of negotiation, all participants have experienced that throughout their childhood (99.1%).

Table 7.1
Demographic characteristics of the sample

	Total (N = 351)	Female (N = 214)	Male (N = 111)
Age			
Mean (standard deviation)	48.12(10.13)	46.59 (9.75)	51.05 (10.26)
Range	18-72	18-70	23-72
Ethnicity			
Malay	49 (14%)	34 (15.9%)	15 (13.5%)
Chinese	186 (53%)	124 (57.9%)	62 (55.9%)
Indian	47 (13.4%)	28 (13.1%)	18 (16.2%)
Other	39 (11.1%)	23 (10.7%)	16 (14.4%)
Highest level of education			
UPSR/SATS (Primary school)	6 (1.7%)	6 (2.8%)	0
PMR (Elementary school)	10 (2.8%)	10 (4.7%)	0
SPM/GCSE (Secondary school; O-level)	52 (14.8%)	37 (17.3%)	15 (13.5%)
STPM/A-levels	18 (5.1%)	11 (5.1%)	6 (5.4%)
Certificate/Diploma level/NVQ	76 (21.7%)	53 (24.8%)	23 (20.7%)
Undergraduate degree	118 (33.6%)	75 (35.0%)	43 (38.7%)
Masters degree	36 (10.3%)	16 (7.5%)	20 (18%)
Doctorate	9 (2.6%)	5 (2.3%)	4 (3.6%)
Monthly income			
<RM 2000	37 (10.5%)	27 (12.6%)	10 (9.0%)
RM3000-RM5000	106 (30.2%)	77 (36.0%)	28 (25.2%)
RM6000 – RM8000	48 (13.7%)	38 (17.8%)	10 (9.0%)
RM9000 – RM10,000	22 (6.3%)	7 (3.3%)	15 (13.5%)
>RM10,000	85 (24.2%)	45 (21.0%)	40 (36.0%)
Marital status			
Single	7 (2.0%)	5 (2.3%)	2 (1.8%)
Married	294 (83.8%)	188 (87.9%)	105 (94.6%)
Divorced	18 (5.1%)	17 (7.9%)	1 (0.9%)
Widowed	7 (2.0%)	4 (1.9%)	3 (2.7%)
Parenting status			
Yes	316 (90%)	208 (97.2%)	107 (96.4%)
No (guardian or primary caregiver)	10 (2.8%)	6 (2.8%)	4 (3.6%)
Malaysian or with a Malaysian background			
Yes	319 (90.9%)	209 (97.7%)	109 (98.2%)
No	7 (2.0%)	5 (2.3%)	2 (1.8%)
Lived outside of Malaysia before			
Yes	90 (67.2%)	52 (24.3%)	38 (34.2%)
No	236 (25.6%)	162 (75.7%)	73 (65.8%)
How long outside of Malaysia (months) Mean (Standard deviation)	59.96 (94.49)	50.86 (75.49)	76.08 (119.04)
Number of children			
Mean (Standard deviation)	2.45 (1.06)	2.35 (0.99)	2.63 (1.1.4)
Child age			
Youngest: Mean (standard deviation)	14.25 (8.38)	14.13 (8.36)	14.47 (8.44)
Eldest: Mean (standard deviation)	20.49 (8.64)	19.89 (9.11)	21.62 (7.65)

Table 7.2
Mean and (Standard Deviations) for Sample and Normative data

	M (SD)	Normative Data
AAMAS		Gim Chung, Kim, & Abreu, (2004)
Own Culture	4.51 (.84)	4.42(0.77)
American Culture	2.64 (1.1)	3.11 (0.58)
European Culture	3.35 (.95)	4.85 (0.59)
Parenting Scale		Non-clinical norm from Arnold et al. (1993)
Laxness	3.28 (.77)	2.4 (.80)
Overreactivity	3.02 (.85)	2.4 (.70)
Verbosity	3.95 (.69)	3.1 (1.00)
Total	3.46 (.49)	2.6 (0.60)
AAPI		Adult norm from AAPI from Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, (2000)
Expectations	4.82 (1.89)	4.26 (4.71)
Empathy	3.37 (1.94)	2.35 (6.13)
Beliefs in Corporal Punishment	3.72 (1.63)	2.15 (7.59)
Family roles	2.69 (1.63)	1.70 (8.53)
Power-independence	4.64 (2.06)	-
History of Abuse		
Physical assault – minor	.97 (1.01)	-
Physical assault – severe	.57 (.66)	-
Physical assault – very severe	.25 (.61)	-
Negotiation	1.81 (1.00)	-
Psychological aggression – Minor	1.29 (.98)	-
Psychological aggression – Severe	.61 (.75)	-
Physical neglect	.27 (.62)	-
Emotional neglect	.68 (1.17)	-
Sexual Coercion - Contact	.09 (.47)	-
Sexual Coercion – Non contact	.14 (.49)	-
Financial Security	.10 (.18)	-
Neighbourhood Support	2.31 (.81)	-
Social Support		
Significant other	5.56 (1.36)	-
Family	5.50 (1.37)	-
Friends	5.30 (1.24)	-

Table 7.3
Participants' history of abuse

Have experienced:	Total : N (%)	Male N (%)	Female N (%)	Total Mean (SD)
Physical assault				
Minor	80.6%	77.5%	81.8%	3.84 (7.58)
Severe	77.8%	82%	75.7%	2.28 (4.36)
Very severe	25.6%	32.4%	21.5%	1.08 (3.52)
Psychological aggression				
Minor	92.3%	89.2%	93%	6.95 (9.40)
Severe	83.8%	82%	84.6%	2.74 (5.50)
Neglect				
Physical	37%	39.6%	36%	.99 (3.84)
Emotional	40.5%	33.3.%	41.6%	2.97 (9.44)
Sexual coercion				
Contact	7.4%	6.3%	8.4%	.35 (2.60)
Non-Contact	12.5%	16.2%	11.2%	.50 (2.69)
Negotiation	99.1%	99.1%	99.1%	9.34 (8.75)

Statistical analysis

In exploring how parents' perception of child maltreatment are related to history of abuse, parenting practices, cultural transmission and ecological influences, Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to analysis the relationship between each maltreatment domain with each variables (see Table 7.4).

Table 7.4
Parental perception of maltreatment based on type of domain: Kruskal-Wallis

		Kruskal-Wallis		
Type of domain	Significant difference with:	χ^2	p<	Significant paired comparison[a]
Physical	History of minor psychological aggression	8.07	.05	-
	History of severe psychological aggression	18.37	.001	1-2 0-2
	History of minor physical assault	22.61	.001	0-1 0-2 1-2
	History of severe physical assault	23.05	.001	0-1 0-2 1-2
	History of very severe physical assault	6.75	.05	1-2
	History of physical neglect	9.33	.01	0-2
	History of emotional neglect	9.73	.01	1-2
	History of sexual coercion (contact)	6.88	.05	1-2
	Culture of origin	6.91	.05	1-2
	European-American culture	8.06	.05	1-2
	Laxness	11.50	.01	1-2
	Over-reactivity	42.46	.001	1-2 0-2
	Significant other	10.40	.01	1-2
Emotional	History of minor psychological aggression	13.71	.01	1-2 0-2
	History of severe psychological aggression	25.34	.001	1-2 0-2
	History of minor physical assault	16.86	.001	0-1 0-2 1-2
	History of severe physical assault	15.95	.001	0-1 0-2 1-2
	History of very severe physical assault	27.04	.001	0-1 0-2 1-2
	History of physical neglect	11.76	.01	0-1 0-2
	History of emotional neglect	9.68	.01	1-2
	History of sexual coercion (contact)	7.18	.05	1-2
	History of sexual coercion (non-contact)	13.26	.01	1-2
	European-American culture	8.89	.05	1-2
	Over-reactivity	36.98	.001	1-2

				0-2
	Support from significant other	12.49	.01	1-2
	Support from family	10.59	.05	1-2
Sexual	History of severe psychological aggression	10.91	.01	0-2
	History of minor physical assault	7.73	.05	0-2
	History of severe physical assault	8.51	.05	0-2
	History of very severe physical assault	23.86	.001	0-2 1-2
	History of physical neglect	13.59	.001	0-2
	History of emotional neglect	7.65	.05	1-2
	History of sexual coercion (contact)	33.95	.001	0-2 1-2
	History of sexual coercion (non-contact)	21.4	.001	1-2
	Asian-American culture	13.49	.0014	1-2
	Laxness	8.10	.05	1-2
	Over-reactivity	16.76	.001	1-2 0-2
	Financial security	14.1	.001	1-2
	Neighbourhood support	6.35	.05	0-1
	Support from significant other	11.44	.01	1-2
	Support from family	10.83	.01	1-2
Neglect	History of severe psychological aggression	9.65	.01	0-1 0-2
	History of minor physical assault	8.59	.01	0-1 0-2
	History of severe physical assault	10.32	.01	0-1 0-2
	History of very severe physical assault	21.63	.001	0-1 0-2 1-2
	History of negotiation	6.91	.05	0-1
	History of physical neglect	14.41	.01	0-1 0-2
	History of emotional neglect	11.15	.01	0-1 0-2
	History of sexual coercion (non-contact)	29.28	.001	0-1 0-2
	Laxness	7.86	.05	-
	Over-reactivity	13.88	.01	1-2
	Financial security	23.48	.001	1-2 0-2
	Support from significant other	7.69	.05	-
	Support from family	6.31	.05	-

Note: 0 = acceptable parenting practices; 1 = neutral; 2 = unacceptable parenting practices;
[a] Pairwise comparison significant after applying Bonferroni correction.

In exploring how parental beliefs (i.e., expectations of children, empathy, etc) are related to history of abuse, ecological influences, cultural transmission and parenting practices, Kruskal-Wallis test was also used to examine the relationship of these variables. The following Table 7.5 details the significant results for Kruskal-Wallis test and the significant pairwise comparison.

Table 7.5
Parental beliefs with history of abuse, parenting practices, cultural transmission and ecological influences: Kruskal-Wallis

		Kruskal-Wallis		
Parental beliefs	Significant difference with:	χ^2	p<	Significant paired comparison[a]
Expectation of children	European-American culture	3.55	.05	L-M
	Over-reactivity parenting style		.001	L-H M-H
Parental empathy towards children needs	History with negotiation	7.63	.05	-
	European-American culture	29.99	.001	L-H M-H
	Laxness	10.86	.01	L-H
	Over-reactivity	15.46	.001	M-H
Use of corporal punishment	Over-reactivity	9.74	.01	M-H
	History with negotiation	1.99	.01	H-M
Parent-child family roles	History with severe physical assault	10.80	.01	H-M
	Financial security	7.74	.05	-
	European-American culture	13.27	.01	H-M
	Over-reactivity	8.01	.05	M-H
	Verbosity	8.13	.05	M-H
Child power and independence	History with severe psychological aggression	6.27	.05	-
	History with physical neglect	7.01	.05	L-H
	European-American culture	20.30	.001	H-L M-L
	Laxness	14.28	.001	L-H M-H
	Over-reactivity	15.57	.001	L-H M-H
	Verbosity	9.73	.01	M-H

Note: L = low risk, M = medium risk, H = high risk;
[a] Pairwise comparison significant after applying Bonferroni correction.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between Malaysian parents' perception of child maltreatment with parental beliefs, parenting practices, the influence from cultural transmission (i.e., enculturation and acculturation), parental history of abuse and ecological factors (i.e., neighbourhood support, social support and financial security).

Hypothesis 1: Malaysian parents' perceptions of child maltreatment will be associated with parental history of abuse, parenting practices, cultural transmission and ecological influence

This study found that parents' perceptions of child maltreatment are associated with their history of abuse, parenting practices (styles), and culture. Interestingly, across the four domains of maltreatment that were used to examined parents perception on acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices, it was found that there are similarities in terms of how parents perceived child maltreatment and parents history of child maltreatment, in particular history of physical assault (of all levels of severity), history of physical and emotional neglect severe psychological aggression.

Although such patterns are interesting to note, it is also important to acknowledge that although most participants in this study have retrospective self-report that they have a history of child abuse, the average frequency that was found in this study is extremely small. Furthermore, the pairwise comparison found that there are many overlaps as to how parents might perceive each domain of maltreatment (with the exception of sexual domain). Such results may suggest that: a) parents who have experienced some form of abuse were more inclined to perceive each domain as unacceptable parenting practices, and hence as maltreatment, or b) parents who responded "neutral", may not necessarily see these vignettes as abusive parenting and/or need more situational context to substantiate it as abusive. With regards to sexual abuse, however, there is a clear distinction on how parents in this sample

perceived sexual related vignettes – as unacceptable and abusive practice. This study found that parents' perception of child maltreatment do have a relationship with their history of abuse, parenting practices (styles), and culture. This study found that across the four domains of maltreatment that were used to examine parents' perception on acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices, there are similarities in terms of how parents' history of child maltreatment and perception, more specifically, history of physical assault (of all levels of severity), history of physical and emotional neglect and history of severe psychological aggression, all have an influence on parents' perception. Although this finding was consistent with studies such as Berlin et al., (2011) and Tajima (2000) that examined how parental history of abuse were associated with abuse, it is important to note, that all participants in this study have provided a retrospective report of their history of abuse, and as such the average frequency that was found in this study is extremely small.

Furthermore, the pairwise comparison found that there are many overlaps as to how parents might perceive each domain of maltreatment (with the exception of sexual domain). Such results may suggest that parents who have experienced some form of abuse were more inclined to perceive each domain as unacceptable parenting practices (probably as a result of resiliency; see Zahradnik et al., 2010), and thus as child maltreatment. However, given the overlaps in the pairwise comparison, it is also probable that parents, who responded "neutral", may not necessarily see these vignettes as abusive parenting and/or need more situational context to substantiate it as abusive. This was similar to a study conducted by Elliott, Tong, and Tan (1997), that suggested that parents who were exposed to different situation characteristics, may perceived (extreme) abusive behaviours as less abusive or not abusive at all. With regards to sexual abuse, however, there is a clear distinction on how parents in this sample perceived sexual related vignettes – as unacceptable and abusive practice.

Furthermore, this study also found that perception of child maltreatment could also be influenced by culture among parents. Although, from this study it was found that all Malaysian parents tend to held strongly their own Asian cultural values and practices; this study found that Western culture could also influence parental beliefs and how they might perceive child maltreatment. Regardless of types of maltreatment, it was found that there is a difference with European-American culture and the perception of child maltreatment. In understanding why a secondary (Western) culture could influence perception, Kling, (1995) argued that as Malaysia is exposed to globalisation and being introduced by Western cultures via media, it is potential that Malaysian parents may adopt Western cultures in their parenting practices. Furthermore, the influences of a secondary culture also suggest that parents not only are being influenced by their own cultural group but may also be influenced by a different culture, as argued by Raman and Hodes (2012).

Hypothesis 2: Malaysian parental beliefs will be associated with parental history of abuse, ecological influences, cultural transmission and parenting practices.

In terms of parental beliefs, this study also found that there is a relationship between parental beliefs with culture and parenting practices (style). Apart from parental beliefs on the usage of corporal punishment, this study also found European-American culture do have an influence on how parents put realistic expectation on their child, the ability to understand and value their children, encourage independence in their children and have appropriate family roles. However, this study also found that over-reactivity parenting style (refers to authoritarian and harsh parenting style) and laxness (which refers to permissive parenting) were also found to be associated with parental beliefs and influence the parental perception of maltreatment across all of the domains. Parents who have higher levels of over-reactivity, may tend to expect their children to be obedient to parental demands and fears of spoiling the child, which subsequently may influence their perception in distinguish abusive parenting

from those that are not (Dongping & Yuk‐chung, 2008; Ngiam & Tung, 2016; Suzuki et al., 2016). However, to understand why Malaysian parents may have similar parental beliefs to Western parents *and* typical Asian parenting (e.g., usage of harsh parenting), Choi, Kim, Kim and Park, (2013) have argued that Asians generally do not necessarily fit into authoritarian or authoritative parenting style as suggested by Baumrind (1968). In her study with Korean-Americans, she found that these parents were able to show a blend of Western authoritative and authoritarian parenting style that is typically positive (e.g., warmth, acceptance and communication) and have very limited negative parenting.

Strengths and limitations

This study is one of the very few that examined how Malaysian parents perceived child maltreatment and how both ecological and cultural factors could influence parental perception on what is viewed as acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices. In order, to reduce child maltreatment, it is necessary to understand not only the perception towards maltreatment but also determining factors that could influence maltreatment perceptions. Therefore, the results of this study is perhaps the first, to lay the ground work in providing a baseline to distinguish what may be considered as abusive parenting from those that are not among Malaysians. Additionally, as most studies have utilised ecological frameworks that are well-established (Belsky, 1980; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993), this study perhaps is also the first to use and test the applicability of using a novel framework – the eco-cultural framework to examine how both ecological and cultural factors could influence the perception of child maltreatment.

However, the current study has a few limitations. First, the use of self-report measurements that were used in this study could be problematic. Although these measurements asked parents about acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices, socially-sensitive participants in this study may have provided socially desirable responses as they

might feel that their responses also reflect their own parenting beliefs and practices and may want to avoid from being judged or shamed. Furthermore, as one of the measurements was based on a retrospective self-report of their childhood history, it is possible that such measurement might not be accurate, as parents might over- or underestimate the frequency of the abuse (if they have experienced any).

Conclusion

In conclusion, while it is interesting to find how parental beliefs and perception of child maltreatment could be influenced by a secondary culture and parenting practices such as over-reactivity and laxness; this study has also demonstrated the methodological difficulties in examining the cultural differences and similarities among parents. As such, future studies may require rigorous methods, including culturally appropriate and specific measures to empirical support and find cultural nuances that may exist within Asian families and how parents perceived child maltreatment. Furthermore, future studies need to understand how perception is translated to perpetration (or the propensity to perpetrate) of maltreatment, or how cultural values and beliefs, such as those that were found in this study, could influence child protection policy in Malaysia as well as to further understand how parents perceived (the risk of) child maltreatment and how they interpret and distinguish abusive parenting from those that are not.

Chapter 8: General Discussion

Chapter rationale

The objective of this chapter is to revisit the overall thesis aims and to summarise the main findings across all chapters of this thesis. This chapter will also highlight theoretical and practical implications, future directions, and conclude by highlighting the contributions this research has and can make to the study of child maltreatment.

Thesis aims

This thesis was an exploratory study that aimed to: a) explore how child maltreatment was being perceived in relation to cultural influences and parenting practices; b) to explore and address the nexus between culture and child maltreatment; and c) to explore the relationship between the ecological factors and cultural factors (using the eco-cultural framework) to understand the interplay between these factors and in relation to how child maltreatment is being perceived.

To address these aims, the thesis began with a systematic review with the aim to investigate how child maltreatment was understood, defined and/or identified among Asians, as well as to explore if there were any differences in how child maltreatment was perceived. Additionally, the review aimed to investigate cultural influences that may affect how child maltreatment is perceived, and to inform how this thesis could build upon the findings from previous research when studying other cultural groups, such as Malaysians.

Thus, as there is a dearth of literature from Malaysia that examined how child maltreatment may be defined, identified or perceived, the findings of the review (Chapter 3) suggested a tentative need to explore how different stakeholders (i.e., professionals, parents and adult survivors of child maltreatment) perceived child maltreatment, in relation to parenting practices and cultural beliefs/values. In response to the findings from the review (in Chapter 3), the thesis utilised an exploratory sequential design (mixed method), to explore how child maltreatment was perceived by Malaysian professionals (Chapter 4), parents (Chapter 5) and adult survivors of child maltreatment (Chapter 6). The findings from Chapters 4 to 6 were then enriched by quantitative findings (Chapter 7) to understand the relationship between parenting practices, culture and the perception of child maltreatment.

Summary of findings

Previous systematic reviews found that child maltreatment studies that were conducted in Asia have predominantly focused on East Asian societies (i.e., China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan; Dunne et al., 2015) and tended to focus on the prevalence and incidences of child maltreatment, the consequences of child maltreatment, and the burden of health and economics of child maltreatment (Fang, Fry, Brown, et al., 2015; Fang, Fry, Ji, et al., 2015; Fry, McCoy, & Swales, 2012; Ji, Finkelhor, & Dunne, 2013). Although these reviews helped to understand child maltreatment in Asia, it is noteworthy that the studies that were included in those reviews tended to take a monocultural perspective (such as those that have been discussed in Chapter 2), and have different socio-political and historical contexts, which could have lead to a different perception of child maltreatment. Taking China as an example, local policies such as the 'one child', although it has been reformed, can still have profound effects on children's welfare in China that are not translatable into any other non-western countries, such as Malaysia or western countries, like the UK (Corby et al., 2012).

Additionally, as there were no reviews that focused on the methodological, definitional and/or cultural issues that are related to Asians on child maltreatment, the systematic review (as described in Chapter 3) was conducted. In this review, the majority of included studies examined the perception of child maltreatment from professionals and parents, and only two studies examined how children may perceive child maltreatment. Across the different populations that were studied (i.e., professionals, parents, children and the general public), the review found that behaviours that were sexual in nature or sexually-motivated were unequivocally considered as forms of sexual abuse. With regards to other forms of maltreatment, physical abuse was the next most consistently recognised and viewed form of child maltreatment in comparison to emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. Furthermore, the review found that how maltreatment was perceived could also be influenced

by the perceived intention of the abuser and severity of the abuse, as well as the nature of the abuse. However, although Asians may recognise different forms of maltreatment, the review also highlighted that there is still ambiguity on what parenting behaviours may be considered as abusive parenting practices, and what may be considered as unacceptable parenting practices but not harmful. Such ambiguity pointed out the need to understand how professionals, parents and victims of child maltreatment distinguish between these two parenting practices.

The perception of child maltreatment, parenting practices and culture

Therefore, to answer these gaps in the literature, Chapters 4 to 6 (qualitative studies) were conducted to understand how Malaysians perceived child maltreatment (and if they were similar or different to other Asians) and to provide an insight as to how abusive parenting may be distinguish from those that are not. The findings from Chapters 4 to 6 demonstrated that all participants in the studies (i.e., professionals, parents and survivors of child maltreatment) did have implicit ideas of child maltreatment and included the four categories of maltreatment that were frequently found in the literature and legally recognised in Malaysia (see Chapter 2), namely physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as physical neglect. However, unlike what was found in the systematic review, all participants in this thesis discussed physical and emotional abuse more frequently than either sexual abuse or (physical) neglect. Some studies (especially those conducted in China) have suggested that such low rates of sexual abuse and neglect may be due to cultural values and practices such as inhibited disclosure, Confucian family values, masculinity and a collectivistic culture that may serve as a 'protective' mechanism to avoid shame and dishonour to the family (e.g., Finkelhor, Ji, Mikton, & Dunne, 2013).

Moreover, although Malaysia does have a legal framework that recognises sexual abuse (i.e., see Chapter 2 on Malaysian Sexual Offences against the Child Bill 2017), much

of the discourse among all the participants in this thesis tended to focus on physical sexual assault, rather than other forms of sexual abuse, such as child pornography and sexual grooming. Similarly, with neglect, much of the discourse was related to physical neglect, while other forms of neglect (e.g., emotional neglect, medical neglect, educational neglect) were mentioned little or none at all. This may also suggest that Malaysians may still lack an awareness, recognition and/or knowledge on other forms of abuse ,and there is a need for such recognition in the Malaysian laws and policies concerning children (i.e., Child Act 2016) as argued by Che Noh and Wan Talaat (2012; see Chapter 2). However, despite the lack of discussion or narrative on sexual abuse and neglect, the studies included in this thesis found that all professionals, parents and adult survivors, seemed to show a wide range of tolerance of parenting practices that is contingent on circumstances and were influenced by their cultural beliefs and values (see results in Chapter 4 to 6). For example, in Chapter 6, the results seem to suggest that adult survivors are able to 'distinguish' what may be considered as acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices, based on parenting behaviours that they have experienced as a child.

Besides that, from the review in Chapter 3, it was found that familial values and cultural practices, such as parental authority and rights towards their children, filial piety, and avoidance of shame and 'losing face', were found to more likely influence how child maltreatment is perceived and influence attitudes towards child maltreatment among Asians. However, unlike what was found in the systematic review, the findings from this thesis tend to suggest that these cultural practices tend to relate under the theme concerning family honour and saving face, especially in the discourse with Malaysian parents (Chapter 5) and with the survivors of child maltreatment (Chapter 6).

The study with parents in this thesis, have also found that with regards to family honour, other family values were associated with honour, such as (1) how a child conducted

him or herself at home and outside, (2) the child's independence (child is able to be independent with minimal supervision from an adult), and (3) the child's responsibility and roles to the family (child's responsibilities at home such as house chores, studying, etc). Similarly, with adult survivors, the study also found similar findings with regards to cultural beliefs with Malaysian professionals (in Malaysia) and Malaysian parents, such as how they perceived parental attitudes and practices, expectations and need to be a good child, and family values and beliefs.

However, although similar cultural beliefs and values (e.g., family honour, expectation on the child) were found among adult survivors, such culture may seem to be perceived differently among adult survivors in distinguishing abusive parenting behaviours from those that are not. In the study with adult survivors (Chapter 6), the findings seemed to suggest that perceptions towards child maltreatment were perceived differently based on the parenting styles that the participants experienced as a child, (which seem to be associated with authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles). Although, one might have assumed that those who experienced an authoritative style of parenting would see all forms of harsh parenting practices as abusive, but this was not the case with the adult survivors in this study. As such, this finding might suggest that adult survivors may perceive dysfunctional parenting practices as not harmful, but instead as 'loving punishment' (Zhu & Tang, 2011) and may be an indication that, like Malaysian parents, survivors may view harsh parenting practices as on a continuum with physical abuse.

With Malaysian professionals, although this thesis was unable to find out how different types of professionals perceived child maltreatment, similar cultural values and tolerance towards different parenting practices were found. As pointed out in Chapter 3 and 4, as professionals are also influenced by their own cultural beliefs and values, this may also create conflict between their professional and personal values (Ashton, 2010). Thus, in the

interest to find out how professionals distinguished abusive parenting practices from those that are not when faced with such conflicting cultural values, the study (in Chapter 4) found that Malaysian professionals, categorically, held three distinctive attitudes towards child maltreatment, specifically: a) progressive but non-judgemental; b) moderate; and c) against the law but culturally acceptable (see Chapter 4 for a detailed description of the categories).

The professionals study found that while all professionals from Malaysia were found in all three categories, professionals from the UK (albeit a small sample size of three, as discussed in Chapter 4) were only found in a single category – 'moderate' (whereby they were aware of the legislative framework for child maltreatment and grey areas, disagreed with violent parenting strategies, but were non-judgemental and supportive towards parents). This contrast in results between Malaysia and UK professionals may suggest that cultural influences that are more common in Malaysia (such as the perceived norm on the usage of harsh parenting practices, including corporal punishment; the importance of family values such as filial piety and respect for elders; the parental role in educating and disciplining children to follow family and religious customs) could influence what professionals considered abusive parental behaviour and/or may implicitly endorsed a culturally and societal-approved parenting practices and views on how to raise children (Chan et al., 2002).

However, the three distinctive attitudes towards child maltreatment from professionals seemed to also suggest that there was a lack of professional consensus for abusive parenting practices that are viewed as less extreme (i.e., parenting practices that are dysfunctional but not harmful), which is a cause for concern. This consensus is important, typically in a child protection system, as it may affect how professionals view what is considered as abusive or not and influence their decision threshold as to when and whether to intervene (Gough & Lynch, 2002). Furthermore, the absence of a consensus might also suggest that professionals' training may not sufficiently introduce professionals to the different forms of maltreatment,

the details of abuse in relation to culture (to make practical judgements), and the management of (potential) victims of child maltreatment (as described by adult survivors in Chapter 6) and the families (parents) concerned (Chan et al., 2002). Thus, these findings suggest that there is a need to build greater consensus in opinions across different professions to facilitate more effective intervention efforts and preventative measures against child maltreatment.

In relation to culture, it is also interesting to note in this thesis how culture could influence (via enculturation and acculturation; Raman & Hodes, 2012) how Malaysian parents (Chapter 5), especially those in the UK, perceived child maltreatment and parent their children. Although Malaysian parents in the UK may seem to practice similar Western parenting styles, they also seem to have similar cultural beliefs and values to parents in Malaysia. However, this perhaps is not surprising given that studies such as Choi, Kim, Kim, and Park, (2013) have found that Asian parents (who have migrated or were born in a Western country) could establish bicultural parenting in which they continued to endorse their own traditional cultural values, while adopting certain Western parenting practices and values. In addition, the findings throughout Chapter 4 to 6 on similar cultural beliefs and values such as family honour, may also suggest that, in Malaysia, there may be culturally valid values, cultural practices and parenting beliefs among Malaysians that may influence perceptions of what is considered as acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices (as discussed in Chapter 2; Korbin, 1981, 1991). However, although the studies from Chapter 4 to 6, may suggest that parenting practices in Malaysia may be different from the ones in the Western countries (for example authoritarian vs authoritative parenting style), the quantitative study (in Chapter 7) found that *both* Malaysian parents in Malaysian and in the UK were found to have similar parental beliefs that were associated with Western parenting styles (authoritative parenting style) *and* parenting styles that are related to over-reactivity

and laxness ('Asian' parenting styles), which arguably could be due to globalisation and the introduction of Western cultures via media (Kling, 1995).

Furthermore, given that there is a lack of studies with children or (potential) victims of child maltreatment in Malaysia (Cheah & Choo, 2016), it was also interesting to note from this thesis that all adult survivors related how their maltreatment experiences and understanding of their experiences as a child, was very much different to how they defined child maltreatment as an adult. This was similar to Chan, Lam and Shae's (2011) study that found that children tend to perceive child maltreatment differently compared to adults and may only considered an abusive behaviour if there was a significant harm or danger (e.g., physical injury) to the child. Additionally, this thesis also found that survivors have different perception towards their sociocultural norm - such as unsupportive community, how Malaysian society may expect from a child, and how they were impacted by their maltreatment experiences (i.e., resentment, internalising the problem, justifying parents' maltreatment, etc.), all of which may impact how they perceive and identify child maltreatment, as well as how they might perceive intervention and treatment (if any) that was given to them. Thus, to understand further how these findings (Chapter 4 to 6) were related among Malaysian parents, the quantitative study (as described in Chapter 7) were conducted.

Revisiting the eco-cultural framework

In Chapters 4 to 6, these chapters have highlighted that parental factors, such as parental beliefs, the differing views on parenting practices, and other cultural influences such as acculturation (alongside with known ecological factors such as sociodemographic factors and social support), could influence perceptions of child maltreatment, which is similar to the eco-cultural framework that has been discussed in Chapters 1 and 7 (see Figure 5).

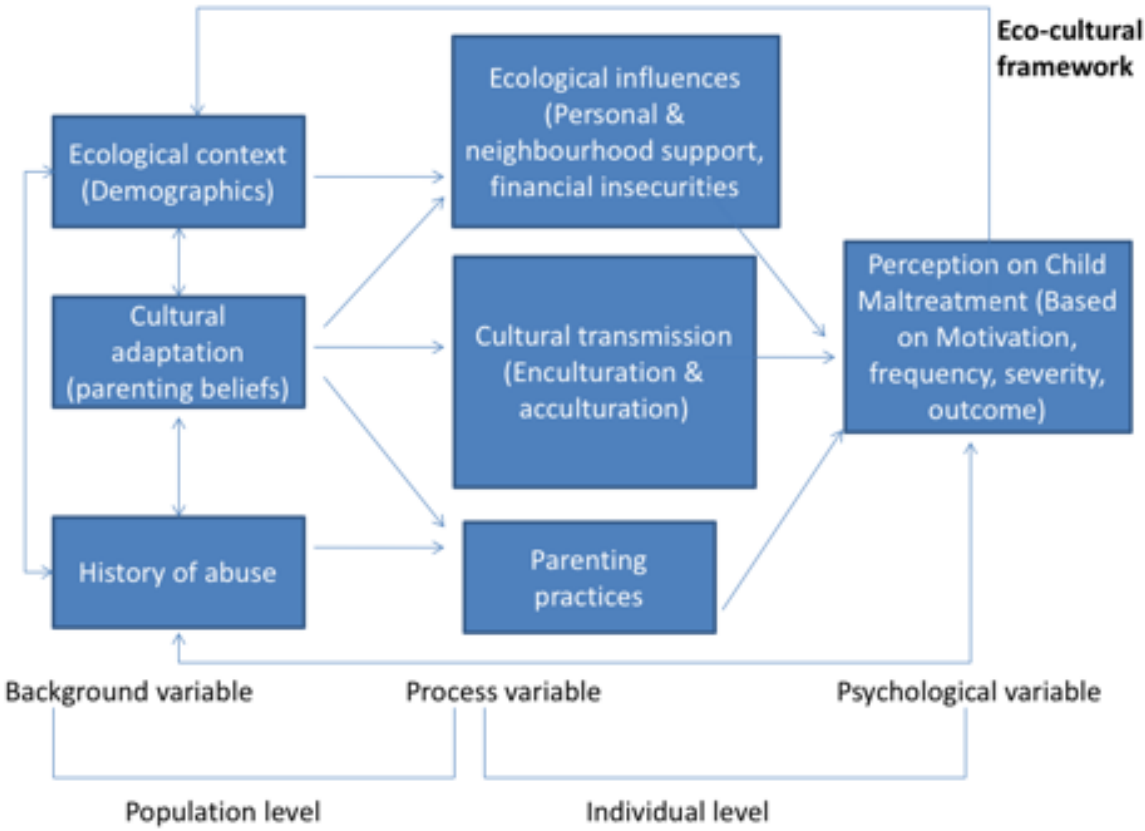


Figure 2.0: Adaptation of the eco-cultural framework

Thus, building upon the main findings from Chapters 4 to 6, Chapter 7 explored the relationship between how the ecological factors as well as the cultural factor (that was found from previous chapters) may influence how child maltreatment is being perceived by parents. The quantitative study in this thesis found that in terms of perceptions of maltreatment, parents' own history of childhood abuse have been found to be associated with their perception of abuse regardless of type of abuse, and influenced by parenting practices such laxness and over-reactivity. In terms of parental beliefs, parenting style, such as over-reactivity and laxness, seemed to have a relationship with parental beliefs that is consistent with other Asian literature (Choi et al., 2013; Suzuki et al., 2016). Additionally, given that Malaysia's parenting practices could be influenced by Western cultures, as suggested by some literature (e.g., Choi et al., 2013), it is not surprising that a secondary (European-American) culture could influence parenting beliefs and the perception of child maltreatment.

However, in relation to the eco-cultural framework, although this thesis may be the first to adapt the framework to study child maltreatment, the findings from Chapter 7 indicate its potential utility in understanding child maltreatment better in relation to culture compared to other ecological models.

Revisiting threshold considerations

It was clear from the findings in this thesis that among professionals, parents and adult survivors, there was a wide range of opinion as to the limits of what may be considered as acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices. These studies (Chapters 4 to 6) suggested that professionals, parents and adult survivors did not necessarily regard unacceptable (or dysfunctional) parenting practices (such as physical punishment) as child maltreatment. In fact, the term 'abuse' to these participants seemed to carry a connotation of deliberate and/or intentional harm, and it was perceptions of intention that seemed to determine whether an action was considered as maltreatment or not (Elliott et al., 1997).

Such views regarding abuse, may be seen as a more serious and derogatory term that may have more definite implicit intention by the perpetrator. The term 'abuse' may also imply that for some parental behaviours to be perceived or viewed as maltreatment, some parental responsibility over the child, such as those expected from society, may have been abused (e.g., the right to discipline the child). Furthermore, while abuse is also a legal term, used in Malaysian laws, this term which may also imply that an offense has been committed. This may suggest that unacceptable but not harmful parenting practices on the other hand, minimise attribution of intention and focus on the idea of treatment of children and its consequences, rather than the intentions of an abusing adult, that were found among all the participants in this thesis.

However, this thesis in general takes the view that a parental action should be seen as maltreatment if there are bad consequences for the child, regardless of public opinion (and

sociocultural norms). Without such a view, it would be difficult to object to socially sanctioned, but harmful, parenting practices that were done with 'good intentions'. The difficulty that remained for this thesis is to understand at what point one can be sufficiently certain of the effects of certain 'good intention' parenting practices.

In addition, as mentioned by Korbin (1991), as there is a wide cultural variation in parenting practices, it is possible that some cultures will find some form of parenting practices as acceptable, while others may see it approaching the threshold of what may be considered as acceptable or cross the boundaries of acceptability. Subsequently, this may contribute to the difficulty in establishing definitions (such as those discussed in Chapters 1 and 2) and to continuously raise conflicting value judgements across different cultures (Korbin, 1991; Korbin, 2002). Therefore, in distinguishing parenting practices that may be seen as maltreatment from those that are not, it is first important to establish if there are actual consequences for children (Elliott et al., 1997). However, this may not necessarily be seen as straightforward, given that the study with adult survivors suggested that some who view certain parenting practices as 'loving punishment' may not necessarily experience negative consequences, but rather perceived such action as a form of challenge (when they were a child), that may be seen as positive.

Furthermore, as pointed out by Munro (2008), although it is important that research recognised that parents should enjoy a discretion to act within their children's best interests (given their parental rights), this perception on what may be considered as 'best interest' may likely to vary, although the present thesis did not investigate this. Some parents may take the view that their children's interest are always subordinate to their own or their child's best interests are considered as family matters, such as those found with Malaysian parents. Such a parental view may influence how parents treat their children (regardless seen 'good' or 'bad' parenting), as outside of the purview of the law or by society except for extreme

maltreatment cases (Benbenishty & Schmid, 2013; Elliott et al., 1997). Similarly, other Malaysian parents, especially those in the UK, may take the opposite view, in which they may view their parenting practices as affecting their own children's development. Such parents, perhaps, are more aware of children's rights and how their parenting practices could be influenced by acculturation. Nonetheless, as argued by Elliott et al., (1997) a parents right to treat their children as they see fit should not affect the definition of child maltreatment. Instead, the question of what constitutes maltreatment should still remain as a question of consequences.

Implications for policy and practice

Following from this thesis, a few implications for policy and practices should be noted. Firstly, it is the view of this thesis, that a definition of child maltreatment should begin with the law. Although, Malaysia has laws and policies that protect children (i.e., Malaysian Child Act 2016 and Sexual Offences against the Child Bill, 2017), definitions and provisions to protect children remain inadequate. For example, the term abuse, although it has not been explicitly included in the Malaysian Child Act 2016 (see Chapter 2), and has been used in conjunction with the term 'injury' to describe the different forms of maltreatment (i.e., physical, emotional and sexual), such terms may remained problematic given that it may not include other forms of child maltreatment (see Che Noh & Wan Talaat, 2012). Thus, this thesis suggests that current laws should use the term abuse or maltreatment more explicitly to include other forms of maltreatment (e.g., verbal abuse, emotional neglect, educational neglect) that may not necessarily include physical injuries following an abuse. However, it is also in the view of this thesis that it is not necessary to include specific examples of maltreatment with such definition. Although, it may be helpful to understand what comprises of child maltreatment, this thesis argues that the definitions of child maltreatment should not be tied to any specific examples. As examples are only illustrative of principles, they are

more likely to change as society's knowledge and awareness on what affects child developments improves. Definition, however, should transcend to such changes and should reflect enduring values in a society. In addition to that, this thesis would also suggest that a comprehensive review and reform for all laws concerning Malaysian children should remain consistent (see Chapter 2 for detail discussion), such as banning child marriages and the removal of corporal punishment and making them unlawful in homes, schools and in penal institutions as a sentence for crime. Such a change, will not only help to provide adequate care and protection for children, but also promote children's rights in Malaysia.

Secondly, with regards to Malaysian parents and adult survivors, although there seemed to be different views on what was considered as acceptable and unacceptable parenting practices, this thesis is more concerned with 'grey areas' - unacceptable parenting practices but not harmful. This is because, as not all physical punishment are necessarily seen as abusive (such as corporal punishment under Malaysian laws), Malaysian society may sanction the usage of physical violence as normative and appropriate, to which this may set the stage for escalation to increasingly use punitive discipline when disciplining a child (Bower-Russa et al., 2001). Additionally, while the idea of not using physical punishment may not necessarily readily discerned by parents (as suggested in Chapter 5), Malaysian parents may then act and perceive that their abusive act (e.g., caning a child) as acceptable and proper (Ferrari, 2002). Such parental (and those who may be at risk of child maltreatment) views, not only needs to be constantly challenged but also to help parents understand the effects and/or (potential) bad consequences of their actions towards their child's (development). Furthermore, parents should also be educated on children's rights so as to promote safeguarding among children.

Nonetheless, the implication of this thesis on the prevention of child maltreatment, seem to also suggest it is not just a matter of public education, but also a matter of

professional education. Although, it is commonly found in research that professional socialisation may not necessarily lead to a uniform view towards child maltreatment as professionals are also influenced by their own culture (e.g., Ashton, 2010), this thesis implies that what is more important in a child protection system is how the different types of professionals work together (Taylor et al., 2016). This is because as intervention and treatment of child maltreatment, increasingly, requires the services of multidisciplinary teams, there is an importance to have an agreement on what may considered as maltreatment, otherwise intervention may be compromised (Segal & Iwai, 2004). However, despite the importance of consensus, the findings in this thesis with professionals may suggest that there are apparent differences in perceptions among professionals.

Therefore, as Malaysia has child protection services in partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental agencies, this thesis suggest that some steps need to be taken to facilitate greater awareness among different stakeholders that are involved in the child protection service. Besides, there is a need for clarity on the contemporary definition of child maltreatment in Malaysia. A task force comprising child protection officers, physicians, social workers, psychologists and others should meet regularly or form a multidisciplinary team to discuss the management of every reported case of abuse. This practice not only would be helpful for professionals to define the limits on discipline and criteria for abuse, but also to provide a more defined framework within which child protection and management of maltreatment can be addressed (Ngiam & Tung, 2016).

In addition, given that this thesis found that the professionals may struggle with their own profession, professional and personal values, in which this may relate to gaps in their training, this thesis would suggest a few content areas to be included in their training programmes:

Types of child maltreatment and definitions. Although this thesis found that professionals were able to describe the common four categories of child maltreatment (namely physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect), much of the discourse concerned physical and emotional abuse. Some studies have suggested that certain forms of sexual abuse and neglect could be omitted or may not be comprehensive enough in child maltreatment training programmes (Alvarez et al., 2004). It is therefore, suggested that educational efforts should focus on reviewing all forms of sexual abuse including contact (e.g., sexual intercourse, fondling, inappropriate touching of genitalia) and non-contact forms (i.e., exposure of pornography, witnessing sexual acts and sexual grooming). Similarly, in the case of physical abuse, while most professionals seemed to be able to relate serious physical acts that result in injury as abuse, some failed to understand that physical acts such as shaking, canning, and kicking (that have the potential to result in physical injury) could be reportable. Similarly in discussing neglect with all groups in this thesis, it seemed that their understanding of it related almost exclusively to a consideration of the lack of physical basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. It is therefore important, that professionals (and perhaps parents and adult survivors too) understand that neglect may be the most complicated to identify, and includes the lack of other forms of child needs such as healthcare, education, and affection. Furthermore, in defining child maltreatment during training, the information provided needs to be tailored and be consistent with Malaysian laws in which the training is implemented. This should also include a review on the current laws in Malaysia as well as reporting procedures. Training programmes should also include interactive group exercises in which child maltreatment vignettes are reviewed by professionals and subsequently classified into appropriate types of maltreatment (Alvarez et al., 2004).

Cultural competency focuses on "the capacity of the child protection system to improve health and wellbeing by integrating culture into every aspect of service delivery"

(Raman & Hodes, 2012, p.35). Although cultural competence seems to be increasingly important among child protection-related professionals in Western countries, given the growth of ethnic minority groups (Harrison & Turner, 2011), this thesis argues that such cultural competence training should also be conducted in Malaysia, given that this thesis showed how cultural beliefs and values that are related to family and parenting could be interpreted differently among different Malaysian groups and among the Malaysian professionals. In addition, as the thesis found that parents could also be influenced by both western parenting practices and values as well as their own cultural beliefs and practices, it is likely that training on cultural competency could benefit professionals in a way that requires them to practice self-reflexivity on their own cultural beliefs and values (and those of others), to help avoid assumptions and generalisation. This is important as misinterpretation of some cultural knowledge can often leads to false assumption and stereotyping towards certain parenting practices and potentially may lead to more damaging effects for the child and their families if this was not managed well (Raman & Hodes, 2012).

Theoretical implications and suggestions for future research

While the present research adds to our understanding of how different groups of Malaysians (i.e., professionals, parents and adult survivors) perceived child maltreatment in relation to their culture and parenting practices, the findings indicated that such perceptions could also potentially be influenced by Malaysians' ethnicities, their gender, parenting beliefs and styles, as well as other factors such as perception of social roles and social norms (Cheah & Choo, 2016; Hohendorff, Habigzang, & Koller, 2017; Lee, Altschul, & Gershoff, 2015). The present research, went beyond the label of the participants' ethnic identity to study the influences of attitudes and cultural beliefs on child maltreatment that may be embedded within the ethnic groups' identity. Therefore, it is important that future research, should continue to discover how other factors such as gender (i.e., fathers and boys), age (ie., adult

and children), and the different ethnicities (including those who have mixed ethnicities) in Malaysia, influence perceptions of child maltreatment. Such an exploration of other factors will not only help to understand the differences within and between groups, but also help inform practice in Malaysia in promoting better safeguarding, by providing fine-tuned intervention for different group of ethnicities. Similarly, further studies should also continuously study professionals, to examine if there are differences between the different types of professionals, as well as to compare them with other Malaysians who are living in other Western countries and work in the area of child protection. Such a study, would not only help to understand how culture influences perceptions of child maltreatment, but it will also be able to provide further evidence for culturally valid parenting practices and beliefs that may transcends over time.

Furthermore, while thematic analysis has been useful in studying patterns of how child maltreatment was perceived by participants, this research indicated that perhaps a qualitative pluralistic approach may be useful, which incorporates discourse analysis to example, analyse texts and social interactions of how different cultures in Malaysia perceived child maltreatment (Frost et al., 2011). Given that Malaysia is a multicultural country that utilises different languages, it is possible that how a Malaysian describes abuse may not necessarily be the same as English speakers. For example, English words such as “abuse” and “molested”, in which the meaning of these words may vary widely between cultures and languages and other phrases such as “flashed private parts” or “made you look at private parts”, that may be difficult to be translated literally and subsequently difficulties in obtaining affirmative responses (Dunne et al., 2009), all of which will poorly capture a best estimation of the prevalence of child maltreatment or how the concept is being understood in different cultures.

Finally, to further disentangle cross-cultural differences in how child maltreatment is being perceived in Malaysia, and given the potential usage of the eco-cultural framework, future studies should also further consider the interactions of other country-level variables, such as sociocultural context (e.g., Malaysians laws and policies regarding children) and individual factors including parenting styles, (i.e., authoritarian, authoritative and permissive), childhood parenting experiences, and childhood experiences of maltreatment. Future studies should also consider a wider variety of samples from rural and urban populations, educated and less educated, as well as a range of participants that may represent the socio-demographic backgrounds of the population across Malaysia. Such consideration will help highlight underlying factors associated with differences in judgment about maltreatment (Fakunmoju et al., 2013)

Conclusion

Understanding cultural perceptions of child maltreatment is vital in many ways as perception has valuable implications on how future research studies the prevalence and incidences of child maltreatment, reporting behaviour, identifying intervention needs for vulnerable children, formulating and implementing policy, Furthermore, by understanding cultural perception from parents, it would be useful for professionals who are working with parents (suspected of child maltreatment) to determine their disciplinary practices, their parental values and beliefs and their perception towards maltreatment as well as the risk for parents to perpetrate. This thesis may also provide valuable information about the parenting styles experienced during childhood on perception of maltreatment.

Nonetheless, while there is a growing awareness among professionals, parents and adult survivors within Malaysian society about the boundaries between child punishment and abuse, it is clear that there is a gradual recognition on the adverse effects of physical abuse or discipline that is beginning to take hold. It is also important to appreciate that in Malaysia,

there is an existing legislative framework to guide professionals and to work better with parents and survivors to improve safeguarding with children.

References

Abu-Baker, K. (2013). Arab parents' reactions to child sexual abuse: a review of clinical records. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *22*(1), 52–71. http://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2013.744378

Afifi, T. O., & Romano, E. (2017). Ending the Spanking Debate. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *71*, 3–4. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.08.020

Ahmed, A., Choo, W. Y., Marret, M. J., Cheah, G. S., Othman, S., & Chinna, K. (2015). Child Maltreatment Experience among Primary School Children: A Large Scale Survey in Selangor State, Malaysia. *Plos One*, *10*(3), e0119449. http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0119449

Ajzen, I. (2005). *Attitudes, Personality, and Behavior* (2nd ed.). England: Open University Press.

Akmatov, M. K. (2011). Child abuse in 28 developing and transitional countries-results from the multiple indicator cluster surveys. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, *40*(1), 219–227. http://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyq168

Alavi, K., Amin, A. S., Subhi, N., Mohamad, M. S., & Sarnon, N. (2012). Kerja sosial di sekolah: Memahami dan menangani penderaan kanak-kanak (Social Work at School : Understanding and Dealing with Child Abuse). *Jurnal Sains Sosial Dan Kemanusiaan*, *7*(1), 17–37.

Alink, L. R. A., Cicchetti, D., Kim, J., & Rogosch, F. A. (2012). Longitudinal associations among child maltreatment, social functioning, and cortisol regulation. *Developmental Psychology*, *48*(1), 224–36. http://doi.org/10.1037/a0024892

Alvarez, K. M., Kenny, M. C., Donohue, B., & Carpin, K. M. (2004). Why are professionals failing to initiate mandated reports of child maltreatment, and are there any empirically based training programs to assist professionals in the reporting process? *Aggression and*

Violent Behavior, *9*(5), 563–578. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2003.07.001

Arnold, D. S., O'Leary, S. G., Wolff, L. S., & Acker, M. M. (1993). The Parenting Scale: A measure of dysfunctional parenting in discipline situations. *Psychological Assessment*, *5*(2), 137–144. http://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.5.2.137

Ashton, V. (2001). The relationship between attitudes toward corporal punishment and the perception and reporting of child maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *25*(3), 389–99.

Ashton, V. (2010). Does Ethnicity Matter ? Social Workers ' Personal Attitudes and Professional Behaviors in Responding to Child Maltreatment, *11*(2), 129–143.

Babatsikos, G. (2010). Parents' knowledge, attitudes and practices about preventing child sexual abuse: a literature review. *Child Abuse Review*, *19*(2), 107–129. http://doi.org/10.1002/car.1102

Bailhache, M., Alioum, A., & Salmi, L.-R. (2017). Perception of Physical Child Abuse Among Parents and Professionals in a French Emergency Department. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 088626051770566. http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517705663

Bammeke, F. O., & Fakunmoju, S. B. (2016). Childhood Maltreatment and Perception of Child Maltreatment among Respondents in Nigeria. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, *28*(1), 73–100. http://doi.org/10.1177/0971333615622896

Bang, E. J. (2008). The influence of cultural factors on child abuse among Asian Amercians. *The International Journal of Diversity in Organisation, Communities and Nations*, *7*(6), 229–235.

Banyard, V. L. (1997). The impact of childhood sexual abuse and family functioning on four dimensions of women's later parenting. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *21*(11), 1095–1107. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(97)00068-9

Banyard, V. L., Williams, L. M., & Siegel, J. a. (2003). The impact of complex trauma and depression on parenting: an exploration of mediating risk and protective factors. *Child*

Maltreatment, *8*(4), 334–349. http://doi.org/10.1177/1077559503257106

Bates, J. E., Deater-Deckard, K., Dodge, K. A., Lansford, J. E., & Pettit, G. S. (2003). The Development of Attitudes About Physical Punishment: An 8- Year Longitudinal Study. *October*, *17*(3), 351–360. http://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.17.3.351.The

Baumrind, D. (1968). Authoritarian vs. authoritative parental control. *Adolescence*, *3*(11), 255–272.

Bavolek, S. J., & Keene, R. G. (2001). *Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory AAPI-2: Administration and development handbook.* Park City, UT: Family Development Resources, Inc.

Bavolek, S. J., Kline, D. F., McLaughlin, J. A., & Publicover, P. R. (1979). Primary prevention of child abuse and neglect: Identification of high-risk adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *3*(3–4), 1071–1080. http://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(79)90152-2

Beckerman, M., van Berkel, S. R., Mesman, J., & Alink, L. R. A. (2017). The role of negative parental attributions in the associations between daily stressors, maltreatment history, and harsh and abusive discipline. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *64*, 109–116. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.12.015

Begle, A. M., Dumas, J. E., & Hanson, R. F. (2010). Predicting Child Abuse Potential: An Empirical Investigation of Two Theoretical Frameworks. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, *39*(2), 208–219. http://doi.org/10.1080/15374410903532650

Bell, T., & Romano, E. (2012). Opinions about child corporal punishment and influencing factors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *27*(11), 2208–29. http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260511432154

Belsky, J. (1980). Child maltreatment: An ecological integration. *American Psychologist*, *35*(4), 320–335. http://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.35.4.320

Belsky, J. (1993). Etiology of child maltreatment: a developmental-ecological analysis.

Psychological Bulletin, *114*(3), 413–34. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8272464

Benbenishty, R., Davidson-Arad, B., López, M., Devaney, J., Spratt, T., Koopmans, C., … Hayes, D. (2015). Decision making in child protection: An international comparative study on maltreatment substantiation, risk assessment and interventions recommendations, and the role of professionals' child welfare attitudes. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *49*, 63–75. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.03.015

Benbenishty, R., & Schmid, H. (2013). Public attitudes toward the identification and reporting of alleged maltreatment cases among social groups in Israel. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *35*(2), 332–339. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.11.013

Benjet, C., & Kazdin, A. E. (2003). Spanking children: the controversies, findings, and new directions. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *23*(2), 197–224. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12573670

Berger, L. M. (2005). Income, family characteristics, and physical violence toward children. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *29*(2), 107–133. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.02.006

Berlin, L. J., Appleyard, K., & Dodge, K. A. (2011). Intergenerational Continuity in Child Maltreatment: Mediating Mechanisms and Implications for Prevention. *Child Development*, *82*(1), 162–176. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01547.x

Berry, J. W., Van de Koppel, J. M. H., Senechal, C., Annis, R. C., Bahuchet, S., Cavalli-Sforza, L. L., et al. (1986). *On the edge of the forest: Cultural adaptation and cognitive development in Central Africa*. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Berry, J. W. (1976). *Human ecology and cognitive style: Comparative studies in cultural and psychological adaptation*. New York: Sage.

Berry, J. W. (1993). An Ecological Approach to Understanding Cognition Across Cultures. *Advances in Psychology*, *103*(C), 361–375. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0166-

4115(08)61672-6

Berry, J. W. (2010). Intercultural Relations and Acculturation in the Pacific Region. *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*, *4*(02), 95–102. http://doi.org/10.1375/prp.4.2.95

Berry, J. W., & Poortinga, Y. H. (2006). Cross-cultural theory and methodology. In J. Georgas, J. W. Berry, vander V. F.J.R., C. Kagitcibas, & Y. H. Poortinga (Eds.), *Families across cultures: A 30-Nation Psychological Study* (pp. 51–71). Cambridge University Press.

Bhanbhro, S., Cronin de Chavez, A., & Lusambili, A. (2016). Honour based violence as a global public health problem: a critical review of literature. *International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare*, *9*(3), 198–215. http://doi.org/10.1108/IJHRH-10-2015-0032

Bornstein, M. H., Putnick, D. L., & Lansford, J. E. (2011). Parenting Attributions and Attitudes in Cross-Cultural Perspective. *Parenting, Science and Practice*, *11*(2–3), 214–237. http://doi.org/10.1080/15295192.2011.585568

Bower-Russa, M. E., Knutson, J. F., & Winebarger, A. (2001). Disciplinary history, adult disciplinary attitudes, and risk for abusive parenting. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *29*(3), 219–240. http://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.1015

Boyda, D., & McFeeters, D. (2015). Childhood maltreatment and social functioning in adults with sub-clinical psychosis. *Psychiatry Research*, *226*(1), 376–82. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2015.01.023

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. http://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brenner, V., & Fox, R. A. (1999). An Empirically Derived Classification of Parenting Practices. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, *160*(3), 343–356. http://doi.org/10.1080/00221329909595404

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brown, D. W., Anda, R. F., Felitti, V. J., Edwards, V. J., Malarcher, A. M., Croft, J. B., & Giles, W. H. (2010). Adverse childhood experiences are associated with the risk of lung cancer: a prospective cohort study. *BMC Public Health*, *10*(1), 20. http://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-10-20

Budd, K. S., Behling, S., Li, Y., Parikshak, S., Gershenson, R. A., Feuer, R., & Danko, C. M. (2012). Measuring Attitudes Toward Acceptable and Unacceptable Parenting Practices. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *21*(2), 247–261. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-011-9470-3

Buist, A. (1998). Childhood Abuse, Postpartum Depression and Parenting Difficulties: A Literature Review of Associations. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, *32*(3), 370–378. http://doi.org/10.3109/00048679809065529

Bunting, L., Webb, M. A., & Healy, J. (2010). In two minds? - Parental attitudes toward physical punishment in the UK. *Children and Society*, *24*(5), 359–370. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2009.00245.x

Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism* (2nd ed.). Hove: Routledge.

Butchart, A., Harvey, A., Mian, M., & Furniss, T. (2006). Preventing child maltreatment: A guide to taking action and generating evidence. Retrieved from http://www.popline.org/node/181981

Cauce, A. M. (2008). Parenting, Culture, and Context: Reflections on Excavating Culture. *Applied Developmental Science*, *12*(4), 227–229. http://doi.org/10.1080/10888690802388177

Chaiyachati, B. H., Asnes, A. G., Moles, R. L., Schaeffer, P., & Leventhal, J. M. (2015). Gray cases of child abuse: Investigating factors associated with uncertainty. *Child Abuse*

& Neglect, 1–6. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.11.001

Chan, J. S., Chow, Y., & Elliott, J. M. (2000). Professional And Public Perceptions Of Physical Child Abuse And Neglect In Singapore, *16*(April), 74.

Chan, J. S., Elliott, J. M., Chow, Y., & Thomas, J. I. (2002). Does professionnal and public opinion in child abuse differ? An issue of cross-cultural policy implementation. *Special Issue: Culture and Child Protection.*, *11*(6), 359–379. http://doi.org/10.1002/car.767

Chan, K. L. (2015). Are parents reliable in reporting child victimization? Comparison of parental and adolescent reports in a matched Chinese household sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *44*, 170–183. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.11.001

Chan, L. F., Tan, S. M. K., Ang, J. K., Kamal Nor, N., & Sharip, S. (2012). A case of sexual abuse by a traditional faith healer: are there potential preventions?. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *21*(6), 613–620. Retrieved from http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&PAGE=reference&D=medl&NEWS=N&AN=23194137

Chan, Y., Lam, G. L. T., & Shae, W. C. (2011). Children's views on child abuse and neglect: findings from an exploratory study with Chinese children in Hong Kong. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *35*(3), 162–172.

Che Noh, C. H., & Wan Talaat, W. I. A. (2012). Verbal Abuse on Children: Does It Amount to Child Abuse under the Malaysian Law? *Asian Social Science*, *8*(6), 224–229. http://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v8n6p224

Cheah, I. G. S. (2011). Child maltreatment prevention readiness assessment in Malaysia Table of Contents.

Cheah, I. G. S., & Choo, W. Y. (2016). A Review of Research on Child Abuse in Malaysia. *Medical Journal Malaysia*, *71*(1), 87–99.

Chen, J., Dunne, M. P., & Han, P. (2007). Prevention of child sexual abuse in China:

knowledge, attitudes, and communication practices of parents of elementary school children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *31*(7), 747–755. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.12.013

Chen, L. P., Murad, M. H., Paras, M. L., Colbenson, K. M., Sattler, A. L., Goranson, E. N., … Zirakzadeh, A. (2010). Sexual Abuse and Lifetime Diagnosis of Psychiatric Disorders: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, *85*(7), 618–629. http://doi.org/10.4065/mcp.2009.0583

Chen, M., & Chan, K. L. (2016). Effects of parenting programs on child maltreatment prevention a meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *17*(1), 88–104. http://doi.org/10.1177/1524838014566718

Chen, X. (2003). The Social Impact of China'S One-Child Policy. *Harvard Asia Pacific Review*, *7*, 74–76.

Choi, Y., Kim, Y. S., Kim, S. Y., & Park, I. J. K. (2013). Is Asian American parenting controlling and harsh? Empirical testing of relationships between Korean American and Western parenting measures. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *4*(1), 19–29. http://doi.org/10.1037/a0031220

Choo, W.-Y., Dunne, M. P., Marret, M. J., Fleming, M., & Wong, Y.-L. (2011). Victimization experiences of adolescents in Malaysia. *The Journal of Adolescent Health : Official Publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine*, *49*(6), 627–634. Retrieved from http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&PAGE=reference&D=medl&NEWS=N&AN=22098774

Choo, W. Y., Walsh, K., Chinna, K., & Tey, N. P. (2013). Teacher Reporting Attitudes Scale (TRAS): Confirmatory and Exploratory Factor Analyses With a Malaysian Sample. *JOURNAL OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE*, *28*(2), 231–253.

http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260512454720

Choo, W. Y., Walsh, K., Marret, M. J., Chinna, K., & Tey, N. P. (2013). Are Malaysian Teachers Ready to Assume the Duties of Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect? *Child Abuse Review*, *22*(2), 93–107. http://doi.org/10.1002/car.2241

Chuang, S. S., Glozman, J., Green, D. S., & Rasmi, S. (2018). Parenting and Family Relationships in Chinese Families: A Critical Ecological Approach. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *10*(2), 367–383. http://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12257

Cicchetti, D., & Lynch, M. (1993). Toward an ecological/transactional model of community violence and child maltreatment: consequences for children's development. *Psychiatry*, *56*(1), 96–118. http://doi.org/10.1521/00332747.1993.11024624

Cicchetti, D., & Rizley, R. (1981). Developmental Perspectives on the Etiology , Intergenerational Transmission , and Sequelae of Child Maltreatment. *New Directions for Child Development*, *11*, 31–35.

Corby, B. (2005). The causation of child abuse. In C. Jenks (Ed.), *Childhood: Critical concepts in sociology* (pp. 3–27). New York: Routledge.

Corby, B., Shemmings, D., & Wilkins, D. (2012). *Child Abuse: An evidence base for confident practice* (4th ed.). Croydon: McGraw-Hill.

Cui, N., Xue, J., Connolly, C. A., & Liu, J. (2016). Does the gender of parent or child matter in child maltreatment in China? *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *54*, 1–9. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.01.003

Cyr, C., Michel, G., & Dumais, M. (2013). Child maltreatment as a global phenomenon: from trauma to prevention. *International Journal of Psychology : Journal International de Psychologie*, *48*(2), 141–8. http://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2012.705435

Daly, M., Bray, R., Bruckauf, Z., Byrne, J., Margaria, A., Pecnik, N., & Samms-Vaughan, M. (2015). Family and parenting support. Policy and provision in a global context.

Innocenti Insight, 106.

Davies, M., Patel, F., & Rogers, P. (2013). Examining the roles of victim-perpetrator relationship and emotional closeness in judgments toward a depicted child sexual abuse case. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *28*(5), 887–909. http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260512459376

de Jong, R., Alink, L., Bijleveld, C., Finkenauer, C., & Hendriks, J. (2015). Transition to adulthood of child sexual abuse victims. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *24*, 175–187. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2015.04.012

Deater-Deckard, K., Lansford, J. E., Malone, P. S., Alampay, L. P., Sorbring, E., Bacchini, D., … Al-Hassan, S. M. (2011). The association between parental warmth and control in thirteen cultural groups. *Journal of Family Psychology : JFP : Journal of the Division of Family Psychology of the American Psychological Association (Division 43)*, *25*(5), 790–4. http://doi.org/10.1037/a0025120

Department for Education. (2015). *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*. London: Department of Education. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Department of Education. (2017). Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Department of Social Welfare, M. (2017). Statistics Report. Retrieved April 24, 2017, from http://www.jkm.gov.my/jkm/index.php?r=portal/full&id=R3FNa05sRjVTWUc5dy80VEUxU2VNQT09

Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2017). Current Population Estimates, Malaysia, 2016-2017. Retrieved August 14, 2017, from https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=155&bul_id=a1d

1UTFZazd5ajJiRWFHNDduOXFFQT09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09

DiLillo, D., & Damashek, A. (2003). Parenting characteristics of women reporting a history of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Maltreatment*, *8*(4), 319–333. http://doi.org/10.1177/1077559503257104

Dixon, L., Browne, K., & Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. (2008). Patterns of Risk and Protective Factors in the Intergenerational Cycle of Maltreatment. *Journal of Family Violence*, *24*(2), 111–122. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-008-9215-2

Dixon, L., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., & Browne, K. (2005). Attributions and behaviours of parents abused as children: A mediational analysis of the intergenerational continuity of child maltreatment (Part II). *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, *46*(1), 58–68. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00340.x

Dixon, L., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Browne, K., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., & Browne, K. (2005). Risk factors of parents abused as children: a mediational analysis of the intergenerational continuity of child maltreatment (Part I). *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *46*(1), 47–57. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00339.x

Dongping, Q., & Yuk-chung, C. (2008). Myths of child abuse in China: findings based on a qualitative study in Beijing1. *China Journal of Social Work*, *1*(3), 266–278. http://doi.org/10.1080/17525090802404856

Dunne, M. P., Chen, J. Q., & Choo, W. Y. (2008). The evolving evidence base for child protection in Chinese societies. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health / Asia-Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health*, *20*(4), 267–276. http://doi.org/10.1177/1010539508325047

Dunne, M. P., Choo, W. Y., Madrid, B., Subrahmanian, R., Rumble, L., Blight, S., & Maternowska, M. C. (2015). Violence Against Children in the Asia Pacific Region: The

Situation Is Becoming Clearer. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health*, *27*(8 Suppl), 2015–2017. http://doi.org/10.1177/1010539515602184

Dunne, M. P., Zolotor, A. J., Runyan, D. K., Andreva-Miller, I., Choo, W. Y., Dunne, S. K., … Youssef, R. (2009). ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tools Retrospective version (ICAST-R): Delphi study and field testing in seven countries. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *33*(11), 815–825. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.09.005

Dusuki, F. N. (2002). *What Malaysia can learn from experience in England and Wales in protecting child abuse victims: A socio-legal and comparative analsysis*. University of Wales.

Ehrensaft, M. K., Knous-Westfall, H. M., Cohen, P., & Chen, H. (2014). How Does Child Abuse History Influence Parenting of the Next Generation? *Psychology of Violence*, *5*(1), 16–25. http://doi.org/10.1037/a0036080

Elliott, J. M., Tong, C. K., & Tan, P. M. (1997). Attitudes of the Singapore public to actions suggesting child abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *21*(5), 445–464. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(97)00005-7

Eshareturi, C., Lyle, C., & Morgan, A. (2014). Policy Responses to Honor-Based Violence: A Cultural or National Problem? *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *23*(4), 369–382. http://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2014.892048

Fakunmoju, S. B., & Bammeke, F. O. (2013). Development of Perception of Child Maltreatment Scale: Reliability and Validity Analyses. *SAGE Open*, *3*(2), 1–14. http://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013490703

Fakunmoju, S. B., Bammeke, F. O., Antwi Bosiakoh, T., Asante, R. K. B., Wooten, N. R., Hill, A. C., & Karpman, H. (2013). Perception and determination of child maltreatment: Exploratory comparisons across three countries. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *35*(9), 1418–1430. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.06.001

Fang, X., Brown, D. S., Florence, C. S., & Mercy, J. A. (2012). The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *36*(2), 156–165. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.10.006

Fang, X., Fry, D. A., Ji, K., Finkelhor, D., Chen, J., & Dunne, M. P. (2015). The burden of child maltreatment in China : A systematic review. *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 176–185.

Fang, X., Fry, D., Brown, D. S., Mercy, J. A., Dunne, M. P., Butchart, A. R., … Swales, D. M. (2015). The burden of child maltreatment in the East Asia and Pacific region. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *42*(43123767), 146–62. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.02.012

Feng, J.-Y., Jezewski, M. A., & Hsu, T.-W. (2005). The meaning of child abuse for nurses in Taiwan. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing : Official Journal of the Transcultural Nursing Society / Transcultural Nursing Society*, *16*(2), 142–149.

Feng, J. Y., Chen, S. J., Wilk, N. C., Yang, W. P., & Fetzer, S. (2009). Kindergarten teachers' experience of reporting child abuse in Taiwan: Dancing on the edge. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *31*(3), 405–409. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.09.007

Ferrari, A. M. (2002). The impact of culture upon child rearing practices and definitions of maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *26*(8), 793–813. http://doi.org/10.1080/05679320500212114

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Evanston, IL: Row & Peterson.

Finkelhor, D., Ji, K., Mikton, C., & Dunne, M. (2013). Explaining lower rates of sexual abuse in China. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *37*(10), 852–860. Retrieved from http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&PAGE=reference&D=prem&NEWS=N&AN=23958110

Fleming, P., Biggart, L., & Beckett, C. (2014). Effects of Professional Experience on Child Maltreatment Risk Assessments : A Comparison of Students and Qualified Social

Workers, (June), 1–19.

Fontes, L. A., & Plummer, C. (2010). Cultural issues in disclosures of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *19*(5), 491–518. http://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2010.512520

Frechette, S., & Romano, E. (2016). How do parents label their physical disciplinary practices? A focus on the definition of corporal punishment. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *71*, 92–103. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.02.003

Fréchette, S., & Romano, E. (2017). How do parents label their physical disciplinary practices? A focus on the definition of corporal punishment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 1–12. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.02.003

Fréchette, S., Zoratti, M., & Romano, E. (2015). What Is the Link Between Corporal Punishment and Child Physical Abuse? *Journal of Family Violence*, *30*(2), 135–148. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-014-9663-9

Frost, N., Holt, A., Shinebourne, P., Esin, C., Nolas, S.-M., Mehdizadeh, L., & Brooks-Gordon, B. (2011). Collective findings, individual interpretations: an illustration of a pluralistic approach to qualitative data analysis., *0887*(September 2015). http://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2010.500351

Fry, D. (2012). *Child Maltreatment: Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences in the East Asia and Pacific Region: A Systematic Review of Research*. Bangkok: UNICEF EAPRO.

Fry, D., Fang, X., Elliott, S., Casey, T., Zheng, X., Li, J., … McCluskey, G. (2017). The relationships between violence in childhood and educational outcomes: A global systematic review and meta-analysis. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, (January), 0–1. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.06.021

Fry, D., McCoy, A., & Swales, D. (2012). The consequences of maltreatment on children's lives: a systematic review of data from the East Asia and Pacific Region. *Trauma,*

Violence & Abuse, *13*(4), 209–33. http://doi.org/10.1177/1524838012455873

Fujiwara, T., Okuyama, M., & Izumi, M. (2012). The impact of childhood abuse history, domestic violence and mental health symptoms on parenting behaviour among mothers in Japan. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, *38*(4), 530–537. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2011.01272.x

Gagné, M.-H., Tourigny, M., Joly, J., & Pouliot-Lapointe, J. (2007). Predictors of adult attitudes toward corporal punishment of children. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *22*(10), 1285–304. http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260507304550

Gangoli, G., McCarry, M., & Razak, A. (2009). Child Marriage or Forced Marriage? South Asian Communities in North East England. *Children & Society*, *23*(6), 418–429. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ856481&site=ehost-live

Gardikiotis, A. (2011). Minority Influence. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *5*(9), 679–693. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2011.00377.x

Gershoff, E. T. (2010). More harm than good: A summary of scientific research on the intended and unintended effects of corporal punishment on children. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, *73*(2004), 31–56.

Gershoff, E. T., Font, S. A., Taylor, C. A., Foster, R. H., Garza, A. B., Olson-Dorff, D., … Spector, L. (2016). Medical center staff attitudes about spanking. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *61*, 55–62. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.10.003

Gershoff, E. T., Grogan-Kaylor, A., Lansford, J. E., Chang, L., Zelli, A., Deater-Deckard, K., & Dodge, K. a. (2011). Parent discipline practices in an international sample: associations with child behaviors and moderation by perceived normativeness. *Child Development*, *81*(2), 487–502. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01409.x

Gilbert, R., Fluke, J., O'Donnell, M., Gonzalez-Izquierdo, A., Brownell, M., Gulliver, P., … Sidebotham, P. (2012). Child maltreatment: Variation in trends and policies in six developed countries. *The Lancet*, *379*(9817), 758–772. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(11)61087-8

Gilbert, R., Widom, C. S., Browne, K., Fergusson, D., Webb, E., & Janson, S. (2009). Burden and consequences of child maltreatment in high-income countries. *Lancet*, *373*(9657), 68–81. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(08)61706-7

Gim Chung, R. H., Kim, B. S. K., & Abreu, J. M. (2004). Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale: Development, Factor Analysis, Reliability, and Validity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *10*(1), 66–80. http://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.10.1.66

Giovannoni, J. M., & Becerra, R. M. (1979). *Defining Child Abuse*. New York: The Free Press.

Godbout, N., Briere, J., Sabourin, S., & Lussier, Y. (2014). Child sexual abuse and subsequent relational and personal functioning: The role of parental support. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *38*(2), 317–325. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.10.001

Gough, D. (1996). Child Abuse in Japan. *Child Psychology and Psychiatry Review*, *1*(1), 12–18.

Gough, D. (1996). Defining the problem. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *20*(11), 993–1002. http://doi.org/10.1080/05679320500212114

Gough, D., & Lynch, M. A. (2002). Culture and child protection. *Child Abuse Review*, *11*(6), 341–344. http://doi.org/10.1002/car.773

Gracia, E., & Herrero, J. (2008). Beliefs in the necessity of corporal punishment of children and public perceptions of child physical abuse as a social problem. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *32*(11), 1058–1062. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.05.004

Gross, D., & Rocissano, L. (1988). Maternal confidence in toddlerhood: its measurement for clinical practice and research. *The Nurse Practitioner*, *13*(3), 19–22, 25, 28–9. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3374866

Hahm, H. C., & Guterman, N. B. (2001). The Emerging Problem of Physical Child Abuse in South Korea. *Child Maltreatment*, *6*(2), 169–179. http://doi.org/10.1177/1077559501006002009

Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Peixoto, C. S., & Melo, A. (2011). Risk assessment and intervention. In T. Magalhaes (Ed.), *Abuse and neglect series 1: To improve the management of child abuse and neglect* (pp. 89–131). Portugal: SPECAN.

Harrison, G., & Turner, R. (2011). Being a 'culturally competent'social worker: making sense of a murky concept in practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, (August 2010), 333–350. http://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcql01

Higgins, D. (2004). Differentiating between child maltreatment experiences. *Family Matters*, *69*(69), 50–56.

Hillberg, T., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., & Dixon, L. (2011). Review of meta-analyses on the association between child sexual abuse and adult mental health difficulties: a systematic approach. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, *12*(1), 38–49. http://doi.org/10.1177/1524838010386812

Ho, G. W. K., & Gross, D. A. (2015). Pediatric nurses' differentiations between acceptable and unacceptable parent discipline behaviors: a Q-study. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care : Official Publication of National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates & Practitioners*, *29*(3), 255–64. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2014.12.004

Hohendorff, J. Von, Habigzang, L. F., & Koller, S. H. (2017). "A boy, being a victim, nobody really buys that, you know?": Dynamics of sexual violence against boys. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *70*(May), 53–64. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.05.008

Holden, G. W. (2002). Perspectives on the effects of corporal punishment: comment on Gershoff (2002). *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*(4), 590-5; discussion 602-11. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12081083

Hong, J. S., Lee, N. Y., Park, H. J., & Faller, K. C. (2011). Child maltreatment in South Korea: An ecological systems analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *33*(7), 1058–1066. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.01.012

Hornor, G., Bretl, D., Chapman, E., Chiocca, E., Donnell, C., Doughty, K., … Quinones, S. G. (2015). Corporal Punishment: Evaluation of an Intervention by PNPs. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, *29*(6), 526–535. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2015.04.016

Hossain, Z., Roopnarine, J. L. J. L., Masud, J., Muhamed, A. A., Baharudin, R., Abdullah, R., & Juhari, R. (2005). Mothers' and fathers' childcare involvement with young children in rural families in Malaysia. *International Journal of Psychology*, *40*(6), 385–394. http://doi.org/10.1080/00207590444000294

Hossain, Z., Roopnarine, J. L., Masud, J., Muhamed, A. A., Baharudin, R., Abdullah, R., & Juhari, R. (2005). Mothers' and fathers' childcare involvement with young children in rural families in Malaysia. *International Journal of Psychology*, *40*(6), 385–394. http://doi.org/10.1080/00207590444000294

Hulme, P. (2004). Retrospective measurement of childhood sexual abuse: a review of instruments. *Child Maltreatment*, *9*(2), 201–217. http://doi.org/10.1177/1077559504264264

Ibrahim, I., Hussain, F., & Aziz, N. A. (2012). The Child Bride: Rights under the Civil and Shariah Law. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *38*(December 2010), 51–58. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.03.323

Idriss, M. M. (2017). Not domestic violence or cultural tradition: is honour-based violence distinct from domestic violence? *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, *39*(1), 3–

21. http://doi.org/10.1080/09649069.2016.1272755

Jafari, M., Baharudin, R., & Archer, M. (2016). Fathers' Parenting Behaviors and Malaysian Adolescents' Anxiety. *Journal of Family Issues*, *37*(2), 198–220. http://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X13513580

Jambunathan, S., Burts, D. C., & Pierce, S. (2000). Comparisons of parenting attitudes among five ethnic groups in the United States. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *31*(4), 395–406.

Jent, J. F., Eaton, C. K., Knickerbocker, L., Lambert, W. F., Merrick, M. T., & Dandes, S. K. (2011). Multidisciplinary child protection decision making about physical abuse: Determining substantiation thresholds and biases. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *33*(9), 1673–1682. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.04.029

Ji, K., & Finkelhor, D. (2015). A meta-analysis of child physical abuse prevalence in China. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *43*, 61–72. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.11.011

Ji, K., Finkelhor, D., & Dunne, M. (2013). Child sexual abuse in China: A meta-analysis of 27 studies. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *37*(9), 613–622. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.03.008

Johnson, S. B., Riley, A. W., Granger, D. A., & Riis, J. (2013). The science of early life toxic stress for pediatric practice and advocacy. *Pediatrics*, *131*(2), 319–27. http://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-0469

Kaufman, J., & Zigler, E. (1987). Do abused children become abusive parents? *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *57*(2), 186–192.

Kempe, H. (1982). Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Child Abuse. *Pediatrics*, *69*(4), 497–498.

Keshavarz, S., & Baharudin, R. (2009). Parenting style in a collectivist cultures of Malaysia. *European Journal of Social …*, *10*(1), 66–73. Retrieved from http://psasir.upm.edu.my/16042/

Keshavarz, S., & Baharudin, R. (2013). Perceived parenting style of fathers and adolescents' locus of control in a collectivist culture of malaysia: the moderating role of fathers' education. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, *174*(3), 253–270. http://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2012.678419

Kesner, J., Kwon, K.-A., & Lim, C. (2016). The role of race in preservice teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards corporal punishment & child maltreatment. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *59*, 318–326. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.06.015

Kim, K., Trickett, P. K., & Putnam, F. W. (2010). Childhood experiences of sexual abuse and later parenting practices among non-offending mothers of sexually abused and comparison girls. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *34*(8), 610–622. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2010.01.007

Kiser, L. J., Stover, C. S., Navalta, C. P., Dorado, J., Vogel, J. M., Abdul-Adil, J. K., … Briggs, E. C. (2014). Effects of the child-perpetrator relationship on mental health outcomes of child abuse: It's (not) all relative. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *38*(6), 1083–1093. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.02.017

Kling, Z. (1995). The Malay Family : Beliefs and Realities. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *26*(1), 43–66.

Knerr, W., Gardner, F., & Cluver, L. (2013). Improving Positive Parenting Skills and Reducing Harsh and Abusive Parenting in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review. *Prevention Science*, *14*(4), 352–363. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-012-0314-1

Ko, C., & Koh, C. K. (2007). The influence of abuse situation and respondent background characteristics on Korean nurses' perceptions of child sexual abuse: a fractional factorial design. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, *44*(7), 1165–1176.

Kohrt, H. E., Kohrt, B. A., Waldman, I., Saltzman, K., & Carrion, V. G. (2004). An ecological-transactional model of significant risk factors for child psychopathology in outer Mongolia. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, *35*(2), 163–181. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-004-1883-4

Kolhatkar, G., & Berkowitz, C. (2014). Cultural Considerations and Child Maltreatment. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, *61*(5), 1007–1022. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2014.06.005

Korbin, J. E. (1981). Introduction. In Korbin (Ed.), *Child abuse and neglect: Cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 1–12). USA: University of California Press.

Korbin, J. E. (1991). Cross-cultural perspectives and research directions for the 21st century. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *15 Suppl 1*, 67–77.

Korbin, J. E. (2002). Culture and child maltreatment: Cultural competence and beyond. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *26*(6–7), 637–644. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(02)00338-1

Krane, J., Oxman-Martinez, J., & Ducey, K. (2000). Violence Against Women and Ethnoracial Minority Women: Examining Assumptions about Ethnicity and "Race." *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, *32*(3), 1–18.

Lang, R. A., & Frenzel, R. R. (1988). How sex offenders lure children. *Annals of Sex Research*, *1*(2), 303–317. http://doi.org/10.1007/BF00852802

Lansford, J. E., Cappa, C., Putnick, D. L., Bornstein, M. H., Deater-Deckard, K., & Bradley, R. H. (2016). Change over time in parents' beliefs about and reported use of corporal punishment in eight countries with and without legal bans. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.10.016

Lansford, J. E., Chang, L., Dodge, K. a, Malone, P. S., Oburu, P., Palmérus, K., … Quinn, N. (2009). Physical discipline and children's adjustment: cultural normativeness as a moderator. *Child Development*, *76*(6), 1234–46. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-

8624.2005.00847.x

Lansford, J. E., Godwin, J., Alampay, L. P., Uribe Tirado, L. M., Zelli, A., Al-Hassan, S. M., … Tapanya, S. (2015). Mothers', fathers' and children's perceptions of parents' expectations about children's family obligations in nine countries. *International Journal of Psychology*, *51*(5), n/a-n/a. http://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12185

Larsen, S., Kim-Goh, M., & Nguyen, T. D. (2008). Asian American Immigrant Families and Child Abuse: Cultural Considerations. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, *27*(1), 16–29. http://doi.org/10.1521/jsyt.2008.27.1.16

Larson, K. E., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2017). Cultural competence and social desirability among practitioners: A systematic review of the literature. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *76*, 100–111. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.02.034

Lau, J. T., Liu, J. L., Yu, A., & Wong, C. K. (1999). Conceptualization, reporting and underreporting of child abuse in Hong Kong. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *23*(11), 1159–1174.

Lee, S. J., Altschul, I., & Gershoff, E. T. (2015). Wait until your father gets home? Mother's and fathers' spanking and development of child aggression. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *52*, 158–166. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.11.006

Lee, Y., Malley-Morrison, K., Jang, M., & Watson, M. W. (2014). Hierarchies of child maltreatment types at different perceived severity levels in European Americans, Korean Americans, and Koreans. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *46*, 220–229. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.08.021

Leeb, R. T., Paulozzzi, L., Melanson, C., Simon, T., & Arias, I. (2008). *Child Maltreatment Surveillance: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements*. Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Levey, E. J., Apter, G., & Harrison, A. M. (2017). The global problem of child maltreatment:

perspectives on mechanisms of influence and illness presentation. *International Journal of Culture and Mental Health*, *10*(1), 90–96. http://doi.org/10.1080/17542863.2016.1264440

Liang, M., Loaiza, E., Diop, N. J., & Legesse, B. (2016). Demographic perspectives of female genital mutilation. *International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare*, *9*(1), 3–28 26p. http://doi.org/10.1108/IJHRH-05-2015-0017

Liao, M., Lee, A. S., Roberts-Lewis, A. C., Hong, J. S., & Jiao, K. (2011). Child maltreatment in China: An ecological review of the literature. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *33*(9), 1709–1719. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.04.031

Lin, C.-H., Chiang, P. P., Lux, E. A., & Lin, H.-F. (2018). Immigrant social worker practice: An ecological perspective on strengths and challenges. *Children and Youth Services Review*, (2017), #pagerange#. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.02.020

Loh, J. M. I., Calleja, F., & Restubog, S. L. D. (2011). Words that hurt: a qualitative study of s parental verbal abuse in the Philippines. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *26*(11), 2244–2263. http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510383031

Ltd, Q. I. P. (2015). *NVivo qualitative data analysis software* (11th ed.).

Macdonald, G. (2001). *Effective Interventions for Child Abuse and Neglect: An Evidence-Based Approach to Evaluating and Planning Intervention*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Mackenbach, J. D., Ringoot, A. P., Van Der Ende, J., Verhulst, F. C., Jaddoe, V. W. V, Hofman, A., … Tiemeier, H. W. (2014). Exploring the relation of harsh parental discipline with child emotional and behavioral problems by using multiple informants. The generation R study. *PLoS ONE*, *9*(8). http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0104793

MacMillan, H. L., & Mikton, C. R. (2017). Moving research beyond the spanking debate. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 12–15. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.02.012

Madu, S. N., Idemudia, S. E., & Jegede, A. S. (2002). Perceived Parental Disorders as Risk Factors for Child Sexual, Physical and Emotional abuse among High School Students in the Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, *6*(2), 103–112. http://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2002.11892337

Maiter, S., Alaggia, R., Trocme, N., & Trocmé, N. (2004). Perceptions of child maltreatment by parents from the Indian subcontinent: challenging myths about culturally based abusive parenting practices. *Child Maltreatment*, *9*(3), 309–324. http://doi.org/10.1177/1077559504266800

Maker, A. H., Shah, P. V., & Agha, Z. (2005). Child physical abuse - Prevalence, characteristics, predictors, and beliefs about parent-child violence in South Asian, Middle Eastern, East Asian, and Latina women in the United States. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *20*(11), 1406–1428. http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260505278713

Manly, J. T. (2005). Advances in research definitions of child maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *29*(5), 425–39. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.04.001

Marriott, C., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., & Harrop, C. (2014). Factors Promoting Resilience Following Childhood Sexual Abuse: A Structured, Narrative Review of the Literature. *Child Abuse Review*, *23*(1), 17–34. http://doi.org/10.1002/car.2258

Mathoma, A. M., Maripe-Perera, D. B., Khumalo, L. P., Mbayi, B. L., & Seloilwe, E. S. (2006). Knowledge and perceptions of parents regarding child sexual abuse in Botswana and Swaziland. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, *21*(1), 67–72. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2005.08.002

May-Chahal, C., & Cawson, P. (2005). Measuring child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *29*(9), 969–84. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.05.009

Mayeda, D. T., & Vijaykumar, R. (2016). A Review of the Literature on Honor-based

Violence. *Sociology Compass*, *10*(5), 353–363. http://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12367

McCarthy, R. J., Skowronski, J. J., Crouch, J. L., & Milner, J. S. (2017). Parents' spontaneous evaluations of children and symbolic harmful behaviors toward their child. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.02.005

McCulloch, A., Wiggins, R. D., Joshi, H. E., & Sachdev, D. (2000). Internalising and externalising children's behaviour problems in Britain and the US: Relationships to family resources. *Children and Society*, *14*(5), 368–383. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2000.tb00191.x

Milner, J. S. (2003). Social information processing in high-risk and physically abusive parents. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *27*(1), 7–20. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(02)00506-9

Milner, S. (1993). Social Information Processing and Physical Child Abuse. *Clinical Pyschology Review*, *13*, 275–294. http://doi.org/10.1016/0272-7358(93)90024-G

Mitchell, K., Moynihan, M., Pitcher, C., Francis, A., English, A., & Saewyc, E. (2017). Rethinking research on sexual exploitation of boys: Methodological challenges and recommendations to optimize future knowledge generation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 1–10. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.01.019

Muda, T. F. M. B. T., & Alwi, E. A. Z. B. E. (2012). Care and protection against child abuse: With special reference to Malaysia child act 2001. *Asian Social Science*, *8*(1), 202–208. http://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v8n1p202

Munro, E. (2008). *Effective child protection* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Munro, E., Taylor, J. S., & Bradbury-Jones, C. (2014). Understanding the Causal Pathways to Child Maltreatment: Implications for Health and Social Care Policy and Practice. *Child Abuse Review*, *23*(1), 61–74. http://doi.org/10.1002/car.2266

Nadan, Y., Spilsbury, J. C., & Korbin, J. E. (2015). Culture and context in understanding

child maltreatment: Contributions of intersectionality and neighborhood-based research. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *41*, 40–48. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.10.021

Ngiam, X. Y., & Tung, S. S. (2016). The acceptability of caning children in Singapore: the fine line between discipline and physical maltreatment. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, *37*(2), 158–163. http://doi.org/10.1097/DBP.0000000000000247

Nguyen, H. T., Dunne, M., & Le, A. V. (2010). Multiple types of child maltreatment and adolescent mental health in Viet Nam. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, *88*(1), 22–30. http://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.08.060061

Norman, R. E., Byambaa, M., De, R., Butchart, A., Scott, J., & Vos, T. (2012). The Long-Term Health Consequences of Child Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, and Neglect: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *PLoS Medicine*, *9*(11), e1001349. http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001349

Oates, R. K., & Bross, D. C. (1995). What have we learned about treating child physical abuse? A literature review of the last decade. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *19*(4), 463–473. http://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(95)00005-S

Pak, J. (2014). Malaysia's love for the cane is questioned. Retrieved April 23, 2017, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-26883902

Park, M. S. (2001). The factors of child physical abuse in Korean immigrant families. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *25*(7), 945–958. Retrieved from http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&PAGE=reference&D=med4&NEWS=N&AN=11523870

Ping, N. C. L., & Sumari, M. (2012). Malaysia Women Survivors' Perspective on Healing from Childhood Sexual Abuse through Spirituality. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *65*(ICIBSoS), 455–461. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.148

Pinheiro, P. S. (2006). *World Report on Violence against Children*. Geneva: UNICEF.

Portwood, S. G. (1999). Coming to Terms with a Consensual Definition of Child Maltreatment. *Child Maltreatment*, *4*(1), 56–68. http://doi.org/10.1177/1077559599004001006

Qiao, D. P., & Xie, Q. W. (2015). Public perceptions of child physical abuse in Beijing. *Child & Family Social Work*, n/a-n/a. http://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12221

Radford, L., Corral, S., Bradley, C., Fisher, H., Bassett, C., Howat, N., & Collishaw, S. (2011). Child abuse and neglect in the UK today. *Nspcc*, 205. http://doi.org/304

Raman, S., & Hodes, D. (2012). Cultural issues in child maltreatment. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, *48*(1), 30–7. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1754.2011.02184.x

Reisig, J. A. J., & Miller, M. K. M. (2009). How the Social Construction of "Child Abuse" Affect Immigrant Parents: Policy Changes That Protect Children and Families. *International Journal of Social Inquiry*, *2*(1), 17–37. Retrieved from http://www.acarindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423904081.pdf

Reisig, J., & Miller, M. (2009). How the social construction of "Child Abuse" affect immigrant parents: Policy changes that protect children and families. *International Journal of Social Inquiry*, *2*(1), 17–37. Retrieved from http://www.acarindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423904081.pdf

Rind, B., Tromovitch, P., & Bauserman, R. (1998). A meta-analytic examination of assumed properties of child sexual abuse using college samples. *Psychological Bulletin*, *124*(1), 22–53. http://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.124.1.22

Rind, B., Tromovitch, P., & Bauserman, R. (2001). The validity and appropriateness of methods, analyses, and conclusions in Rind et al. (1998): A rebuttal of victimological critique from Ondersma et al. (2001) and Dallam et al. (2001). *Psychological Bulletin*, *127*(6), 734–758. http://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.127.6.734

Roberts, R., O'Connor, T., Dunn, J., & Golding, J. (2004). The effects of child sexual abuse

in later family life; mental health, parenting and adjustment of offspring. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *28*(5), 525–545. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2003.07.006

Roche, S. (2017). Child Protection and Maltreatment in the Philippines: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, *4*(1), 104–128. http://doi.org/10.1002/app5.167

Rodriguez, C. M. (2008). Ecological predictors of disciplinary style and child abuse potential in a hispanic and Anglo-American sample. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *17*(3), 336–352. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-007-9145-2

Rodriguez, C. M., & Price, B. L. (2004). Attributions and discipline history as predictors of child abuse potential and future discipline practices. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *28*(8), 845–861. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.02.003

Roer-Strier, D. (2001). Reducing risk for children in changing cultural contexts: Recommendations for intervention and training. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(00)00242-8

Rubin, K. H., & Chung, O. B. (2006). *Parenting Beliefs, Behaviors, and Parent-Child Relations: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Runyan, D. K., Dunne, M. P., Zolotor, A. J., Madrid, B., Jain, D., Gerbaka, B., … Youssef, R. M. (2009). The Development and Piloting of the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool-Parent Version (ICAST-P). *Child Abuse & Neglect: The International Journal*, *33*(11), 826–832. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ861732&site=ehost-live

Ruscio, A. M. (2001). Predicting the child-rearing practices of mothers sexually abused in childhood. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *25*(3), 369–387. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(00)00252-0

Sawrikar, P. (2017). *Working with Ethnic Minorities and Across Cultures in Western Child Protection Systems*. UK: Routledge.

Sawrikar, P., & Katz, I. (2017a). How aware of child sexual abuse (CSA) are ethnic minority communities? A literature review and suggestions for raising awareness in Australia. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *79*, 166–179. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.08.015

Sawrikar, P., & Katz, I. (2017b). The treatment needs of victims/survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA) from ethnic minority communities: A literature review and suggestions for practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *79*(March), 166–179. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.06.021

Segal, U. A. (1992). Child abuse in India: an empirical report on perceptions. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *16*(6), 887–908.

Segal, U. A. (2000). Exploring Child Abuse Among Vietnamese Refugees. *Journal of Multicultural Social Work*, *8*(3–4), 159–191. http://doi.org/10.1300/J285v08n03_01

Segal, U. A., & Iwai, Y. (2004). Perceptions of Child Abuse: A Comparison of Three Professional Groups in Japan. *Children & Society*, *18*(1), 16–29.

Sege, R. D., Hatmaker-Flanigan, E., De Vos, E., Levin-Goodman, R., & Spivak, H. (2006). Anticipatory guidance and violence prevention: results from family and pediatrician focus groups. *Pediatrics*, *117*(2), 455–63. http://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2005-0377

Shamrahayu, A. A. (2009). The Malaysian Legal System: the Roots, the Influence and the Future. *Malayan Law Journal*, *3*, 1–9.

Shang, X., & Katz, I. (2015). Awareness of Child Maltreatment among Professionals in Shanghai. *Asian Social Work and Policy Review*, *9*(3), 245–256. http://doi.org/10.1111/aswp.12062

Shor, R. (1999). Inappropriate child rearing practices as perceived by Jewish immmigrant

parents from the former Soviet Union. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *23*(5), 487–99.

Shor, R. (2000). Child maltreatment: Differences in perceptions between parents in low income and middle income neighborhoods. *British Journal of Social Work*, *30*(2), 165–178. http://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/30.2.165

Shuaib, F. S. (2012). The Islamic legal system in Malaysia. *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal*, *21*(1).

Son, H., Lee, Y. A., Ahn, D. H., & Doan, S. N. (2017). Maternal understanding of child discipline and maltreatment in the United States, South Korea, and Japan. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *82*(June), 444–454. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.10.015

Sorkhabi, N. (2005). Applicability of Baumrind's parent typology to collective cultures: Analysis of cultural explanations of parent socialization effects. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *29*(6), 552–563. http://doi.org/10.1080/01650250500172640

Sorsoli, L., Kia-Keating, M., & Grossman, F. K. (2008). "I keep that hush-hush": Male survivors of sexual abuse and the challenges of disclosure. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *55*(3), 333–345. http://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.55.3.333

Steele, B. F. (1997). Psychodynamic and biological factors in child maltreatment. In M. E. Helfer, R. S. Kempe, & R. D. Krugman (Eds.), *The Battered Child* (5th ed., pp. 566–576). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stewart, S. M., & Bond, M. H. (2002). A critical look at parenting research from the mainstream: Problems uncovered while adapting Western research to non-Western cultures. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *20*(3), 379–392. http://doi.org/10.1348/026151002320620389

Stoltenborgh, M., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Alink, L. R. A. (2013). Cultural-geographical differences in the occurrence of child physical abuse? A

meta-analysis of global prevalence. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY*, *48*(2), 81–94. http://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2012.697165

Stoltenborgh, M., van Ijzendoorn, M. H., Euser, E. M., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2011). A global perspective on child sexual abuse: meta-analysis of prevalence around the world. *Child Maltreatment*, *16*(2), 79–101. http://doi.org/10.1177/1077559511403920

Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Finkelhor, D., Moore, D. W., & Runyan, D. (1998). Identification of child maltreatment with the parent-child Conflict Tactics Scales: Development and psychometric data for a national sample of American parents. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *22*(4), 249–270. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(97)00174-9

Suzuki, K., Kita, Y., Kaga, M., Takehara, K., Misago, C., & Inagaki, M. (2016). The Association between Children's Behavior and Parenting of Caregivers: A Longitudinal Study in Japan. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *4*(February), 1–6. http://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2016.00017

Svevo-Cianci, K. a., Hart, S. N., & Rubinson, C. (2010). Protecting children from violence and maltreatment: A qualitative comparative analysis assessing the implementation of U.N. CRC Article 19. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *34*(1), 45–56. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.09.010

Tajima, E. A. (2000). The relative importance of wife abuse as a risk factor for violence against children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *24*(11), 1383–98. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11128172

Tajima, E. a., & Harachi, T. W. (2010). Parenting Beliefs and Physical Discipline Practices Among Southeast Asian Immigrants: Parenting in the Context of Cultural Adaptation to the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*, 212–235. http://doi.org/10.1177/0022022109354469

Tanaka, M., Suzuki, Y. E., Aoyama, I., Takaoka, K., & MacMillan, H. L. (2017). Child sexual abuse in Japan: A systematic review and future directions. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *66*, 31–40. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.02.041

Tang, C. S. (2006). Corporal punishment and physical maltreatment against children: A community study on Chinese parents in Hong Kong. (C. Achenbach Cohen, Gershoff, Hesketh, Kendall-Tackett, Lau, Lau, Lau, Leung, Levendosky, Locke, MacEwen, Mammen, Margolin, Milner, Ruble, Samuda, Sidebotham, Sidebotham, Sidebotham, Straus, Straus, Straus, Straus, Tang, Tang, Tang, Tang, Tang, Tang, Whippl, Ed.)*Child Abuse & Neglect*. Netherlands: Elsevier Science. Retrieved from http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&PAGE=reference&D=psyc5&NEWS=N&AN=2006-11672-005

Tang, C. S. K. (1998). The rate of physical child abuse in chinese families: A community survey in Hong Kong. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *22*(5), 381–391. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(98)00010-6

Tang, C. S. K. (2002). Childhood Experience of Sexual Abuse among Hong Kong Chinese College Students. *Child Abuse & Neglect: The International Journal*, *26*(1), 23–37. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ641056&site=ehost-live

Taylor, C. A., Fleckman, J. M., & Lee, S. J. (2016). Attitudes, beliefs, and perceived norms about corporal punishment and related training needs among members of the "American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children." *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *71*(October 2016), 56–68. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.04.009

Taylor, C. A., Hamvas, L., & Paris, R. (2011). Perceived Instrumentality and Normativeness of Corporal Punishment Use among Black Mothers. *Family Relations*, *60*(1), 60–72.

http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2010.00633.x

Taylor, C. A., Hamvas, L., Rice, J., Newman, D. L., & DeJong, W. (2011). Perceived social norms, expectations, and attitudes toward corporal punishment among an urban community sample of parents. *Journal of Urban Health*, *88*(2), 254–269. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-011-9548-7

Taylor, C. a, Moeller, W., Hamvas, L., & Rice, J. C. (2013). Parents' professional sources of advice regarding child discipline and their use of corporal punishment. *Clinical Pediatrics*, *52*(2), 147–55. http://doi.org/10.1177/0009922812465944

Taylor, J., Bradbury-Jones, C., Lazenbatt, A., & Soliman, F. (2015). Child maltreatment: pathway to chronic and long-term conditions? *Journal of Public Health*, 1–6. http://doi.org/fdv117 [pii]

Thornberry, T. P., & Henry, K. L. (2013). Intergenerational Continuity in Maltreatment. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *41*(4), 555–569. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-012-9697-5

Trickett, P. K., Noll, J. G., & Putnam, F. W. (2011). The impact of sexual abuse on female development: lessons from a multigenerational, longitudinal research study. *Development and Psychopathology*, *23*(2), 453–76. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579411000174

Tyrka, A. A. R., Wyche, M. M. C., Kelly, M. M. M., Price, L. H., & Carpenter, L. L. (2009). Childhood maltreatment and adult personality disorder symptoms: influence of maltreatment type. *Psychiatry Research*, *165*(3), 281–7. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2007.10.017

UNICEF. (2017). CRC Reservation. Retrieved August 14, 2017, from https://www.unicef.org/malaysia/17982_crc-reservations-malaysia.html

UNICEF Malaysia. (2017). CRC Reservation. Retrieved from

https://www.unicef.org/malaysia/17982_crc-reservations-malaysia.html

United Nations. (2017). Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/

United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2006). General Comment No. 8, The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (arts. 19; 28, para. 2; and 37, inter alia) (Forty-second session, 2006), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/GC/8 (2006).

Valentine, D. P., Acuff, D. S., Freeman, M. L., & Andreas, T. (1984). Defining child maltreatment: a multidisciplinary overview. *Child Welfare*, *63*(6), 497–509.

Vittrup, B., & Holden, G. W. (2010). Children's assessments of corporal punishment and other disciplinary practices: The role of age, race, SES, and exposure to spanking. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *31*(3), 211–220. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2009.11.003

Vong, E., Wilson, L., McAllister, L., & Lincoln, M. (2010). Malaysian parents' use of positive reinforcement: A descriptive study and implications for the Lidcombe Program. *Asia Pacific Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing*, *13*(2), 87–108. http://doi.org/10.1179/136132810805335119

Walsh, W. (2002). Spankers and Nonspankers: Where They Get Information on Spanking. *Family Relations*, *51*(1), 81–88. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2002.00081.x

Wang, F., Wang, M., & Xing, X. (2018). Attitudes mediate the intergenerational transmission of corporal punishment in China. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *76*(September 2017), 34–43. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.10.003

Weisner, T. S. (2002). Ecocultural Understanding of Children's Developmental Pathways. *Human Development*, *45*(4), 275–281. http://doi.org/10.1159/000064989

Weisner, T. S. (2009). Culture , Development , and Diversity : Expectable Pluralism ,

Conflict , and Similarity, *37*(2), 181–196. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1352.2009.01037.x.182

Whitney, S. D., Tajima, E. a., Herrenkohl, T. I., & Huang, B. (2006). Defining child abuse: Exploring variations in ratings of discipline severity among child welfare practitioners. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *23*(3), 316–342. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-006-0051-z

WHO. (2014). Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014. *World Health Organization*, 1–274. http://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2

WHO. (2017). Child Maltreatment. Retrieved November 28, 2014, from http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs150/en/

Widom, C. S., & Maxfield, M. G. (2001). An update on the "cycle of violence." Research in brief.

Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Wolfe, D., & McIsaac, C. (2011). Distinguishing between poor/dysfunctional parenting and child emotional maltreatment. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *35*(10), 802–813. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2010.12.009

World Bank Group. (2017). *Malaysia Economic Monitor: Data for Development*. Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/993771497248234713/pdf/116032-REVISED-MEM-9-June-2017-FINAL-COPY-EDITED-96pgs-13-6-17.pdf

Xie, Q. W., Qiao, D. P., & Wang, X. L. (2016). Parent-involved prevention of child sexual abuse: A qualitative exploration of parents' perceptions and practices in beijing. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *25*(3), 999–1010. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-015-0277-5

Xie, Q. W., Sun, X., Chen, M., Qiao, D. P., & Chan, K. L. (2017). What prevents Chinese

parents from reporting possible cases of child sexual abuse to authority? A holistic-interactionistic approach. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *64*, 19–31. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.12.006

Xu, Y., Farver, J. A., Zhang, Z., Zeng, Q., Yu, L., & Cai, B. (2005). Mainland Chinese parenting styles and parent-child interaction. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *29*(6), 524–531. http://doi.org/10.1080/01650250500147121

Zahradnik, M., Stewart, S. H., O'Connor, R. M., Stevens, D., Ungar, M., & Wekerle, C. (2010). Resilience Moderates the Relationship between Exposure to Violence and Posttraumatic Reexperiencing in Mi'kmaq Youth. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, *8*(2), 408–420. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ881966&site=ehost-live

Zhu, Y., & Tang, K. L. (2011). Physical child abuses in urban China: Victims' perceptions of the problem and impediments to help-seeking. *International Social Work*, *55*(4), 574–588. http://doi.org/10.1177/0020872811425806

Zigler, E., & Hall, N. W. (1989). Physical child abuse in America: past, present, and future. In D. Cicchetti & V. Carlson (Eds.), *Child maltreatment* (pp. 38–75). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511665707.003

Zolotor, A. J., Runyan, D. K., Dunne, M. P., Jain, D., P??turs, H. R., Ramirez, C., … Isaeva, O. (2009). ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool Children's Version (ICAST-C): Instrument development and multi-national pilot testing. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *33*(11), 833–841. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.09.004

Zvara, B. J., Mills-Koonce, W. R., Appleyard Carmody, K., Cox, M., Cox, M., Clancy Blair, … Werner, E. (2015). Childhood sexual trauma and subsequent parenting beliefs and behaviors. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *44*, 87–97.

http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.01.012

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Quality assessment form: Qualitative Study

Source database:
Full reference:

Questions	Score				Comments
	Y(2)	P(1)	N(0)	U	
Were the study aim(s) and objectives clear? Consider: • Is the goal of the study clearly stated? • Is there a clear rationale for undertaking the study?					
Will the study's design address the objectives? Consider: • Is the research design identified and sufficiently justified?					
Selection bias					
Is the sample size appropriate for the method of analysis? • E.g., for IPA the recommended amount is 6-8; 2 would be too few.					
Is the sample adequately described and reflective of the population? Consider: • Is there a clear description of the sample? • How the sample was recruited? • Were the distribution of demographic/background of the sample sufficiently described?					
Was the sample recruited appropriate to the research aims? Consider: • Did the study explain why the recruited sample was the most appropriate for the study?					
Did the study considered the relationship between the researcher and participants adequately? Consider whether it is clear: • Has the researcher(s) critically examined his/her role, potential bias and influence towards child maltreatment? • Did the researcher record their responses to the study topic (i.e., child maltreatment) during the study.					

Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? Consider: • Sufficient details of the study were explained to participants (for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained) • Informed consent and confidentiality boundaries were made known to participants • Was it clear how data was treated to ensure confidentiality?					
Has ethical approval been gained? • Have they listed the body that gave approval?					
Measuring bias					
Did the study describe how data (i.e., child maltreatment, Asian culture) was collected? Hint: • E.g., focus group, semi-structured interview, etc. • If the methods were made explicit (e.g., interview), did the study described how interviews were conducted? Did the study include an interview schedule or a topic guide? • Is the form of collected data clear (e.g., tape recordings, video recordings, notes?					
Was the means of data collection appropriate to the research aims and proposed form of analysis? E.g., • If a semi-structured interview for thematic analysis, where the questions appropriate?					
Did the study discuss saturation of data?					
Was the analysis used appropriate for the data? Consider: • Did the study justify or provide a rationale for the analysis used? • If the plan of analysis changed during the research, did the authors consider the implications of this change?					
Is there a clear and in depth description of the analysis process? Consider: • Did the study clearly described how categories/themes were derived from the data (for example if thematic/IPA analysis is used)					
Did the study include reliability and validity check? Or, if not, did they include a rationale for not doing so?					

Hint: • For example: triangulation, respondent validation, inter-rater reliability • Do they discuss issues of reliability and validity?					
Attrition bias					
Was drop-out/non-completion rate recorded and/or discussed? (For example, did they state if any participant stopped part way through the interview?)					
Results and discussion					
Are the results reported? Consider: • Are the results presented in a way that is appropriate and clear? • Were the data presented selected from the original sample?					
Did the study achieve their aims and research objectives? For example, • **IF** the stated aim was to evaluate cultural differences, did the authors describe how child maltreatment is being viewed from the different cultural perspective • Were the stated aims referred to explicitly in the discussion?					
Are the results representative of the findings? • E.g., do they provide quotes to back up their coding? • Are quotes from all participants included or do they focus on only a few?					
Does the discussion accurately reflect the results of the study or do they go beyond the data?					
Were the implications of this study discussed? Consider: • Did the study identify new areas for research?					
Did the study describe its strengths and limitations?					

Quality score = _____

No. Unclear = _____

Quality assessment forms adapted from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2013). Studies were scored as follows in relation to each question:

0 = condition not met

1 = condition partially met

2 = condition fully met

U = unclear/insufficient information provided.

Scores were summed in order to obtain an overall quality rating, with higher scores indicating better quality studies. Lucidity of reporting was assessed by summing the number of items rated 'U', with a high score indicating less accurate reporting.

Appendix B: Quality assessment form: Cohort

Source database:
Full reference:

Questions	Score				Comments
	Y(2)	P(1)	N(0)	U	
Were the study aim(s) and objectives clear? Consider: • Is the goal of the study clearly stated? • Is there a clear rationale for undertaking the study?					
Will the study's research design address the objectives? Consider: • Is the research design identified and sufficiently justified? • Is there a clear hypothesis stated? Are the key variables clearly defined?					
Selection bias					
Is the sample adequately described and reflective of the population? Consider: • Is there a clear description of the sample? • How the sample was recruited? • Were the distribution of demographic/background of the sample sufficiently described?					
Was the sample recruited appropriate to the research aims? Consider: • Did the study explain why the recruited sample was the most appropriate for the study?					
Was the sample size sufficient? • Was a power analysis done to establish the required sample size?					
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? Consider: • Sufficient details of the study were explained to participants (for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained) • Informed consent and confidentiality boundaries were made known to participants					

• Was it clear how data was treated to ensure confidentiality?					
Has ethical approval been gained? • Have they listed the body that gave approval?					
Measuring bias					
Did the study describe a clear method for identifying participant's definition of child maltreatment?					
Is the method for identifying participant's definition of child maltreatment comparable to other studies' method?					
Did the study describe a clear method for identifying participants' classification of child maltreatment?					
Was exposure (i.e., child maltreatment, Asian culture) accurately measured?					
Did the study use objective measurement(s)?					
Were the measurement(s) described clearly? Consider also: • Is there a clear rationale for using this measurement(s)? • Is this assessment(s) appropriate for the sample recruited and the aim of the study?					
Were the assessment(s) standardised? Consider: • Reliability and validity					
Were the measurement(s) comparable to instruments used in other studies?					
Was the outcome measure clearly stated?					
Have the study identified all possible (important) confounding factors?					
Were the confounding factors taken into account in the study design and/or analysis?					
Attrition bias					
Was drop-out/non-completion rate recorded?					
Was drop-out/non-completion stage discussed?					
Results and discussion					
Are the results reported appropriately? Consider: • Are the results presented in a way that is appropriate and clear?					
Did the study achieve their aims and research objectives? For example, • **IF** the stated aim was to evaluate cultural differences, did the authors describe how child maltreatment is being viewed from the different cultural perspective					

• Were the stated aims referred to explicitly in the results section?					
Was there a clear and appropriate plan of statistical analysis? • Was the analysis appropriate?					
Are the results reliable? Hint: • Was the sample size sufficient for the type of data analysis? • Look for the range of the confidence intervals, if given					
Does the discussion accurately reflect the results of the study or do they go beyond the data?					
Are the results generalisable/transferable to population that is similar to the Asian (and non-Asian) sample of this study?					
Were the implications of this study discussed?					
Did the study describe its strengths and limitations?					

Quality score = _____

No. Unclear = _____

Quality assessment forms adapted from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2013). Studies were scored as follows in relation to each question:

0 = condition not met

1 = condition partially met

2 = condition fully met

U = unclear/insufficient information provided.

Scores were summed in order to obtain an overall quality rating, with higher scores indicating better quality studies. Lucidity of reporting was assessed by summing the number of items rated 'U', with a high score indicating less accurate reporting.

Appendix C: Quality assessment form: Cross-sectional

Source database:
Full reference:

Questions	Score				Comments
	Y(2)	P(1)	N(0)	U	
Were the study aim(s) and objectives clear? Consider: • Is the goal of the study clearly stated? • Is there a clear rationale for undertaking the study?					
Will the study's research design address the objectives? Consider: • Is the research design identified and sufficiently justified? • Is there a clear hypothesis stated? Are the key variables clearly defined?					
Selection bias					
Is the sample adequately described and reflective of the population? Consider: • Is there a clear description of the sample? • How the sample was recruited? • Were the distribution of demographic/background of the sample sufficiently described?					
Was the sample recruited appropriate to the research aims? Consider: • Did the study explain why the recruited sample was the most appropriate for the study?					
Was the sample size sufficient? • Was a power analysis done to establish the required sample size?					
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? Consider: • Sufficient details of the study were explained to participants (for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained) • Informed consent and confidentiality boundaries were made known to participants					

• Was it clear how data was treated to ensure confidentiality?					
Has ethical approval been gained? • Have they listed the body that gave approval?					
Measuring bias					
Did the study describe a clear method for identifying participant's definition of child maltreatment?					
Is the method for identifying participant's definition of child maltreatment comparable to other studies' method?					
Did the study describe a clear method for identifying participants' classification of child maltreatment?					
Was exposure (i.e., child maltreatment, Asian culture) accurately measured?					
Did the study use objective measurement(s)?					
Were the measurement(s) described clearly? Consider also: • Is there a clear rationale for using this measurement(s)? • Is this assessment(s) appropriate for the sample recruited and the aim of the study?					
Were the assessment(s) standardised? Consider: • Reliability and validity					
Were the measurement(s) comparable to instruments used in other studies?					
Was the outcome measure clearly stated?					
Have the study identified all possible (important) confounding factors?					
Were the confounding factors taken into account in the study design and/or analysis?					
Attrition bias					
Was drop-out/non-completion rate recorded?					
Was drop-out/non-completion stage discussed?					
Results and discussion					
Are the results reported appropriately? Consider: • Are the results presented in a way that is appropriate and clear?					
Did the study achieve their aims and research objectives? For example, • **IF** the stated aim was to evaluate cultural differences, did the authors describe how child maltreatment is being viewed from the different cultural perspective					

• Were the stated aims referred to explicitly in the results section?					
Was there a clear and appropriate plan of statistical analysis? • Was the analysis appropriate?					
Are the results reliable? Hint: • Was the sample size sufficient for the type of data analysis? • Look for the range of the confidence intervals, if given					
Does the discussion accurately reflect the results of the study or do they go beyond the data?					
Are the results generalisable/transferable to population that is similar to the Asian (and non-Asian) sample of this study?					
Were the implications of this study discussed?					
Did the study describe its strengths and limitations?					

Quality score = _____

No. Unclear = _____

Quality assessment forms adapted from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2013). Studies were scored as follows in relation to each question:

0 = condition not met

1 = condition partially met

2 = condition fully met

U = unclear/insufficient information provided.

Scores were summed in order to obtain an overall quality rating, with higher scores indicating better quality studies. Lucidity of reporting was assessed by summing the number of items rated 'U', with a high score indicating less accurate reporting.

Appendix D: Data extraction form (Qualitative studies)

General information

Author(s):
Full reference:
Source database:
Country of origin:
Purpose of study:

Specific information

Population characteristics and exposure conditions

1. Target population (describe):
2. Inclusion criteria:
3. Exclusion criteria:
4. Sampling method:
5. Sample selection (describe):
6. Participants characteristics:
    a. Age (or age range):
    b. Ethnicity/Race:
    c. Social-economic status:
    d. Gender:
    e. Geographical location:
    f. Drop-out rates and reasons of drop-outs:
    g. Other information:
7. Total number of participants:
8. Are there comparative groups (i.e., cultural groups)?

Study's characteristics

1. Research design:
2. Type of child maltreatment:
3. Focus of exposure (e.g., victim, family or friends of a victim, professionals):
4. Outcome measure(s)
    a. What were measured?
5. What was the interview schedule?
6. Who carried out the interview? (include how many meetings)
7. Form of data collection?

Analysis

1. Type of analysis used:
2. Reliability check:
3. Validity check:
4. Qualitative data (e.g., Themes, data extracted)

Others

1. Quality assessment score:
2. Number of 'unclear' quality assessment items:

Appendix E: Data extraction form (Quantitative studies)

General information

Author(s):
Full reference:
Source database:
Country of origin:
Purpose of study:

Specific information

Population characteristics and exposure conditions

9. Target population (describe):
10. Inclusion criteria:
11. Exclusion criteria:
12. Sampling method:
13. Sample selection (describe):
14. Participants characteristics:
    a. Age (or age range):
    b. Ethnicity/Race:
    c. Social-economic status:
    d. Gender:
    e. Geographical location:
    f. Drop-out rates and reasons of drop-outs:
    g. Other information:
15. Total number of participants:
    a. Total number of participants in each group (if applied):
16. Are there comparative groups (i.e., cultural groups)?

Study's characteristics

8. Research design:
9. Type of child maltreatment:
10. Definition of child maltreatment used:
11. Classification/identification system used to distinguish (abused/non-abused):
12. Focus of exposure (e.g., victim, family or friends of a victim, professionals):
13. Outcome measure(s)
    a. What were measured?
    b. How often?
14. What mediating/moderating variables were investigated (if any):
15. Confounding variables/factors:
16. Who carried out the measurement?
17. What were the measurement tools?
18. Were the tools validated? If so how?

Analysis

5. Type of statistics used:
6. Was this appropriate?

7. Does the statistics adjust for confounding? If yes, how?
8. Was there missing data and how was it handled?
9. Descriptive data (e.g., total numbers, percentages, mean, standard deviation):
10. Inferential data (e.g., statistic results, p-value)
11. Effect size/measures:
12. Confidence intervals:

Others

3. Quality assessment score:
4. Number of 'unclear' quality assessment items:

Appendix F: Interview Schedule

1. Can you describe your child rearing practices with your children to me? [for parents/guardian/adult survivors] Can you describe child rearing practices in Malaysia/UK? [for professionals/adult survivors]
   Possible prompts: How do you discipline them? How do you teach them to behave? How do you reward and punish them? What influence these practices?
2. Can you tell me how do your child rearing practices affect your relationship with other people?
   Possible prompts: Children, partner, family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues? How do you think other people see you? Is that important to you? Why is this important?
3. Can you describe what is your (Malay/Chinese/Indian) culture to me?
   Possible prompts: What are the similarities and differences of your culture with other cultures?
4. Do you think your culture influences your perception on child rearing practices?
   Possible prompts: How do you identify this culture with your child rearing practices?
   PRESENTATION OF VIGNETTES – THERE ARE FIVE VIGNETTES ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF MALTREATMENT AND EACH WILL BE DISCUSSED IN TURN
5. What do you think this vignette is all about?
   Possible prompts: What makes you think so? What is consider as abuse? What is not considered as abuse? Can you relate this with your own experience(s)? Can you provide me with a different example?
   AFTER THE FOUR VIGNETTES, THE INTERVIEW WILL END MORE GENERALLY
6. Can you tell me what you think is child maltreatment?
   Possible prompts: How do you define this?
7. How do you describe physical abuse/emotional abuse/sexual abuse/neglect?
   Possible prompts: How do you differentiate this (these) abuse(s)?Could you give me an example?
8. In what kind of situation will you identify those as abuse?
   Possible prompts: Could you provide me an example?
9. Do you think your culture influences your perception on child maltreatment and, if so, in what way?
   Possible prompts: In what way does your culture consider a particular behaviour as an abuse? How do you think this differs from other cultures?

Appendix G: Vignettes of Child Maltreatment

Vignette 1 – Physical Abuse (1)

Andrew loves to play video games and he has been playing for the whole day. Andrew has to go to school the next day but he has not finished any of his homework. His mother told him to stop playing and start doing his homework immediately. Though Andrew's mother had repeatedly reminded him to do his homework, Andrew ignore his mother's request and continue playing his games. His mother could not tolerate his behaviour anymore and abruptly turned off his video game. Andrew argued with his mother. In the heat of their argument, Andrew's mother got so angry that she fetched a cane and beat Andrew's hands and legs multiple times. Bruise marks on Andrew's hand and legs could be seen after the beatings.

Vignette 2 – Physical Abuse (2)

Ahmad is a 12 year old boy and he stays with his grandmother when his parents are at work. His mother always allows him to do whatever he wants at home. For example, Ahmad loves to eat ice cream at home and always makes a mess, which his mother doesn't mind. However, at his grandmother's house one day when Ahmad made a mess of his ice-cream, Ahmad's grandmother told him to clean it up. Ahmad refused and argued with his grandmother; Ahmad's grandmother slapped him.

Vignette 3 – Emotional Abuse

Linda is a 12 year old girl and lived in a single parent family. Linda always has poor academic performance as she tends to always failed in her examinations. Linda's mother did not like Linda. Sometimes her mother scolds her for her poor academic performance, other times is because Linda's refusal to help with the house chores. Linda's mother always complained that she did not like Linda because she was like her irresponsible father and thinks Linda is a useless child. Sometimes Linda's mother said that she hopes Linda is not her own child. Other times, Linda's mother will threaten her to sell her off to a stranger.

Vignette 4 – Sexual Abuse

Siew Lee is 6 years old. Siew Lee knew her neighbour Mr Tan, when her family first moved into the neighbourhood. Mr Tan always watched adult films, the category film (18SX) that are banned to be watched by people who are under 18. One day, Mr Tan invites Siew Lee to visit his home and offers some candies and chocolates to her. They watch the adult films together.

Vignette 5 – Neglect

Kumar is a 10 years old boy and he lives with his younger brother who is 6 years old. Their father works away and flies back home once a month. Their mother needs to work every night. Sometimes, when the two brothers return home from school, there is no food at home to eat and their parents are not at home. Their mother always asks them to finish their homework and sleep early. She also told them to phone her if they needed help. Sometimes, when Kumar calls her on her phone, they could not contact her as the phone was turned off.

Appendix H: Demographics Sheet

Please take a moment to complete a few personal details about yourself by ticking on the relevant boxes.

1. Are you a: □ Male □ Female
2. Are you a parent: □ Yes □ No
3. What is your current age: _____?
4. What is your marital status?
   □ Single□ Married □Divorced □Widowed

5. Are you a Malaysian or with a Malaysian heritage background? □Yes □ No
6. Have you lived outside of Malaysia before? □ Yes □ No
7. If outside of Malaysia, which country have you been living in? _____
8. If outside Malaysia, how long has it been? _____Month _____ Year
9. How many children do you have? _____
10. How old is your youngest child at this time: _____ years old
11. How old is your eldest child at this time: _____ years old
12. Which of the following will describe best your culture or ethnicity of origin?
    □Malay □ Chinese □Indian □ Others (please state): _____

13. Do you speak a language other than English at home? □Yes □ No
    a. If yes, please state the other language(s)? _____
14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    □ UPSR (Primary School)

    □ PMR (Elementary School)

    □ SPM (O-level equivalent)

    □ STPM/A-level (or any other that is equivalent)

    □ Certificate level

    □ Undergraduate degree

    □ Masters Degree

    □ Doctorate

15. Please state your occupation/professional: _____
16. What is your approximate <u>monthly</u> household income?
    □ Less than RM 2000

    □ RM 2000-RM5000

    □ RM 6000 – RM 8000

    □ RM 8000- RM 10000

    □ RM 10000 and above

Appendix I: History of Abuse Screening Questionnaire

Children all over the world are exposed to different types of discipline, which may include violence at home, school, or other locations. The questions below ask you about things that may have happened to you when you were a child. These questions may seem strange or hard to answer but please try to answer each item (by ticking [✓]) as best you can. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Please remember that the researchers will not be able to identify or trace you after you have returned this survey.

	When you were 17 and below, has an adult or someone older than you:	≥ 50 times	13-50 times	6-12 times	3-5 times	1-2 times	0 times
1	Shouted, yelled, or screamed at you very loudly?						
2	Insulted you by calling you dumb, lazy or other names like that?						
3	Cursed you?						
4	Ignored you?						
5	Blamed you for his/her misfortune?						
6	Told you to start or stop doing something						
7	Explained to you why something you did was wrong?						
8	Gave you a reward for behaving well?						
9	Gave you something else to do (in order to stop or change behaviour)						
10	Took away privileges or money?						
11	Forbade you from going out?						
12	Embarrassed you publicly?						
13	Said they wished you were dead or never been born?						
14	Threatened to leave or abandon you?						
15	Locked you out of the home?						
16	Threatened to invoke harmful people, ghosts or evil spirit against you?						
17	Threatened to hurt or kill you?						
18	Kicked you?						
19	Shook you aggressively?						
20	Slapped you on the face or on back of head?						

	When you were 17 and below, has an adult or someone older than you:	≥ 50 times	13-50 times	6-12 times	3-5 times	1-2 times	0 times
21	Hit you on the head with knuckles?						
22	Spanked you on the bottom with bare hand?						
23	Hit you on the buttocks with an object (such as a stick, broom, cane or belt)?						
24	Hit you over and over again with object or fist (“beat-up”)						
25	Choked you to prevent you from breathing						
26	Burned, scalded or branded you?						
27	Put hot pepper, soap or spicy food in your mouth to cause you pain?						
28	Locked you up or tied you to restrict movement?						
29	Twisted your ear?						
30	Pulled your hair?						
31	Pinched you to cause pain?						
32	Forced you to stand, sit or kneel in a position that caused pain?						
33	Put you in time-out?						
34	Withhold a meal as a punishment?						
35	Give you drugs or alcohol?						
36	Referred to your skin colour/gender/religious or culture in a hurtful way						
37	Tried to embarrass you because you were an orphan or without a parent?						
38	Stopped you from being with other children to make you feel bad or lonely?						
39	Stole or broke or ruined your belonging?						
40	Threatened you with bad marks that you didn’t deserve?						
41	You did not get enough to eat (went hungry) and/or drink (were thirsty)?						

	When you were 17 and below, has an adult or someone older than you:	≥ 50 times	13-50 times	6-12 times	3-5 times	1-2 times	0 times
42	You had to wear clothes that were dirty, torn, or inappropriate for the season?						
43	You were not taken care of when you were sick or injured?						
44	You were hurt or injured because no adult was supervising?						
45	You did not feel cared for?						
46	You were made to feel unimportant?						
47	Made you watch a sex video or look at sexual pictures?						
48	Made you look at their private parts or wanted to look at yours?						
49	Touched your private parts in a sexual way, or made you touch theirs?						
50	Made a sex video or took photographs of you alone, or with other people, doing sexual things?						
51	Forced you to have sex with you when you did not want them to?						

Appendix J: Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS)

Instructions: Use the scale below to answer the following questions. Please circle the number that best represents your view on each item.

		Not very well			Somewhat		Very well
1.	How well do speak the language of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. English	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	How well do you understand the language of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. English	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	How well do you read and write in the language of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. English	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	How often do you listen to music or look at movies and magazines from -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	How much do you like the food of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	How often do you eat the food of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	How knowledgeable are you about the history of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	How knowledgeable are you about the culture and traditions of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	How much do you practice the traditions and keep the holidays of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6

		Not very well			Somewhat		Very well
10.	How much do you identify with -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	How much do you identify with -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	How much do you feel you have in common with people from -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	How much do you interact and associate with people from -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	How much would you like to interact and associate with people from -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	How proud are you to be part of -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	How negative do you feel about people from -						
	a. your own Asian culture of origin?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	b. other Asian groups in America?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	c. the White mainstream groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix K: Parenting Scale

At one time or another, all children misbehave or do things that could be harmful, that are "wrong", or that parents don't like. Examples include hitting someone, whining, throwing food, forgetting homework, not picking up toys, lying, having a tantrum, refusing to go to bed, wanting a cookie before dinner, running into the street, arguing back and coming home late.

Parents have many different ways or styles of dealing with these types of problems. Below are items that describe some styles of parenting. For each item, circle the number that best describes your style of parenting during the past 2 months with your child.

Sample item

At meal time…

I let my child decide how much to eat	1	(2)	3	4	5	6	7	I decide how much my child eats

---

1. **When my child behaves…**

I do something right away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I do something about it later

2. **Before I do something about a problem…**

I give my child several reminders or warnings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I use only one reminder or warning

3. **When I'm upset or under stress…**

I am picky and on my child's back	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I am no more picky than usual

4. **When I tell my child not to do something…**

I say very little	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I say a lot

5. **When my child pesters me…**

I can ignore the pestering	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I can't ignore the pestering

6. **When my child misbehaves…**

I usually get into a losing argument with my child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I don't get into an argument

7. I threaten to do things that…

I am sure I can carry out	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I know I won't actually do.

8. I am the kind of parent that…

sets limits on what my child is allowed to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	let's my child do whatever he or she wants

9. When my child misbehaves…

I give my child a long lecture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I keep my talks short and to the point

10. When my child misbehaves…

I raise my voice or yell	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I speak to my child calmly

11. If saying no doesn't work right away…

I take some other kind of action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I keep talking and trying to get through to my child

12. When I want my child to stop doing something…

I firmly tell my child to stop	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I coax or beg my child to stop

13. When my child is out of my sight…

I often don't know what my child is doing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I always have a good idea of what my child is doing

14. After there's been a problem with my child…

I often hold a grudge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	things get back to normal quickly

15. When we're not at home…

I handle my child the way I do at home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I let my child get away with a lot more

16. When my child does something I don't like…

I do something about it every time it happens	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I often let it go

17. When there's a problem with my child…

things build up and I do things I don't mean to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	things don't get out of hand

18. When my child misbehaves, I spank, slap, grab, or hit my child…

never or rarely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	most of the time

19. When my child doesn't do what I ask…

I often let it go or end up doing it myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I take some other action

20. When I give a fair threat or warning…

I often don't carry it out	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I always do what I said

21. If saying "No" doesn't work…

I take some other kind of action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I offer my child something nice so he/she will behave

22. When my child misbehaves…

I handle it without getting upset	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I get so frustrated or angry that my child can see I'm upset

23. When my child misbehaves…

I make my child tell me why he/she did it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I say "No" or take some other action

24. If my child misbehaves and then acts sorry…

I handle the problem like I usually would	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I let it go that time

25. When my child misbehaves…

I rarely use bad language or curse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I almost always use bad language

26. When I say my child can't do something…

I let my child do it anyway	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I stick to what I said

27. When I have to handle a problem…

I tell my child I am sorry about it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I don't say I'm sorry

28. When my child does something I don't like, I insult my child, say mean things, or call my child names…

never or rarely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	most of the time

29. If my child talks back or complains when I handle a problem…

I ignore the complaining and stick to what I said	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I give my child a talk about not complaining

30. If my child gets upset when I say "No"…

I back down and give in to my child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I stick to what I said

Appendix L: Financial security, neighbourhood support and social support

Financial security

Please tick yes or no for each item.

Have you in the past year or anyone in your household received:

1. Temporary income support ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Disability support ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Housing benefit ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Tax credits ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Free school lunches for children ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Use of a food bank or charitable support (food, bedding or furniture etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

Neighbourhood support

Please circle one for each item

a. How likely do you think the people in your neighbourhood will help you if you needed it?

   Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 Strongly disagree

b. How likely can you trust the people in your neighbourhood?
   Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 Strongly disagree

c. How likely are you able to get along with your neighbours?

   Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 Strongly disagree

Social Support

Instructions: We are interested in how you feel about the following statements. Please read each statement carefully and indicate (by circling) how you feel about for each statement.

Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1	There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	My family really tries to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I have a special person who is real source of comfort to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	My friends really try to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I can count on my families when things go wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I can talk about my problems with my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	My family is willing to help me make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I can talk about my problems with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Other support needs

18. Have social services been involved in the care of your children:
    a. in the past? ☐ Yes ☐ No
    b. currently? ☐ Yes ☐ No
19. Have you in the past or currently needed professional support for a mental health difficulty?
    a. ☐ Yes ☐ No
    b. If yes, please state the difficulty that you received support for:

    _____

Appendix M: Perception of Child Maltreatment

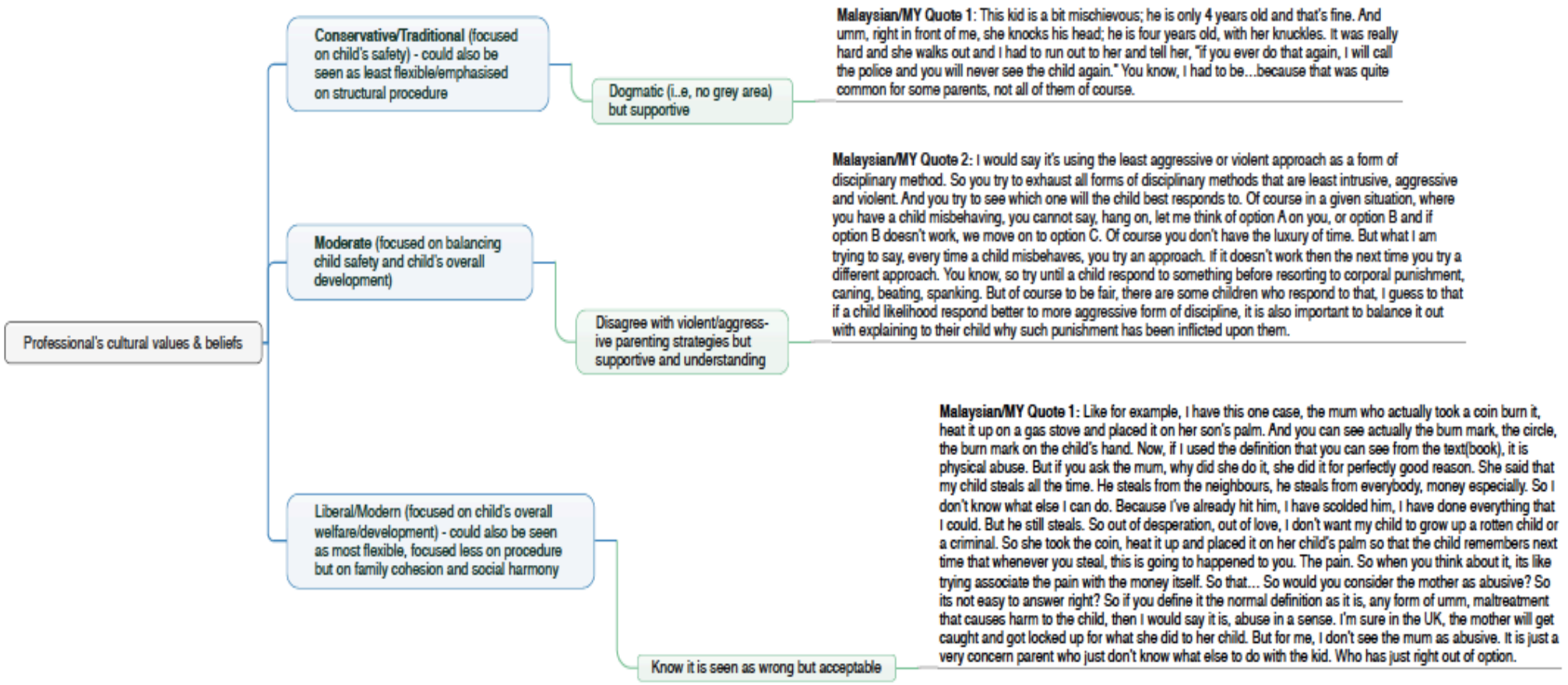
The vignettes below describe ways parents may respond to their child's behaviour. Rate how acceptable or unacceptable the parent's responses are for each item. Please answer each item honestly. Even if you are not sure, please give a response by circling for each item. Your responses are completely confidential.

I think this is:

Acceptable Parenting Practice	Somewhat acceptable	Neither acceptable nor unacceptable	Minimally acceptable	Unacceptable Parenting Practice
1	2	3	4	5

1.	The parents of a 12 year old boy scold the child for failing his exams	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The parents of a 7 year old girl tell her that she doesn't deserve to be part of their family because she lied to them	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The parent of a 5 year old child yells at the child when the child refuses to do his/her homework	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The parents of a 12 year old girl call her "useless child" when she repeatedly refuses to help with house chores	1	2	3	4	5
5.	A 3 year old boy soils his pants and his parents smell the odour. They call him "stinky boy".	1	2	3	4	5
6.	A 5 year old boy is overweight compared to his siblings. His parents call him "the little fat one"	1	2	3	4	5
7.	When a 2 year old boy gets up in the middle of the night, his parents tell him to go back to bed. After he continues to bother them, they tell him they won't love him anymore if he doesn't leave them alone	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The parent of a 12 year-old child sees the child refusing to pray. The parent shouts at the child to pray	1	2	3	4	5
9.	An 11 year old boy forgets repeatedly to take out the rubbish. His parents threaten to give him away the next time he does not do his chores	1	2	3	4	5
10.	A parent locks a 10 year old boy in his room all day for talking back to an adult.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	An 8 year old girl is often left alone at home for four hours during the day because her parents work and cannot be home right after school	1	2	3	4	5

12.	The parents of a 10 year old child often leaves their child alone during the day while searching for a job	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The parents of a 6 year old girl make her leave wet clothes on after she wets herself in public even when a change of clothing is available.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	The parents ignore their child all the time, seldom talking with or listening to him/her	1	2	3	4	5
15.	The parents of a 3 year old child feed the child with little food with nutritional value due to lack of awareness.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	The parents of a 2 year old child waited for two days before seeking urgent medical attention	1	2	3	4	5
17.	The parents let their 11 year old daughter stay at home from school when one parent is ill and the other is working so that she can baby sit her younger sister	1	2	3	4	5
18.	The parents of an 11 year-old boy punish him by caning his hands when he steals from a shop	1	2	3	4	5
19.	When a 4 year old boy throws a rock at his brother's head, his parents whip him on his bare legs with a leather belt, breaking the skin.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	The parents of a 7 year old spank him on the buttocks with a belt when he misbehaves	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The parents of a 4 year old child hit the child with a wooden spoon for being talking back to an adult	1	2	3	4	5
22.	The parents of a 9 year-old girl place spicy sauce on her tongue when their daughter uses vulgar or obscene words.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	The parents of an 8 year old boy wash his mouth with soap (place soap in his mouth) when he uses obscene words.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	A 2 year old boy keeps pinching his parent, so the parent pinches the boy's arm back	1	2	3	4	5
25.	The parents of a 10 year old boy pinch his arm when he keeps flipping his pencil around instead of doing his homework	1	2	3	4	5
26.	A 9 year old boy is supposed to be doing his homework but is reading a magazine. When his parents find him with the magazine, they take it away from him and pull on his ears.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	When their 1 year old child throws food on the floor, the parents slap the child's hand	1	2	3	4	5

28.	When the parent of a 10 year old girl learn that she has been lying to them about where goes after school, they slap her on the face, leaving red mark	1	2	3	4	5
29.	The parents spank their 5 year old child with their hand on the child's rear end when the child misbehaves.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	The parents spank their 13 year old son when he refuses to pray	1	2	3	4	5
31.	A 5 year old girl throws toys at her parent. When she won't stop, her parent throws the toys back to her.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	The parent of a 14 year old was beaten with a cane for intentionally skipping school.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	A parent touches their child's genital area	1	2	3	4	5
34.	The parents have sexual intercourse where their child can see them	1	2	3	4	5
35.	The parent and a child engage in mutual masturbation on one occasion	1	2	3	4	5
36.	The parent and the 15 year old son watch a pornography video together	1	2	3	4	5
37.	The parent suggested to a girl to engage in sexual relations	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix N: Example of a thematic map with Malaysian professionals