

## **Fathers Do Matter: Evidence From an Asian School-Based Aggressive Sample**

REBECCA P. ANG

*Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*

*The impact of children's perception of a father's and mother's support on children's quality of relationship with their classroom teacher was examined in a sample of 51 third and fourth grade Asian children rated by their teachers as aggressive. Children's perception of a father's support predicted teacher-ratings in all three areas of the teacher-student relationship (instrumental help, satisfaction, and conflict) but children's perception of a mother's support did not. This adds to a gradually expanding research base documenting the benefits of fatherly support across selected and unselected samples in various cross-cultural settings. Implications of the findings for child and family therapy are discussed.*

Research on fathering has expanded in scope and breadth in the last two decades (e.g., Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000; Lamb, 2004). However, research on fathering and father effects are still limited compared to those on mothering and mother effects. The contribution of the father-to-child development and outcomes has often been assumed to be subordinate to that of the mother. In fact, while attachment theory presents both parents as attachment figures, Bowlby (1982) considered the father as

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This research was supported by the Academic Research Fund grant (RI No. 5/03 RA) from National Institute of Education to Rebecca P. Ang, PhD. Special thanks are extended to Jade Teo and Wendy Teo from Methodist Children and Youth Center (MCYC) for coordinating the project and for overseeing the data collection. The cooperation of Khye Suan Tan (Director, MCYC) and Elizabeth Pang (Head, Psychological Services Unit, Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports [MCYS]) are also gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also extended to other staff (currently or previously with MCYC and MCYS) involved: Li Koon Quek, Charmaine Lim, Li Jen Tan, Michelle Ho, and Saw Han Quah.

Address correspondence to Rebecca P. Ang. E-mail: rp\_ang@yahoo.com

a trusted play companion and more as a subsidiary attachment figure than a principal attachment figure.

Subsequent researchers, however, argued that fathers and mothers may play distinct and complimentary roles in parenting and they engage in different types of interaction with their children (Lamb & Oppenheim, 1989; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network, 2004). Grossman, Kindler, and Strasser (2003) noted that in addition to the well-known attachment-caregiver system that Bowlby posited, he also posited a learner-teacher, play-partner system. In Bowlby's view, fathering involved a greater emphasis on play, mentorship, and encouragement of the child in the face of challenges rather than on the nurturing interactions.

In line with the expectation that fathers played a distinct role, Gottman (1998) and Parke (2002) reported that experiences with fathers accounted for more variation in certain types of child outcomes than experience with mothers. For example, Grossman et al. (2003) found fathers' support for their children's autonomous exploration in the preschool years made a larger unique contribution to the child's emotional security at age 16 than did mothers' support of their children's autonomous exploration. A similar pattern of results was observed using Asian samples. Shek (2000, 2001) found paternal influence to be stronger than maternal influence on psychological adjustment of Hong Kong Chinese adolescents as well as family functioning. Another study using an Asian sample (Ang, *in press*) also found that adolescents' perception of fathers' parenting style influenced adolescents' psychological adjustment more strongly than did adolescents' perception of mothers' parenting style.

Grossman et al. (2002) reasoned that given the role of the father as a mentor and as one who encourages the child to face challenges, the father-child relationship may be particularly crucial in supporting children's independent explorations into the world outside the family. In the elementary school years, transition to formal schooling and adjustment to the demands of new relationships at school constitute major experiences children have outside the family. Thus, it is of interest to consider if fathers' support and involvement may be an important predictor of children's relationships at school, in particular, with teachers and peers.

Effects of father involvement and support have been shown to be associated with positive child outcomes (Amato, 1994; Lamb, 2004). Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) 1997 National Household Education Survey (NHES) showed that, relative to their counterparts, children with involved fathers have better academic performance, behavior, attitudes, and relationships in school (NCES, 1998). These results were consistent even after taking into account mother's level of involvement, educational level of both parents, household income, residential status of father, and child's ethnicity (NCES, 1998). Barnett, Marshall, and Pleck (1992) found that sons who reported a positive relationship with their mother or father

had relatively low levels of psychological distress. In fact, when measures of both mother-child relationship and father-child relationship were entered simultaneously into the regression equation, only the father-child relationship emerged as a significant predictor of son's distress (Barnett et al., 1992). More recent research in the West and in Asia have shown that children with more involved and supportive fathers tend to be more prosocial, psychologically well-adjusted, to do better in school, to engage in less antisocial behavior, and to have more successful intimate relationships (Flouri, 2005; Flouri & Buchanan, 2000, 2002; Hwang & Lamb, 1997; Sanford et al., 1995; Shek, 1999, 2000, 2001). Grossman et al. (2002) also found that adolescents at age 16 who had secure attachment representations had fathers who were more sensitive, responsive, and appropriately challenging during play with their toddlers. Interestingly, quality of infant-mother attachment and mothers' play sensitivity did not predict adolescents' scores on secure attachment representations (Grossman et al., 2002).

Other research studies, however, suggest that both father and mother support and involvement contributed significantly and independently to adolescents' positive school attitudes (Flouri, Buchanan, & Bream, 2002). Flouri and Buchanan (2004) also found that father involvement and mother involvement independently predicted both son's and daughter's educational attainment by age 20, in both intact and non-intact families. Similarly, McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan, and Ho (in press) found that both mother and father involvement was significantly associated with greater child achievement; in fact, father involvement had a positive impact of children's education beyond that accounted for by mother involvement. Positive child outcomes associated with mother and father support have also been reported. For example, Zimmermann (2004) found that supportive attachment experiences with both mother and father were positively associated with friendship quality. Yet other studies suggest that maternal influences are more important than paternal influences in relation to child adjustment outcomes (e.g., Zemor & Rinholm, 1989).

Taken together, research suggests that both the father's and mother's support and involvement appear to contribute positively to children's outcomes educationally and socially. At present, it is unclear whether father support and involvement is differentially linked to specific child outcomes. Grossman et al.'s (2002) argument is plausible: given the role of the father as mentor and one who helps the child to face new challenges, fatherly support may be particularly important as a predictor of the quality of children's relationships outside that of the immediate family (e.g., relationships with teachers).

Reviewing the literature on fathers and fathering, it appears that fathers have seldom been the focus of research investigating correlates of early behavior problems in children. There is a paucity of research on the impact of fatherly characteristics or effects in clinical samples or school-based

samples of children with behavior problems (e.g., aggression). When the fathers' contributions to developing child problems have been examined, the most common concern has been paternal psychopathology (Phares, 1996). In the clinical child literature, the focus and emphasis have also typically been on the effects of the mother-child attachment and relationship on child outcomes, with a tendency to blame mothers for negative child outcomes (Caplan & Hall-McCorquodale, 1985; DeKlyen, Biernbaum, Speltz, & Greenberg, 1998). Specifically, research examining aggressive children's relationships with parental figures (e.g., Lyons-Ruth, 1996) suggests that these children experience a greater proportion of conflicted interactions with their mothers and receive less parental warmth and involvement (usually the mother). Relatively little attention has been paid to characteristics of fathers (besides paternal psychopathology) of children who have been referred for disruptive and aggressive behavior. For example, there is limited research on whether positive father characteristics such as support, warmth, and involvement could possibly serve as protective factors in aggressive children's developmental trajectory.

Recent data suggests that fatherly involvement was associated with lower child internalizing behaviors in a community sample (Mezulis, Hyde, & Clark, 2004). Recent data from National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997 cohort, a nationally representative survey, showed that father involvement had a significant influence on youth delinquency and substance use (above and beyond mother involvement) among adolescents (Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Capps, & Zaft, *in press*). Unfortunately, both were nonselected samples. DeKlyen et al.'s (1998) study was one of the few studies that used a clinic sample and found that father parenting behaviors and characteristics better predicted subsequent outcomes for clinic referred boys compared with mother parenting behaviors and characteristics. Shek's (2002) study was one of the few studies that used a non-Caucasian sample to examine the relation of parental qualities (e.g., support, help, parenting) to well-being, school adjustment, and problem behavior in a sample of adolescents with economic disadvantage. Findings indicated that relative to maternal parenthood qualities, paternal parenthood qualities were more important in enhancing mental health and reducing problem behavior in Chinese adolescents from poor and disadvantaged families (Shek, 2002).

In a separate body of research on aggressive children, findings have indicated that a positive teacher-student relationship can function as a protective factor that buffers aggressive children from known risk factors. For example, Hughes, Cavell, and Jackson (1999) found that teacher-rated positive teacher-student relationship quality attenuated aggressive children's subsequent levels of aggression as rated by teachers and peers. Drawing on attachment theory, as the child transitions from home to school, a secure and positive relationship with one's teacher serves attachment functions (Howes, Hamilton, & Matheson, 1994; Pianta, 1992). Specifically, it promotes the child's active

exploration of the environment and socially competent interactions with others. Empirically, the teacher-student relationship adds unique variance to the prediction of child competence, above that accounted for by security in the mother-child relationship (Howes, Matheson, & Hamilton, 1994). In their research, Copeland-Mitchell, Denham, and DeMulder (1997) found that positive teacher-student relationships compensated for impairment in children's relationships with their mothers. Specifically, the magnitude of the compensatory effect of positive teacher-student relationships was stronger for children who had insecure attachments to mothers than for those who had secure maternal attachments (Copeland-Mitchell et al., 1997).

Collectively, these studies on aggressive children have demonstrated that a positive teacher-student relationship could possibly serve a protective function and attenuate these children's subsequent aggression. However, gaps in research continue to exist as the literature review pointed toward an almost exclusive emphasis on the mother-child relationship and its effects on aggressive children's social and behavioral outcomes. The effects of the father-child relationship on aggressive children's subsequent outcomes are again notably absent. Moreover, almost all existing studies on parent-child relations with aggressive children have been conducted in Western societies. Whether related research using Asian samples would yield similar or different findings is an interesting cross-cultural question.

The present study aims to investigate the impact of children's perception of father support and mother support on children's quality of relationship with their classroom teacher using an Asian school-based aggressive sample. Few studies have examined the effects of father support in clinical samples or in samples of children with behavior problems. Previous research typically focused on unselected school populations. Even fewer studies use non-Caucasian samples. Hence this study hopes to extend research in these areas. Aggressive children's perception of father and mother support was expected to independently predict a more positive teacher-student relationship as rated by the teacher. Specifically, children's perception of father and mother support was expected to be positively associated with teacher-rated instrumental help, positively associated with teacher-rated satisfaction, and negatively associated with teacher-rated conflict. Based on previous empirical findings reviewed using both Western and Asian samples, it was expected that perceived father support would have a stronger relationship compared with perceived mother support in predicting quality of relationship with aggressive children's teachers.

## METHOD

### Participants

Participants in this study were children who were part of a multidimensional longitudinal intervention research study known as Project Partners. Project

Partners aims to help children at risk for conduct problems and their parents so that these children, their parents, teachers, and peers can enjoy more positive relationships with each other. These children were drawn from four elementary schools in Singapore. All measures for the present study were administered prior to implementation of the intervention program. All measures were administered in English and no translation was needed as English is the language of instruction used in all schools in Singapore.

Teachers were requested to nominate children in their classrooms who displayed disruptive behavior and who fit a behavioral description of a child with early signs of aggressive behavior: one who starts fights, hits other children, keeps some children out of their group, or tells mean lies about other children. Children were eligible for participation in the study in one of two ways. First, in addition to teacher nominations, children were eligible for participation in the study if teacher ratings indicated that the child's disruptive behavior score was higher than the 90th percentile of the normative sample's scores (Intensity score  $\geq 106.8$  or Problem score  $\geq 9.45$ ) on the Sutter-Eyberg Student Behavior Inventory (SESBI; Burns & Patterson, 2001). The SESBI is a 36-item teacher-rating scale for disruptive behavior problems and normative data for the SESBI is available for 1,286 children between 5 to 12 years of age (Burns & Patterson, 2001). Second, there were five children who did not meet the cut-off score on the SESBI but were included in the study after a multidisciplinary team consisting of a social worker, a school counselor, and a school psychologist, in consultation with the school and teacher, assessed that these children and their parents could benefit from participating in Project Partners.

Letters of consent were sent to parents of aggressive children requesting permission for their child's participation in the Project Partners program. A total of 74 children attending four elementary schools in Singapore were nominated by teachers. Sixty children (81%) were eligible for participation in the study. Of the 60 eligible children, written parental consent for participation in the study was obtained for 52 children (87%). One child subsequently withdrew from the study. For the present study, data were examined for a total of 51 children (45 were male) for whom parental consent was obtained and data collected. In addition to parental consent, each child's assent was obtained and children were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Table 1 presents demographic information of the sample of children who were eligible and who had consent to participate in the study. The mean age of the children was 9.74 ( $SD = 0.60$ ) years.

## Measures

### NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS INVENTORY (NRI)

The NRI (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) is a structured interview that asks children to rate the persons in their social network on various types of

**TABLE 1** Demographic Characteristics of Children Who Were Eligible and Who Had Consent to Participate in the Study ( $n = 51$ )

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	45	88.2
Female	6	11.8
Grade		
3	15	29.4
4	36	70.6
Ethnicity		
Chinese	32	62.7
Malay	10	19.6
Indian	6	11.8
Others	3	5.9
School		
A	13	25.4
B	10	19.6
C	14	27.5
D	14	27.5

*Note.* In Singapore, the three main ethnic groups comprise the Chinese, Malay, and Indian. The “Others” category includes all other ethnic groups not listed. The names of schools are kept confidential; instead, A, B, C, D are used.

social support or conflict. For this study, two social support scales were used: admiration (3 items) and support (3 items). Children were asked to provide two sets of ratings; one set of ratings for their relationships with their fathers and another set of ratings for their relationships with their mothers, specifically in terms of social support received. Specifically, these items that constitute the measurement of social support tap into closeness, approval, liking, and whether the child has a positive relationship with the target individual. A sample item taken from the admiration scale (for fathers) reads as follows: “How much does your father like or approve of the things you do?” A sample item taken from the support scale (for fathers) reads as follows: “How often do you depend on your father for help, advice, or sympathy?” Ratings are made on a 5-point scale (1 = *Little or None*; 5 = *The Most*) and the total social support score for a given relationship is obtained by summing across the two scales, admiration and support. For this study two composite indexes were created, one for perceived father support and one for perceived mother support. Furman and Buhrmester (1985) reported internal consistency reliabilities in the .80s for the NRI. Based on data from the present sample, coefficient alphas were .85 (father) and .76 (mother).

## TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY (TSRI)

The TSRI (Ang, in press) is a 16-item scale to assess teachers' perceptions of the affective quality of the relationship between the teacher and the student. Results from exploratory factor analysis provided evidence for three factors, Instrumental Help (6 items), Satisfaction (5 items), and Conflict (5 items). Results from a confirmatory factor analysis provided additional evidence for the three first-order factors obtained from the exploratory factor analysis. The items include statements like "If the student has a problem at home, he/she is likely to ask for my help" (Instrumental Help), "I enjoy having this student in my class (Satisfaction), and "This student frustrates me more than most other students in my class" (Conflict). Teachers were asked to rate the statements on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Almost never true*) to 5 (*Almost always true*). High scores on Instrumental Help reflect the degree to which a teacher perceives a student to be willing to view the teacher as a resource person, and to turn to the teacher for advice, sympathy, or help. High scores on satisfaction reflect the degree to which a teacher experiences a positive and satisfactory relationship with a student. High scores on Conflict reflect the degree to which a teacher perceives the teacher-student relationship as negative, unpleasant, and conflictual. Hence, both the Instrumental Help and Satisfaction scales measure positive dimensions in the teacher-student relationship while the Conflict scale measures a negative dimension in the teacher-student relationship. Based on the data from the present sample, coefficient alphas were .72 (Instrumental Help), .88 (Satisfaction), and .90 (Conflict).

## RESULTS

Based on the recommendation of the American Psychological Association (APA) Task Force on Statistical Inference, effect size estimates will be computed for all analyses when reporting a  $p$  value (Wilkinson & APA Task Force on Statistical Inference, 1999). This recommendation is based on the reasoning that the reporting of  $p$  values in isolation does not contribute information regarding the magnitude of an effect and result replicability. There are many types of effect size estimates that can be calculated (e.g., Cohen's  $d$  or  $R^2$ ). Hence in the present study, Cohen's  $d$  will be used to report effect size estimates for values obtained from Pearson's correlational analyses, and  $R^2$  will be reported for multiple regression analyses.

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and reliability estimates of the two predictors, perceived father support index and perceived mother support index, and the three outcome variables, teacher-rated instrumental help, teacher-rated satisfaction, and teacher-rated conflict. Table 3 presents intercorrelations among all study variables. As expected, father support was positively correlated with teacher-rated instrumental help ( $r = .42$ ,  $p < .01$ ,

**TABLE 2** Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Estimates for Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Alpha
NRI—Father support	17.48	6.32	.85
NRI—Mother support	19.49	5.24	.76
TSRI—Instrumental help	12.78	3.43	.72
TSRI—Satisfaction	13.04	3.73	.88
TSRI—Conflict	13.73	4.56	.90

*Note.* Alpha = Cronbach's coefficient alpha. NRI = Network of Relationships Inventory. TSRI = Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory.

Cohen's  $d=0.93$ ) and teacher-rated satisfaction ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .05$ , Cohen's  $d=0.85$ ), and negatively correlated with teacher-rated conflict ( $r = -.44$ ,  $p < .01$ , Cohen's  $d=0.97$ ). Mother support on the other hand, was not significantly correlated with teacher-rated instrumental help ( $r = -.01$ , *ns*, Cohen's  $d=0.02$ ), teacher-rated satisfaction ( $r = .19$ , *ns*, Cohen's  $d=0.37$ ), and teacher-rated conflict ( $r = -.09$ , *ns*, Cohen's  $d=0.18$ ). Using Cohen's (1992) guidelines on small (approximately Cohen's  $d=0.20$ ), medium (approximately Cohen's  $d=0.50$ ), and large (approximately Cohen's  $d=0.80$ ) effects, results for father support in this study appear to be large while effects of mother support fall within the negligible to small-medium range.

Standard multiple regression analyses were performed to examine the impact of perceived father support and perceived mother support on teacher-rated variables instrumental help, satisfaction, and conflict. As hypothesized, both father and mother support in the same regression equation predicted teacher-rated instrumental help,  $F(2, 34) = 6.14$ ,  $p < .01$ , which explained 26.5% of the variance ( $R^2 = .27$ ). Father support contributed significantly to the prediction of teacher-rated instrumental help scores ( $\beta = .60$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while mother support did not ( $\beta = .35$ , *ns*). Beta-weights and their associated  $t$  values are presented in Table 4. Likewise, both father and mother support predicted teacher-rated satisfaction,  $F(2, 34) = 3.17$ ,  $p < .05$ , which

**TABLE 3** Correlations Between Father Support, Mother Support, and Measures of Quality of Teacher-Student Relationship in a Sample of Aggressive Children

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. NRI—Father support	—				
2. NRI—Mother support	.52**	—			
3. TSRI—Instrumental help	.42**	-.01	—		
4. TSRI—Satisfaction	.39*	.19	.45**	—	
5. TSRI—Conflict	-.44**	-.09	-.25	-.51**	—

*Note.* NRI = Network of Relationships Inventory. TSRI = Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

**TABLE 4** Impact of Father Support and Mother Support on Teacher-Rated Instrumental Help, Teacher-Rated Satisfaction, and Teacher-Rated Conflict

Predictor	Criterion											
	TSRI-IH				TSRI-S				TSRI-C			
	B	SEB	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	B	SEB	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	B	SEB	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
NRI-FS	.32	.09	.60	3.49**	.26	.12	.40	2.20*	-.34	.14	-.44	-2.45*
NRI-MS	.25	.12	.35	2.07	.01	.16	.01	0.02	-.03	.18	-.03	-0.14

*Note.* NRI-FS = Network of Relationships Inventory Father Support Scale; NRI-MS = Network of Relationships Inventory Mother Support Scale; TSRI-IH = Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory Instrumental Help Subscale; TSRI-S = Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory Satisfaction Subscale; TSRI-C = Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory Conflict Subscale. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

explained 15.7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .16$ ). Father support contributed significantly to the prediction of teacher-rated satisfaction scores ( $\beta = .40$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while mother support did not ( $\beta = .01$ , *ns*). Finally, both father and mother support also predicted teacher-rated conflict,  $F(2, 34) = 4.33$ ,  $p < .05$ , which explained 20.3% of the variance ( $R^2 = .20$ ). Once again, father support contributed significantly to the prediction of teacher-rated conflict scores ( $\beta = -.44$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while mother support did not ( $\beta = -.03$ , *ns*). Taken together, results from the regression analyses indicate that perceived father support predicted a better quality of teacher-student relationship as rated by the teacher in terms of higher instrumental help, higher satisfaction, and lower conflict. Perceived mother support was not significantly related to any of the teacher-rated variables on the quality of the teacher-student relationship.

## DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of children's perception of father support and mother support on teacher-rated teacher-student relationship quality using an Asian school-based aggressive sample. The results only provided partial support for the hypotheses. As expected, children who perceived having father support were found to view their classroom teacher positively as a resource person to provide help, advice, and sympathy when needed. Also, children who perceived having father support were found to have more satisfying and less conflictual relationships with their teachers. Unexpectedly, children's perception of mother support did not influence the quality of children's relationships with their teachers.

The present findings are consistent with previous research (e.g., Grossman et al., 2002; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2004; Shek, 2002) that used both Western and Asian samples, documenting that father support is significantly related to child and adolescent adjustment

outcomes. The current results provided some support for Grossman et al.'s (2002) argument that because of the specific nature of the father-child relationship, fathers may be particularly instrumental in influencing children's interactions outside the immediate family, such as with relationships with teachers in school. Effect size estimates obtained from correlational analyses indicated that effects for father support obtained were relatively larger compared to effects obtained for mother support. This could indicate that, relative to maternal support, paternal support had a stronger influence on the quality of children's relationships with their teachers. In the light of limited research studies using Asian and clinical or selected school-based samples, the present findings may provide an interesting extension to the literature base. As presented, it appears that the benefits of father support found previously in community and unselected samples could also accrue to Asian school-based samples of aggression children in elementary school.

The absence of expected associations between mother support and teacher-related measures of quality of teacher-student relationship was unanticipated but could be accounted for by two possible reasons. First, consistent with Grossman et al.'s (2002) and NIHCD Early Child Care Research Network's (2004) argument that both fathers and mothers have distinct and complementary roles, it is possible that father rather than mother support is predictive of Asian aggressive children's quality of relationships with their classroom teachers. This conclusion needs further research evidence and replication. Second, while having a small sample size is often characteristic of clinical or school-based problem samples, Cohen (1992) has illustrated that inadequate power may explain the failure to obtain statistical significance for small or medium mother support effects. As suggested by the present findings, effects for mother support were in the negligible to small-medium range (Cohen's *d* for correlational analyses ranged from 0.02 to 0.37) compared to the large effects obtained for father support (Cohen's *d* for correlational analyses ranged from 0.85 to 0.97). The sample sizes needed for .80 power to detect effects at the small, medium, and large levels at  $\alpha = .05$  are 481, 67, and 30 respectively (Cohen, 1992).

It is particularly interesting to reflect on the pattern of findings especially in an Asian context. In agreement with Shek's (2001) reasoning, one possible explanation for the observation that paternal influences appear to be more important in determining child outcomes is because in an Asian society, fathers are usually regarded as occupying a more powerful position in the family than mothers, being the primary decision maker in the family and having financial control within the family. Another possible explanation lies in the differential involvement of fathers and mothers in the socialization process. Forehand and Nousiainen (1993) suggested that because fathers are relatively less involved and less available than mothers, parenting attributes such as support of fathers may become more salient in the minds of children and adolescents.

There are a few implications of these findings for clinical research and practice, especially for child and family therapy. First, fathers do matter. Father support was significantly associated with Asian aggressive children's quality of relationship with their teachers. Specifically, benefits of father support include the child viewing the teacher as a resource, and having a less conflictual and a more satisfactory relationship with the teacher. For aggressive children in particular, research has indicated that a positive teacher-student relationship serves as a protective factor for these children and may serve to reduce subsequent levels of child aggression and enhance the child's social competence (e.g., Hughes et al., 1999). Therefore, it is important to include fathers in the therapy. Along the same vein, it would also be helpful for therapists to consider ways to engage, motivate, and encourage fathers to stay committed to the therapy process. Fathers' continued support in the father-child relationship would facilitate early intervention school-based efforts with aggressive children.

Second, the present findings provide some evidence that focusing primarily on mothers and mother-child outcomes to the exclusion of fathers in the clinical child research and practice may be outmoded (Phares, 1996). In doing so, researchers and clinicians may miss out on the important contributions of fathers. With increasing empirical evidence of the influence of father characteristics in both Western samples and Asian samples (e.g., Flouri, 2005; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2004; Shek, 2001, 2002), the commonly held belief in the clinical literature that only maternal influences are important (e.g., Caplan & Hall-McCorquodale, 1985) need to be revised or debunked.

Finally, the present findings also point toward the need to involve fathers in the socialization of children and adolescents. Ironically, despite the importance of father support, a recent national youth survey in Singapore (Ho & Yip, 2003) found that the majority (75%) of young people indicated their mothers as the first person they would turn to for advice on important decisions, followed by their friends (65%), then their fathers (57%). Thus, given the importance of father support in aggressive children's relationships with their teachers and that the degree of involvement of fathers in the socialization of children is lower than mothers (Ho & Yip, 2003), it is critical to consider how fathers can be more positively involved in parenting tasks and in the parenting process.

A few limitations of the study warrant comment. First, as mentioned earlier, a small sample size would likely have reduced power for detecting smaller effects which may be characteristic of maternal influences in Asian samples. Small samples also prevent generalizability. Moreover, as these findings are based on an Asian sample of aggressive elementary school-age children, replication is needed in different samples and in different cultural contexts. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not permit the researcher to make causal inferences, and directionality of effects cannot be

assumed. For example, it is possible that children who have a better quality of teacher-student relationship may elicit higher levels of father support. Despite these limitations, this study has contributed to the research literature by extending the empirical evidence of the benefits of father support to Asian school-based samples of aggressive children.

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