

Children raised in inter-ethnic families better adjusted than children in mono-ethnic families

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A study on the emotional and behavioural adjustments of children from inter-ethnic and mono-ethnic families in Malaysia challenges traditional assumptions about inter-ethnic families.

The research finds that children from mixed Malay-Chinese parentage have fewer emotional and [behavioural problems](#) than their mono-ethnic peers and could have important implications for child development and interventions in Malaysia.

Inter-ethnic children are one of the fastest growing populations worldwide, and some research have suggested that they have higher risk of poor outcomes, including [family](#) breakdown, academic underachievement and psychology maladjustment. Research published this month in the *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities* explores whether ethnically mixed children are less well psychologically adjusted when compared to children from mono-ethnic families.

Tan Jo-Pei of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Faculty of [Human Ecology](#), Universiti Putra Malaysia, studied the behavioural adjustments of 218 interethnic Malay-Chinese and 214 mono-ethnic Malay and Chinese families in Malaysia, taking into account the quality of parental relationships, and parenting behaviour. In the study, children from mixed parentage reported fewer emotional and behavioural problems than those from mono-[ethnic minority](#) families.

This provides evidence for positive adjustment amongst the mixed-parentage children growing up in a multicultural community, and challenges traditional assumptions. The results could in part be explained by parental concern about the social discrimination against [children](#) of mixed parentage. The author hopes they could serve as a basis for designing family-specific interventions in Malaysia and other multicultural societies.

Provided by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

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