

**The impact of parental attachment on
adolescent externalizing problem behaviour in Hong Kong**

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the impact of the quality of parental attachment on externalizing problem behaviours among adolescents in Hong Kong. A mixed “quantitative plus qualitative” approach was applied for data collection. 1,463 Form One, Form Two, and Form Three male students (n=828) and female students (n=635) were given the modified version of the IPPA and a self-report measure of externalizing problem behaviour. 46 students with high level of externalizing problem behaviours were further interviewed. Regression analysis showed that parental attachment played a causal role on adolescent externalizing problem behaviour. Difference in gender was found not significant in determining the degree of problem behaviour. The influence of paternal and maternal attachment on the problem behaviours of their adolescent children was different, with the latter perceived as more powerful. The study results set an alarm for the society to place emphasis on establishing stronger parental-adolescent attachment.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The society has been shocked by the rise in problem behaviour, especially externalizing behaviours like aggression and delinquency, among adolescents in Hong Kong. The recent report on the taking of ketamine by four Form 2 female students at school (Hong Kong Economic Times, Metropolis Daily, Ming Pao Daily News, Sing Pao Daily News, Sing Tao Daily News, South China Morning Post, Ta Kung Pao, The Standard, Wen Wei Po, 12th June, 2007) has been one of the most striking news on adolescent problematic behaviours. However, the news just showed the tip of iceberg.

An important challenge that the society has to face is how to prevent adolescents from engaging in problem behaviours. In the ketamine intake case, people focused on whether the students were taught about the consequences of taking drugs and have received proper moral education at school. The public's usual response on adolescent problem behaviours is to put the blame on school education. The schools are claimed to be responsible for launching developmental guidance to students to help alleviate adolescent problem behaviours. It seems that few concerns have been addressed to parenting or the relationship between teenagers and their parents.

The rise in adolescent problem behaviour is like a time bomb and which will cause severe social problems to the society. There exist the needs to explore if factors other than school

education are valid for predicting adolescent problem behaviour.

Indeed, many studies from the west have illustrated that negative correlation existed between parental attachment and externalizing problem behaviour (Bosmans, Braet, Leeuwen, & Beyers, 2006; Buist, Deković, Meeus, & van Aken, 2004; Greenberg, Speltz, & DeKlyen, 1993; Marcus & Betzer, 1996; Williams, & Kelly, 2005). There has been the study that explored the relationship between parental parenthood qualities and delinquency of Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong (Shek, 2005). In addition, the research by Chou (2003) investigated the association between perceived parental understanding and problem behaviour among local adolescents. However, the relationship between parental attachment and externalizing problem behaviour among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong has not been thoroughly examined.

The present study attempts to investigate the impact of the quality of parental attachment on externalizing problem behaviours among local Chinese adolescents. Findings of the study may help direct the focus of the public to the importance of parent-adolescent relationship, and shed light on forming new strategies or intervention programmes to reduce problem behaviours among adolescents.

This study also aims to look into the relative importance of paternal attachment and maternal attachment in relation to adolescent problem behaviour. In general, mothers take the role as the primary caretaker of their children, and are more heavily involved in parenting, when

compared to the fathers. However, women in Hong Kong are taking up quite a heavy role in the job market and seem to contribute less time to their families. The labour force participation rate among female residents has increased from 47.5% to 52.6% from 1982 to 2006, whereas that of males has dropped from 81.3% to 71% (Census and Statistics Department webpage, 2007).

Given the change in the role of mother in a family, it is worthwhile to investigate whether maternal attachment still exerts a more significant influence on local adolescent problem behaviour over paternal attachment, as illustrated by a number of the western studies (Arbona & Power, 2003; Noom, Dekovic & Meeus, 1999; Hoffman, Ushipz, & Levy-Shiff, 1988). The results may also help provide insights for mothers and fathers to review their relationship with their adolescent children.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The initiation and maintenance of close, enduring intimate attachment bonds is an integral part of human behaviour throughout the life span of an individual (Lopez & Gover, 1993). As parents are usually the primary caretakers of their children, parental attachment plays a vital role in personal development and psychopathology (Blatt, Hart, Quinland, Leadbeater, & Auerbach, 1993).

Attachment

Bowlby (1969, 1973) and his associates (Ainsworth, 1982) were among the first to study the formation and dissolution of attachment. They define attachment as an enduring affective bond characterized by a tendency to seek and maintain proximity to a specific figure.

The concept of attachment was originally used to describe the affectional bonds between infants and their caregivers. Nowadays, attachment is not only considered to be influential during infancy, but also be extended to toddlerhood, childhood, adolescence and adulthood (Bowlby, 1982; Lopez & Gover, 1993). The nature of attachment is broadly believed to be the predominant factor in regulating an individual's behaviour (Bowlby, 1982; Erikson, 1963).

Researchers believe the quality of attachment relationship laid the groundwork for later representational working models (a set of internalized beliefs and expectations) about oneself and others (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980, 1988). The working models influence how children relate

themselves to the social and physical world. If an individual's working model of attachment is low in quality, he or she is more likely to view himself or herself as unlovable and to view the social environment as untrustworthy, unpredictable or even hostile. Conversely, individuals who show high quality of attachment are likely to see themselves as worthy of love and have their behaviours well-adjusted (Buist et al., 2004).

In fact, parents play a significant role in rearing and taking care of their children. An encouraging and cooperative parent is a source of support and can help foster the development of a secure parent-child attachment bond. This attachment bond, in turn, can provide the child with a secure base from which to explore the environment and develop personal and interpersonal competencies (Bretherton, 1992).

Parental attachment is particularly essential during adolescence, an important transition period full of vulnerability and intensified risk, and in which many changes take place in lives (Coleman, 1993). Individuals face with many challenges during their adolescence, whereas the quality of attachment to parents is a principal factor to determine successful resolution of these life challenges, and the outcomes could be crucial to one's future development and behaviours (Adams & Gullotta, 1989).

The relevance of parental attachment during adolescence was illustrated by studies which link attachment to psychological well-being (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Greenberg, Siegel, &

Leitch, 1983; Raja, McGee, & Stanton, 1992). It was depicted that a positive, trusting relationship with parents facilitates adolescents to develop an internalized view of self as capable and lovable. On the other hand, some of the researchers had turned their focus to study the correlation between adolescent problem behaviour and parental attachment as many adolescents have become involved in problem behaviours, for example, conduct problems, depressive mood, delinquency, etc. during the course of their adolescence (Loeber, 1990; Moffit, 1993; Petersen, Richmond, & Leffert, 1993).

Externalizing problem behaviour

Problem behaviour has been defined as the act of a person who either “exerts significant negative impact on his/her quality of life or the quality of life of others”, or “forms significant risk to the health and/or safety to oneself or others” (O’Brien, 2003). The construct is generally categorized into internalizing problem behaviour (depression and anxiety) and externalizing problem behaviour (aggression and delinquency). Adolescence is the developmental stage in which both internalizing and externalizing problem behaviour demonstrate an increase in prevalence (Roberts, Andrews, Lewinsohn, & Hops, 1990; Moffit, 1993).

Researchers found that adolescents who have warm, loving, intimate relationships with their parents were less likely to exhibit problem behaviour. On the contrary, low quality of attachment has been associated with higher incidences of problem behaviour (Barnes & Farrell,

1992; LeCroy, 1988; Laible, Carol, & Raffaelli, 2000).

However, the above studies investigated problem behaviour as a general construct, without differentiating internalizing problem behaviour from externalizing problem behaviour. Indeed, there have been research studies which illustrated that quality of parental attachment was perceived to be relevant to adolescent aggression and antisocial behaviour, extreme forms of externalizing problem behaviour (Marcus & Betz, 1996; Simons, Paternite, & Shore, 2001). The relationship between parental attachment and adolescent externalizing problem behaviour has also been the focus of a number of studies, which showed evidence on the reciprocal relationship between the two factors (Bosmans, et al., 2006; Greenberg, et al., 1993; Williams, & Kelly, 2005).

On the other hand, evidence on reciprocity between parental attachment and adolescent internalizing problem behaviour is scarce. Studies examining parental relationship and internalizing problem behaviour are mostly conducted during childhood (Belsky, Rha, & Park, 2000; Rubin, Hastings, Stewart, Henderson, & Chen, 1997). Only one study was found studying parent-adolescent attachment and internalizing problem behaviour and displayed the negative association between the two factors (Buist et al., 2004).

Indeed, externalizing problem behaviour is more visible and has more direct negative consequences for individuals and the community (Deković, 1999). While the quality of parental

attachment was pertained as a risk factor of problem behaviours, its effects were found more robust on externalizing problem behaviour than internalizing problem behaviour (Reitz, Deković, & Meijer, 2006). Therefore, the present study focused on investigating the relationship between parental attachment and adolescent externalizing problem behaviour, but not internalizing problem behaviour.

Gender effect

In general, boys were found usually displaying higher rates of externalizing problem behaviour when compared with girls (Maughan, Rowe, Messer, Goodman, & Meltzer, 2004). It was thought dispositional differences in aggression, as well as socialization practices that emphasize self-assertion and underemphasize empathy and self-regulation, may put boys at higher risk for externalizing problems (Leadbeater, Kuperminc, Blatt, & Hertzog, 1999).

However, no critical gender effects on the relation between parental attachment and externalizing problem behaviours can be found in many previous studies (Bosmans et al., 2006; Leadbeater, Kuperminc, Blatt, & Hertzog, 1999; Marcus, & Betzer, 1996). This research will examine the gender effect and review if it is significant in exerting influence on the level of adolescent externalizing problem behaviours.

Maternal and paternal attachment

On the other hand, it is observed that in many industrialized cultures, mothers are still

assumed to be the primary caretaker of their children and therefore expected to be heavily involved. Research findings indicated that fathers, in comparison with mother, are less involved in parenting, and less securely attached by their adolescent children (Williams & Kelly, 2005).

Nevertheless, studies comparing the relative importance of paternal and maternal attachment in relation to adolescents' attitudes and behaviours have yielded mixed outcomes. Some studies found attachment to father a strong predictor of adolescent behaviour. A high level of paternal attachment was expected to be particularly salient as fathers generally have less intimate relationship with their adolescent children (LeCroy, 1988; Marcus & Betzer, 1996). Conversely, there have been study results which showed that maternal attachment and not paternal attachment variables were uniquely related to adolescents' involvement in antisocial and problem behaviours (Noom, et al., 1999; Hoffman et al., 1988). According to Arbona and Power (2003), the presence of high quality maternal attachment could even compensate the negative effect brought by insecure paternal attachment on adolescent problem behaviour.

For which factor, the paternal or the maternal attachment, is more influential to adolescent externalizing problem behaviours, seems to be an issue which needs further exploration. Therefore, on top of studying the parental attachment variable, the separate paternal and maternal effects will be investigated.

Chinese culture

According to Bowlby (1988) and Ainsworth (1989), the role of attachment on later development is a universal process that is applicable across cultural and individual experiences. However, there have been researches which supported that differences in cultural values could imply variations in the strength of parent-adolescent attachment and in the importance of parental attachment to adolescents' attitudes and behaviours (Arbona & Power, 2003; LeVine & Miller, 1990; Van IJzendoorn, 1990).

The literatures reviewed so far mainly indicated the links between parental attachment and adolescent externalizing problem behaviour in the Western communities (e.g. Bosmans, et al., 2006; Greenberg, et al., 1993; Williams, & Kelly, 2005). Only one study that investigates the importance of parental attachment in the Asian culture was found. This study depicted the impact of parental attachment on aggression, social stress and self-esteem among Singaporean male youngsters of the age from 8 to 12 (Ooi, Ang, Fung, Wong & Cai, 2006). More studies that examine parental attachment among racially diverse populations are needed. It is worthwhile to investigate the influence of parental attachment to adolescent problem behaviour in the Hong Kong society, which can be described as dominated by Chinese culture and which holds quite different values and worldviews from the Western.

Hypotheses

This study aims to investigate the relation between parental attachment and externalizing

problem behaviours among adolescents in Hong Kong. Quality of parental attachment has been found pertaining as a rooting risk factor in adolescent problem behaviours (Greenberg et al., 1993, Buist et al., 2004) in the western societies. It is hypothesized that parental attachment also has a causal role to play in influencing the level of adolescent externalizing problems in the local community. An insecure parental attachment is predicted to result in a high level of externalizing problem behaviour among the adolescent children. Nevertheless, the level of externalizing problem behaviour should be relatively low when parents and adolescent children are closely attached.

The gender effect on the relation between parental attachment and externalizing problem behaviours is the second issue to be addressed. In accordance with previous research results, it is predicted that difference in gender will not place significant influence on the level of adolescent externalizing problem behaviours.

Thirdly, it is believed that the influence of paternal and maternal attachment on adolescent externalizing problem behaviour is not equal. As mothers in Hong Kong are still taking a primary role in taking care of their children, the mother-child attachment bond is stronger and closely linked than that between a father and his child. It is envisaged that maternal attachment is more powerful in manipulating adolescent externalizing problem behaviour when compared with paternal attachment.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

A mixed approach using both structured questionnaire and structured interview was applied in the present study to collect responses from the participants. The first part of this study applied a cross-sectional quantitative approach to explore the relationship between parental attachment and adolescent externalizing problem behaviour. The qualitative part was designed to supplement the quantitative measures through collecting detailed views on maternal and paternal attachment among adolescents.

Participants

Participants of the quantitative part of the study were 1,823 Form 1 to Form 3 Chinese students drawn from 55 classes from four co-educational secondary schools located in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories. For the qualitative part, 53 students who had been assessed as exerting high level of externalizing problem behaviours in the first part of the study were invited to participate. The sample consisted of Form 1 to Form 3 students from all the four schools.

Materials

As part of a larger study on adolescent development, the participants completed the background information form and a questionnaire on their relationship with their mother and father respectively (see Appendix I). Of interest in the present analyses were several of the

demographic variables, measures of maternal and paternal attachment, and its relationship with adolescent externalizing problem behaviour (aggressive and delinquent behaviours).

For the second part of the study, a structured questionnaire as in Appendix II was used to collect opinions on maternal and paternal attachment from the interviewees.

Measures

(1) Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)

The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) was used in the quantitative questionnaire for measuring maternal and paternal attachment. The IPPA was developed to assess adolescents' perceptions of the positive and negative affective/cognitive dimension of relationships with their parents and close friends, in particular how well these figures serve as sources of psychological security. The theoretical framework is attachment theory originally formulated by Bowlby (1969). Three broad dimensions are assessed: degree of mutual trust; quality of communication; and extent of anger and alienation. The instrument was used primarily with 16-to-20-year-old adolescents (Quintana & Lapsley, 1987) and had been proved applicable in studies with young adolescents (Armsden, McCauley, Greenberg, Burke, & Mitchell, 1991).

The validity of the attachment scales of the IPPA have been examined with FACES (Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1978) and the degree of positive family coping, i.e. communication among

family members and relatives concerning problems (Lewis, Woods, & Ellison, 1987). Moreover, the IPPA is a highly reliable measure (Lopez & Gover, 1993; Lyddon, Bradford, & Nelson, 1993) that consisted of 25 items in each of the mother, father, and peer sections. The instrument is a self-report questionnaire and participants are asked to rate each of the item (e.g. When I am angry about something, my mother tries to be understanding) on a five-point Likert-scale with responses of “5” equals to “almost always or always true”, “4” equals to “often true”, “3” equals to “sometimes true”, “2” for “not very often true” and “1” for “almost never or never true”. In this study, only the mother and father scales were used.

Since the participants of the study are young Chinese adolescents, the whole set of questionnaire was administered in Chinese. The author translated the IPPA into Chinese and had the Chinese version back-translated into English by an external translator. The back-translated version was checked against the original version to ensure no distortion in the meaning had been made. A pilot run which involved 104 student participants was conducted in mid of September, 2006. Internal reliability of the items was examined by Cronbach’s alpha. Finally, 12 items with high reliabilities that ranged from .92 to .93, and which could attain balance in the three broad dimensions to be assessed were retained for each maternal and paternal attachment section.

The IPPA scale used in this study was again tested for internal reliability using the Cronbach’s alpha. High reliabilities of .89 and .90 were obtained from the maternal attachment

scale and paternal attachment scale respectively. The scores on parental attachment were finally obtained through averaging the sum of the maternal and paternal scores.

(2) Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)

Measures on the problem behaviour were based on the study results from the same group of participants, using the Chinese version of the Youth Self-Report format of Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL). CBCL is a widely-used scale that has been translated into more than 60 languages, and has been applied on at least 50 cultural groups in published studies. It has been well validated as a measure of social competence as well as problem behaviours (including internalizing and externalizing problem behaviours) for children aged 4-to-18-years (Achenbach, 1991).

The validation of the Chinese version of CBCL for use in Hong Kong was shown in an Education and Manpower Bureau report (2003). Concurrent validity was checked through investigating the correlations between the CBCL and the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI), as well as the Parenting Stress Index-short form (PSI), which are measures of child behavior problems. The ECBI was found correlated significantly with the CBCL and the PSI. On the other hand, the reliability study on the Chinese version of CBCL (Leung, Kwong, Tang, Ho, Hung, Lee, Hong, Chiu, & Liu, 2006) indicated that the test-retest reliabilities of the internalizing and externalizing scales were .76 and .81 respectively ($p < .001$). The scores on the

reliabilities were moderate to high, comparable to figures reported in the original manual (Achenbach, 1991).

The scale adopted in the present study consisted of 46 items, with three subscales measuring the anxious/depressed (16 items), delinquent (11 items) and aggressive behaviour (19 items) of the participants. The participants were requested to respond to each item (e.g. I damage other peoples' things) on a 3-point scale, for which "0" represented "not applicable", "1" represented "fairly applicable" and "2" for "very applicable".

For this study, analyses focused on the delinquent behaviour subscale and the aggressive behaviour subscale. By testing the Cronbach's alpha, high internal reliabilities of .88 and .90 were achieved for the delinquent behaviour subscale and the aggressive behaviour subscale respectively. By summing up the marks of the two subscales, a score on the externalizing behaviour was obtained.

Procedures

Permission for research with the participants was first obtained from the school teachers and school social workers. In September 2006, survey questionnaires were distributed to the 1,823 student participants. All data were collected in classrooms by trained researchers. Before the participants filled in the questionnaire and their background information, the researchers gave a short announcement to the participants, stating that all data would be kept confidential and

informed the participants should feel free to answer the questionnaires.

Structured interviews were arranged for the 53 target interviewees in October, 2006.

Participants were interviewed by trained researchers individually in private rooms at schools.

Before an interview started, the researcher explained to the participant that the interview would

be recorded, whereas the content would be kept confidential. All the interviews were mainly

administered in Cantonese, but the participants were also allowed to reply in Mandarin, if needed.

The whole conversation was recorded with an MP3 player and was transcribed.

Chapter 4 - Results

Demographic characteristics

Among the 1,823 secondary school students targeted for surveying, the research team succeeded in collecting 1,719 sets of questionnaires. The missing questionnaires were mainly the consequence of the absence of participants on the day of survey. 247 out of the 1,719 questionnaires collected were identified invalid. Those participants were found either left the questions blank or freely circled the same score in each question. After excluding those participants, there were 1,472 sets of valid questionnaires for analysis.

Out of the 1,472 participants coming from Form 1 to Form 3 classes, 56.3% of them are male and 43.1% are female (0.6% of the participants did not indicate their gender). The age of the participants ranges from 11 to 18, with a majority falls between the 12 to 15 age group. Only 3.5% and 3.6% of them are under 12 or over 15 respectively. About three quarters of the participants live with their fathers and mothers, whereas 11% come from single-parent families. The rest are living with their stepfathers, stepmothers, guardians or relatives. A majority of the parents of the students have attained secondary school education (i.e. Form 1 to 5). Some 33% of the families are earning a monthly income of HK\$10,000 or below. It was also noted that 2.3% of the participants are not living in Hong Kong, but instead, in the mainland China. Details of the demographic background of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Variables for measurement

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for the current sample by gender and for attachment and externalizing problem behaviour measures. The mean parental attachment score of the participants is 3.28, which can be considered as moderate in the 5-point range. The average maternal attachment score is higher than the paternal attachment score for both male and female participants. The overall externalizing problem behaviour score was found to be 9.46, low to medium in the range.

Relationship between parental attachment and externalizing problem behaviour

To study the causal relationship between parental attachment and adolescent externalizing problem behaviour, regression analysis was conducted. Excluding those missing data, the figures from 1,229 participants were examined. The results illustrated that there existed a significant negative correlation between the quality of parental attachment and the level of externalizing problem behaviour, $\beta = -.26$, $n = 1,229$, $p < .01$, a result which was consistent with our hypothesis. Findings showed the single factor parental attachment accounted for 7% of the variance ($R^2 = .07$).

Effect of gender and parental attachment

A two-way between-groups analysis of variance was applied to explore the impact of gender and the level of parental attachment on the score of adolescent externalizing problem

behaviour. The data from seven participants who did not fill in their gender in the questionnaires were further taken away. The figures from 1,222 participants were hence finally assessed. The participants were divided into four groups according to their score of parental attachment. An attachment score that ranged from 1 to 2 were categorized as “Low”, whereas a score in the range from 2.01 to 3 would be put in the “Medium low” group. The “Medium high” group consisted of participants scoring 3.01 to 4 marks, and those attaining a score above 4 were classified as “High”.

Table 3 denotes the externalizing problem behaviour score of the male and female participants under different levels of parental attachment. A general downturn of the problem score was observed when the level of attachment increased. The two-way ANOVA analysis demonstrated that there was a statistically significant main effect for the level of parental attachment on the degree of adolescent externalizing problem behaviour [$F(3, 1214) = 25.66, p < .00$], with a moderate effect size ($\eta^2 = .06$). Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the externalizing problem score for the “Low” ($M = 11.74, SD = 6.56$) and “Medium low” ($M = 10.94, SD = 7.31$) parental attachment groups were not significantly different from one another. However, the level of externalizing problem scores of the “Medium high” ($M = 8.82, SD = 6.93$) and “High” parental attachment groups ($M = 6.33, SD = 5.59$) were significantly different from each other and other groups that are lower in ranking. The prediction

that secure parent-adolescent attachment would generate low level of externalizing problem behaviour, whereas insecure parental attachment would result in high level of externalizing problem behaviour among the adolescent, was confirmed.

On the other hand, the effect of gender [$F(1, 1214) = .02, p = .89$] and the interaction effect of gender and level of parental attachment [$F(3, 1214) = .79, p = .50$] did not reach statistical significance. The hypothesis that gender difference does not exert significant influence on the externalizing problem behaviours of adolescents across different level of parental attachment was verified. The results of the ANOVA analysis were summarized in Table 4.

Paternal and maternal effects

The two-way ANOVA was again carried out to explore the effect of paternal and maternal attachment on adolescent externalizing problem behaviours. The externalizing problem behaviour scores of the participants under different levels of paternal and maternal attachment were shown in Table 5. Downward trend in the problem score was seen when the level of paternal attachment increased. Similarly, a rise in the maternal attachment level depressed externalizing problem behaviour. When comparing the externalizing problem behaviour scores across the same level of paternal and maternal attachment categories, it was found that problem scores were lower in the maternal attachment category than those among the paternal attachment category for all the four different levels.

The lowest degree of externalizing problem behaviour ($X = 5.84$) was achieved when both the paternal and maternal attachment levels were high. However, the highest problem score was not reported when both paternal and maternal attachment levels were at the lowest rank at the same time. Instead, the two highest scores were observed when paternal attachment is high and maternal attachment is medium low ($X = 16.25$); and in the situation whereas paternal attachment is medium high and maternal attachment is low ($X = 16.21$).

Table 6 is the summary of the ANOVA analysis. It was revealed that paternal attachment did not significantly affect the externalizing problem behaviour score [$F(3, 1214) = .11, p = .95$]. On the contrary, maternal attachment was statistically significant in influencing the externalizing problem behaviours of the adolescent [$F(3, 1214) = 14.71, p < .00$], whereas the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = .04$). The influence on externalizing problem behaviour exerted by paternal and maternal attachment was proved to be different.

Although paternal attachment alone did not place significant influence, the interaction effect of paternal attachment and maternal attachment [$F(9, 1214) = 4.18, p < .00$] reached statistical significance, with a small effect size ($\eta^2 = .03$). Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that there was no significant difference on externalizing problem score for the “Low” ($M_{\text{maternal}} = 12.99, SD_{\text{maternal}} = 7.94$) and “Medium low” ($M_{\text{maternal}} = 10.69, SD_{\text{maternal}} = 7.56$) maternal attachment groups. The levels of externalizing problem across the “Medium high”

($M_{\text{maternal}} = 8.92$, $SD_{\text{maternal}} = 6.68$) and “High” maternal attachment groups ($M_{\text{maternal}} = 6.87$, $SD_{\text{maternal}} = 5.84$) were significantly different from one another as well as other groups of lower ranking.

For paternal attachment groups, the “Low” ($M_{\text{paternal}} = 11.16$, $SD_{\text{paternal}} = 6.95$) and “Medium Low” ($M_{\text{paternal}} = 10.25$, $SD_{\text{paternal}} = 7.14$) groups were again not significantly different from each other. Significant difference was also not observed between the “Medium High” ($M_{\text{paternal}} = 8.65$, $SD_{\text{paternal}} = 6.86$) and “High” ($M_{\text{paternal}} = 7.34$, $SD_{\text{paternal}} = 6.76$) paternal attachment groups as well. Significant difference is only observed when comparing the high-rank groups (medium high & high) with the low-rank groups (low & medium low). However, overall paternal effect is not significant in predicting adolescent problem behaviour.

Relationship with parents

In regard to the structured interviews, 7 out of the 53 target interviewees were absent. Among the 46 students who had taken the interviews, 25 (54%) of them rated their relationship with their mothers better than that with their fathers. When asking why they came to such a conclusion, they gave reasons like “my mother loves me”, “she concerns about me”, “my mother listens to me and gives me advice”, “she’s the one who takes care of my daily lives”, “she is affectionate”, “my mother stays at home for a longer time than my father”. One of the interviewees quoted the incident that his mother held him tight in her arms and brought him to

see the doctor in a rainy day. In contrast, these respondents claimed they seldom see their fathers at home and said their fathers do not love them or concern about them, and usually scold or criticize them, sometimes without reasons.

On the other hand, a total of 11 (24%) students regarded they are having a better relationship with their fathers. They said: “my father understands my thoughts”, or “my father is more generous and forgiving than my mother”. Some of them will play games and go cycling with their fathers. However, they feel their mothers annoying and sometimes too anxious about their behaviour.

Sharing feelings with parents

The proportion of student interviewees that will or will not share their feelings and concerns with parents is about the same, with the latter occupying a slightly higher rate. For those who are willing to share, they tend to approach their mothers more than their fathers. The students will share their feelings when they sense trust, understanding, dependability, kindness or attention from their parents. For those who choose not to share their feelings, they claimed their parents have a narrow perspective, are difficult to communicate with, do not trust them or understand them, and do not have spare time for sharing. They do not share because they do not want to get into troubles, such as being scolded, disapproved and criticized.

Influence from parents

A majority of the respondents (46%) viewed their mothers as exerting greater influence on them, in comparison with their fathers. When they were asked about the reason, they said “I stay with my mother for a longer time”, “my mother is fond of me and concerns about me”, “my mother will chat with me”, and “my mother is willing to give me a helping hand”. On the other hand, those who said their fathers are playing a more influential role occupied 33% of the interviewees. They claimed that “my father is my role model”, “he is rational”, “he will give me advice on study”, “he governs me”, “my father scolds me and makes criticism against me”. The remaining 21% recognized the influence from both parents equal.

Most of the respondents stated that they are most influenced by their mothers on daily life and school work. Influence on thoughts and emotion came second, then followed by conduct, money spending, future career, health and personality. Alternatively, paternal influence is usually observed in school work. The influence on thoughts ranked second, and then it came with future career, personality, conduct, money spending, emotion, and daily life.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

This study sets out to examine the relation between measures of attachment to parents and the extent of externalizing problem behaviour, which comprises both aggressive and delinquent behaviours, among the adolescents in Hong Kong. A moderate inverse correlation was found between the two variables. Regression analysis revealed that parental attachment was a predictor on the level of the adolescent externalizing problem behaviour.

Effects of parental attachment

The results synchronised with many studies in the west, for which the quality of parental attachment was found as a risk factor of problem behaviours (Bosmans et al, 2006; Greenberg et al., 1993; Marcus & Betzer, 1996; Reitz et al, 2006). Adolescents' perception of negative affective relationship with their parents, which may be viewed as lacking mutual trust and communication, crumpling with anger and alienation, would probably facilitate aggressive and delinquent behaviours. On the contrary, secured and close parental attachment played a role in restraining adolescent problem behaviour. It is believed that adolescents who have a strong affective bond with their parents are more likely than their less attached peers to accept parental rules and regulations and to consider the parents' reactions when the temptation to commit an antisocial act exists (Marcus & Betzer, 1996; Weber, Miracle, & Skehan, 1995).

Participants of this study have claimed that they are most influenced by their parents in

their daily life activities, academic work and conduct. It depicted that the involvement of parents is particular important in structuring the behaviour of their children to the right track.

Ridiculously, some of the parents blame that the school teachers fail to educate their children to get away from problem behaviours, but do not review how they are influencing the behaviour of their children. Indeed, attachment to parents can become a useful tool to moderate the problem behaviour of the adolescent children. To improve the quality of parent-adolescent attachment bonds within the community in Hong Kong therefore becomes an important issue to be addressed.

The socialization process throughout an individual's development can be regarded as the key factor in explaining the significant influence of parental attachment on adolescent problem behaviour (Anderson, Holmes, & Ostresh, 1999). Parents represent the first attachment relationship which lasts for a long duration. A better and more quality relationship may make internalization of parental and societal standards more likely, and which may facilitate the adolescents to learn to develop respect for others and the proper social skills (Marcus & Betzer, 1996). Strongly attached adolescents usually view their relationship with parents positive. They care about parental responses and will consider their parents' reaction before committing an aggressive or delinquent act. In this connection, parents play a role to instill their values and morals in their children that discourage externalizing problem behaviours (Anderson et al.,

1999).

It is believed that youngsters may not be able to develop an adequate conscience if they are alienated from their parents. As a consequence, they will lack conventional moral values to guide their behaviour. Moreover, if an adolescent viewed relationships as the embodiment of anger, mistrust, anxiety and insecurity, he or she is likely to attribute other people's behaviour to negative intentions (Simons et al., 2001). A low level of parental attachment therefore may contribute to aggressive behaviour among the adolescent children.

This study further demonstrated a main effect of the degree of parental attachment that clearly differentiated the high level attachment groups from the low attachment groups. Post hoc tests demonstrated that the effect was most substantial in the group with the highest parental attachment, whereas the difference between the extremely low and moderately low groups was not significant. It illustrated that to exert influence in reducing externalizing problem behaviour among adolescents, at least a moderate high level of parental attachment is needed.

Gender effect

The gender effect on adolescent externalizing problem behaviour was also addressed in this study. The average problem behaviour score of the male participants was found higher than that of the female participants. However, as expected and in consistency with studies conducted for American, Dutch, New Zealand adolescents (Bosmans et al., 2006; Marcus & Betzer, 1996;

Raja et al., 1992), no significant gender effects could be found. Furthermore, there was no interaction effect between gender and the level of parental attachment. That means whatever the quality of the parental attachment is, the difference in gender is not a significant factor in determining the adolescent's degree of problem behaviour.

It has suggested that girls are more socialized, self-regulated and sensitive to interpersonal concerns than boys, whereas boys may be put at higher risk for externalizing problems because of their dispositional differences in aggression, as well as socialization practices that emphasize self-assertion and underemphasize empathy and self-regulation (Leadbeater, Blatt, & Quinlan, 1995). The phenomenon that boys display higher level of externalizing behaviours, possibly reflect their socialization for self-assertion and aggression.

In the traditional Chinese culture, the boys are thought to have more opportunities to exercise their autonomy and competence out of the control from their parents, whereas girls will consider their parents' concerns more trustworthy. In this regard, the protective effect of parental attachment on externalizing problem behaviour should be stronger for girls than for boys. In reviewing the study results, we may expect that both male and female adolescents in Hong Kong are given equal opportunities to express sovereignty, making the gender difference insignificant in regulating the relationship between parental attachment and externalizing problem behaviour.

On the other hand, self-critical personality styles in individuals were found associated with

higher levels of externalizing problems (Blatt, Hart, Quinlan, Leadbeater, & Auerbach, 1993).

Individuals with high levels of self-criticism experience excessive feelings of guilt, hopelessness, worthlessness and inadequacy and tend to avoid intimate relationships or to react with anger and hostility. Nevertheless, gender difference in self-criticism was found not significant (Leadbeater et al., 1995). It may help account for the insignificant gender effect in regulating the relationship between parental attachment and externalizing problem behaviour.

Paternal effect Vs maternal effect

The mean score on maternal attachment in this test was slightly higher than that of paternal attachment. Downward trend in the adolescent externalizing problem score was observed when the level of maternal attachment increases, whereas the same effect was resulted when there was a rise in the paternal attachment level. However, the ANOVA analyses revealed that paternal attachment could not significantly affect the externalizing problem behaviours among adolescents. Only maternal attachment and the interaction of maternal and paternal attachment could place significant influence on the problem behaviour scores.

The results of the study demonstrated that the influence of paternal and maternal attachment on the problem behaviours of their adolescent children was different. The study findings contradicted with the research for which attachment to father was found to be the stronger predictor of problem and antisocial behaviours (LeCroy, 1988; Marcus & Betzer, 1996).

Instead, maternal attachment was evidenced more influential in manipulating adolescent externalizing problem behaviour as compared with paternal attachment.

The qualitative study results supported that a majority of the adolescents perceived maternal attachment more influential. Moreover, mothers and fathers are exerting influence on their adolescent children in a different way. Mothers are regarded as more influential because of their affectionate qualities. In the eyes of their children, mothers are the caretakers who concern about children's daily living and feelings. Mothers will spend more time to listen and chat with their children. Alternatively, fathers provide influence by taking the role as the "governors". On one hand, fathers can give rational and useful advice to their children, on the other hand, fathers can become "tyrants" who scold and make criticism on children without proper reasons. What the fathers concern are the children's academic results and career prospects, elements which they think are crucial to the future success of their children.

From studies on both western and eastern adolescents, the father-child attachment bond was found less robust and less closely linked than that between a mother and her child. Fathers were found less involved in parenting their adolescent children and at the same time, teenagers reported they were more securely attached to their mothers (Buist, Deković, Meeus, & van Aken, 2002; Lamb, 2000; Williams & Kelly, 2005). In the Chinese culture, mothers are also taking a major role in taking care of the family and hence can build up a more intimate relation with their

children. Chinese adolescents consistently perceived paternal parenting to be more negative than maternal parenting. In general, paternal parenting was less liked. Fathers, as compared with mothers, were perceived to be relatively less responsive, less demanding, who demonstrate less concern and be harsher (Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993; Paulson & Sputa, 1996).

According to the research results, adolescents in Hong Kong tend to accept kind words rather than cold criticisms (受軟不受硬). They rate their relationship with their mothers better than that with their fathers in general. What they have praised their mothers are qualities like loving, caring, considerate, willing to listen, spending time on the family. It is time for fathers to review their roles in the family. To enhance a better attachment bond, it seems that the fathers need to show their love, to concern more about the internal qualities of their children, and to spend less time on work but more time on their families.

Furthermore, reported frequency of father-adolescent communication was lower than mother-adolescent communication. Adolescents reported more negative feelings when communicating with fathers than with mothers. As mentioned previously, a more positive parental attachment, which denotes a parent-adolescent relation with higher quality, can trim down the level of externalizing problem behaviour. Mothers, as compared with fathers, usually show more concern and greater responsiveness, and be able to communicate better, are believed to have a more quality relation with their adolescent children (Shek, 2000). In this regard,

mothers are believed to be more significant in exerting influence on their children's externalizing problem behaviours. It seems not supporting the argument that the more authoritative and less involved fathers were viewed special and therefore more influential on adolescent's behaviour adjustment (Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993).

The data provided by the quantitative research also shed lights on the communication between adolescents and their parents. The community should alert that the adolescents choose not to disclose their feelings to parents rather than sharing more frequently. They claimed their parents do not trust them or understand them, and difficult to communicate. They avoid sharing to escape from possible disapproval, criticism, scold and yell. The problem can be solved if the parents provide trust, understanding, attention and patience.

Interaction effect

Although fathers were found not significant in affecting adolescent externalizing problem behaviour when singled out, it is noteworthy to look into the interaction effect placed by both maternal and paternal attachment. Many of the previous research focused on studying maternal and paternal effects separately (Arbona & Power, 2003; Marcus & Betzer, 1996, Noom et al., 1999, Williams & Kelly, 2005), whereas in this study, the interaction of paternal and maternal attachment was illustrated a significant factor in affecting adolescent externalizing problem behaviours.

In line with the tradition Chinese saying: “Men to handle external affairs in the society, whereas women take care of internal family affairs (男主外，女主内)”, mothers in Hong Kong are generally assigned as the caretakers of their children and charged with basic socialization tasks. However, the labour force participation rates by gender are evolving in the recent decades. The labour force participation rate among male residents dropped from 81.3% to 71% from 1982 to 2006, whereas that of females increased from 47.5% to 52.6% (Census and Statistics Department webpage, 2007). It has demonstrated that women are taking up a heavier role in the labour market, and inevitably, contributing less time to their families. On the other hand, more and more fathers are not the only money-makers of the families. They are requested to help in internal family affairs and to take up more responsibilities in taking care of their children. They are expected to be more involved, more concerned, more responsive and more communicative than before. It might account for the significant constructive effect placed by a combining effort of the mothers and fathers in this study. Nevertheless, further research is necessary to study the underlying mechanism contributing to the interaction effect.

Limitations

This research study was based on the attachment theory in analysing the behaviour of adolescents in Hong Kong. Attachment has been considered as lifelong, and an integral part of humans throughout their entire life span (Bowlby, 1982; Lopez & Gover, 1993). The bonds that

arise in adolescence are probably developed out of the attachments in childhood, or even earlier in the toddlerhood or infancy periods. Indeed, researchers have proposed domains of risks like family ecological variables, parental management and socialization practices, child biologic factors, as well as attachment relations during infancy and toddlerhood, to account for disruptive behaviour among individuals (Greenberg et al., 1993). Moreover, early and continuous parent-child interactions were considered important in the development of an individual's conception of self and others, whereas these self-other schemas would influence later behaviour and was expected to exert significant influence on adaptive behaviour during adolescence (Guidano & Liotti, 1983; Kernberg, 1994). In this study, however, the quality of parent-child relationship before adolescence is not available. Parental attachment data only at one point of an individual's life could be obtained. Not surprisingly, the parent-adolescent attachment could only explain a portion of the level of externalizing problem behaviour.

Furthermore, it had been deduced that a healthy parental attachment is positively associated with measures of social competence, identity, interpersonal functioning, self-esteem and emotional adjustment (Rice, 1990). The quality of the adolescents' affect toward their parents was positively related to their self-esteem (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Greenberg et al, 1983; Paterson, Pryor, & Field, 1995), whereas self-esteem was also correlated negatively with adolescents' self-ratings of aggression (Fling, Smith, Rodriguez, Thornton, Atkins, & Nixon,

1992). Parenthood qualities, indexed by perceived parenting styles, parental support, and conflict with parents, were also found associated with adolescent problem behaviour (Shek, 2005).

The focus on investigating the single factor “parental attachment” seems inadequate to explain the adolescent problem behaviour completely. Ideally, it would be more elegant to use more indicators, but this would involve very complicated measurements and might induce larger statistical errors.

Methodological limitations

Although the study appears to be quite a promising step in understanding the relation between parental attachment and adolescent problem behaviour, several limitations in the research methodology should be taken into considerations. Firstly, only adolescent self-report measures were used in the IPPA and CBCL scales. Adolescents’ subjective experiences were employed in both the assessment of the parental attachment and the level of the adolescent problem behaviour. The well-established self-reports are important sources of information, however, future studies can include parents and teachers as informants, so that a more all-rounded perspective can be achieved in measuring the variables.

This study is part of a large-scale study, for which each participant needed about an hour to complete the test. It was not an easy task to have the participants focused their attention for such a long time. The exhaustive process perhaps accounted for the numerous invalid

questionnaires in which answers were left blank or circled on the same scores freely. In view of the short attention span of the youngsters, a questionnaire with completion time limited to thirty minutes is highly recommended.

Because of the time limit of this study, a cross-sectional design was applied. Different age groups of participants were studied at the same point of time. The developmental change in the adolescents' behaviour and attachment to parents could not be investigated. Will there be any vital changes in the level of problem behaviour as well as attachment to parents among Hong Kong adolescents when they approach from early adolescence to middle adolescence? To overcome this limitation, longitudinal research is needed. However, it also implies higher costs and resources, in terms of time, money and workforce.

Implications

Problem behaviours among secondary school students, for example, aggressive and bullying behaviour, delinquent behaviour such as fighting and drug abuse, are common in Hong Kong. It has been demonstrated that parents are playing an important role in influencing youngsters in their externalizing problem behaviour. However, the measures taken to help alleviate student problem behaviours are mainly focused on launching preventive and developmental guidance to the students, for which the building up of a good quality parent-children relation has been ignored.

For example, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) has increased coverage of themes and modules relating to life education as well as physical and mental health in the school curriculum (The HKSAR Press Release, February 4, 2004). The target is to help students understand their personal needs and the proper ways to handle their emotions, develop positive values and outlooks on life, and enhance their ability to stand up to adversities. Recently, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has also launched the P.A.T.H.S “Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social programmes” with an aim to promote the holistic development of young people (SWD webpage, March 24, 2007). Programmes are tailor-made for youngsters to help them to establish healthy beliefs and clear values, and to draw close bonds with others. In these programmes, teachers and social workers have been supported with training on how to handle behavioural and emotional problems among students. However, parents are seldom the targets of these programmes, although close parental attachment can help discourage externalizing problem behaviours among adolescent children.

The results of the study may set an alarm for the society to place emphasis on establishing stronger parental-adolescent attachment, which should be embodied with happiness, harmony, trust and close communication. Parents are the ones who can significantly influence the extent of adolescent externalizing problem behaviours. With the building up of close attachment, the parents can further provide proper guidance and instill in their children conventional moral

values to discourage aggressive and delinquent behaviours.

In reality, many parents in Hong Kong have shed responsibility to the schools on moral education for their children. Cases on behavioural problem in schools are referred to the discipline teachers and social workers. In order to alleviate problem behaviours among adolescents, it is the time we should attach importance to the implementation of preventive and guidance activities to both the parents and their children. Resources should be allocated on intervention programmes on the training and education of parents. Those activities can be framed under the theme “Start from Parents 由父母做起” with the objective to create a harmonious, orderly and happy family environment, nurture in adolescents good characters and conduct, and enhance their ability in mutual respect, socialization and communication.

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Table 1 Demographic background of participants

n=1472		Frequency	Percentage
School grade	Form 1	446	30.3
	Form 2	497	33.8
	Form 3	529	35.9
Gender	male	828	56.3
	female	635	43.1
	missing	9	.6
Age	11	51	3.5
	12	338	23.0
	13	458	31.1
	14	414	28.1
	15	124	8.4
	above 15	53	3.6
Residential parents/guardians	missing	34	2.3
	both father and mother	1098	74.6
	father only	35	2.4
	mother only	127	8.6
	father and stepmother	16	1.1
	mother and stepfather	20	1.3
	Guardian	1	1.4
	other relatives	51	3.5
Father education level	missing	104	7.1
	Primary school or below	247	16.8
	Form 1 to Form 5	746	50.7
	Form 6 to Form 7	118	8.0
	diploma equivalent	27	1.8
	university or above	85	5.8
Mother education level	missing	249	16.9
	Primary school or below	296	20.1
	Form 1 to Form 5	787	53.5
	Form 6 to Form 7	141	9.6
	diploma equivalent	21	1.4
	University or above	70	4.8
Family monthly income	missing	157	10.6
	HK\$5,000 or below	136	9.2
	HK\$5,001 – HK\$10,000	356	24.2
	HK\$10,001 – HK\$15,000	251	17.1
	HK\$15,001 – HK\$20,000	135	9.2
	HK\$20,001 – HK\$25,000	85	5.8
	HK\$25,001 – HK\$30,000	49	3.3
	HK\$30,001 or above	77	5.2
Living area	missing	383	26.0
	Hong Kong Island	270	18.4
	Kowloon	64	4.4
	New Territories	1072	72.8
	Islands	5	.3
Mainland China	34	2.3	
	missing	27	1.8

Table 2 Means and standard deviations for attachment and externalizing problem behaviour scores by gender

	N	Boys		Girls		Overall	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Parental attachment	1282	3.29	.79	3.28	.79	3.28	.79
Paternal attachment	1327	3.20	.93	3.16	.90	3.18	.92
Maternal attachment	1402	3.35	.86	3.40	.88	3.37	.87
Externalizing problem behaviour	1390	9.64	7.44	9.19	7.25	9.46	7.39

Table 3 Externalizing problem behaviour score between boys and girls under different level of parental attachment

		Boys (n=673)		Girls (n=549)		Overall (n=1222)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Level of parental attachment	Low	10.77	5.87	12.68	7.13	11.74	6.56
	Medium low	11.16	7.67	10.63	6.77	10.94	7.31
	Medium high	9.10	6.93	8.52	6.92	8.82	6.93
	High	6.82	5.60	5.71	5.55	6.33	5.59

Table 4 ANOVA summary table of the effects of gender and parental attachment on the score of adolescent externalizing problem behaviour

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Gender	1	.91	.02	.89	.00
Parental attachment	3	1187.18	25.66	.00	.06
Gender & parental attachment	3	36.75	.79	.50	.00
Error	1214	46.27			

Table 5 Externalizing problem behaviour score under different level of paternal and maternal attachment

		Level of paternal attachment								Overall	
		Low		Medium low		Medium high		High		Mean	SD
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Level of maternal attachment	Low	12.47	7.87	12.64	6.84	16.21	7.87	11.36	10.38	12.99	7.94
	Medium low	10.90	6.10	10.52	7.38	10.16	8.13	16.25	10.69	10.69	7.56
	Medium high	12.53	7.02	9.48	7.11	8.01	6.04	9.63	7.33	8.92	6.68
	High	5.93	5.61	10.71	5.82	7.64	6.67	5.84	5.11	6.87	5.84
	Overall	11.16	6.95	10.25	7.14	8.65	6.86	7.34	6.76		

Table 6 ANOVA summary table of the effects of paternal and maternal attachment on the score of adolescent externalizing problem behaviour

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Paternal attachment	3	5.13	.11	.95	.00
Maternal attachment	3	671.59	14.71	.00	.04
Paternal attachment * Maternal attachment	9	190.91	4.18	.00	.03
Error	1214	45.65			

Appendix I

(不用填寫) ___ - ___ - ___

問卷調查

各位同學，您們好！我來自香港城市大學，現正進行一項有關青少年的問卷調查，希望同學參與及協助。

這份問卷所提供的資料均絕對保密，並只會用作學術研究用途，任何資料均不會洩露予學校，請放心填寫，調查完成後，問卷將會被銷毀。

這份問卷並沒有對錯之分，只需如實作答即可。問卷上寫有答題指引，作答前，請確定你已經清楚問卷的指示才填寫，並確保內容全部屬實。作答時，請不要花太多時間思考每條題目，只需作出即時反應即可，亦請不要和別人討論問卷的內容，多謝合作!

個人資料

請細閱下列各題，並在每題最適合的答案填上✓號（每題只限選一個答案）：

1. 性別： 男 女
2. 年齡： _____
3. 學號： _____
4. 以下哪些家庭成員與你同住？
 - 父親和母親 (請跳至問題 5 及 6，不用作答問題 7)
 - 只有父親 (請跳至問題 5，不用作答問題 6 和 7)
 - 只有母親 (請跳至問題 6，不用作答問題 5 和 7)
 - 母親和繼父 (請跳至問題 5 及 6，不用作答問題 7)
 - 父親和繼母 (請跳至問題 5 及 6，不用作答問題 7)
 - 由男監護人照顧 (請跳至問題 7，不用作答問題 5 和 6)
 - 由女監護人照顧 (請跳至問題 7，不用作答問題 5 和 6)
 - 其他親屬 (請說明) _____
5. 父親/ 繼父的教育程度：
 - 小學或以下
 - 中學 F.1-F.5
 - 預科 F.6-F.7
 - 大專
 - 大學或以上
6. 母親/ 繼母的教育程度：
 - 小學或以下
 - 中學 F.1-F.5
 - 預科 F.6-F.7
 - 大專
 - 大學或以上
7. 監護人的教育程度：(如已作答問題 5 或 6，不用回答此問題)
 - 小學或以下
 - 中學 F.1-F.5
 - 預科 F.6-F.7
 - 大專
 - 大學或以上
8. 在你的兄弟姐妹中 (包括非親生的)，分別有多少位？
 - a. 兄長 同住： _____ 位 不同住： _____ 位
 - b. 姐姐 同住： _____ 位 不同住： _____ 位
 - c. 弟弟 同住： _____ 位 不同住： _____ 位
 - d. 妹妹 同住： _____ 位 不同住： _____ 位

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9. 家庭每月收入約:

- \$ 5,000 或以下
\$ 5,001 至 \$ 10,000
\$ 10,001 至 \$ 15,000
\$ 15,001 至 \$ 20,000
\$ 20,001 至 \$ 25,000
\$ 25,001 至 \$ 30,000
\$ 30,001 或以上
其他 (請說明) _____

10. 你現時所住地區:

- 1 中西區 (包括上環、中環、西環等)
2 灣仔
3 東區 (包括銅鑼灣、天后、跑馬地、北角、柴灣等)
4 南區 (包括香港仔、薄扶林等)
5 油尖旺
6 深水埗
7 九龍城
8 黃大仙 (包括彩紅、鑽石山、慈雲山等)
9 觀塘 (包括油塘、藍田、牛頭角、九龍灣等)
10 葵青
11 荃灣
12 屯門
13 元朗
14 北區 (包括上水、粉嶺等)
15 大埔
16 沙田
17 西貢 (包括將軍澳、鯉魚門、調景嶺等)
18 離島
19 中國大陸

11. 你有沒有寄宿?

- 有 沒有

12. 你的宗教信仰:

- 基督教 天主教 佛教 回教
其他: _____ 沒有宗教信仰

13. 你父親的宗教信仰:

- 基督教 天主教 佛教 回教
其他: _____ 沒有宗教信仰

14. 你母親的宗教信仰:

- 基督教 天主教 佛教 回教
其他: _____ 沒有宗教信仰

Parental attachment & problem behaviour

15. 你的出生日期: _____月_____日

我與父母

I. 下列句子問及你對自己母親的感受。若你有多於一位母親(例如：生母及繼母)，請以對你影響最深的一人為對象。請細閱每一句子，並圈出對你現時來說，最能代表該句子準確程度的數字。

	完 全 不 準 確	有 些 不 準 確	半 準 確	有 些 準 確	完 全 準 確
1. 我的母親尊重我的感受。	1	2	3	4	5
2. 我的母親接納我。	1	2	3	4	5
3. 向母親表達自己的感受是沒有用的。	1	2	3	4	5
4. 與母親在一起時，我容易感到不快樂。	1	2	3	4	5
5. 母親對我的不快事情所知甚少。	1	2	3	4	5
6. 我的母親信賴我的判斷。	1	2	3	4	5
7. 我會向母親說出我的問題與煩惱。	1	2	3	4	5
8. 我的母親不大理會我。	1	2	3	4	5
9. 我的母親能引導我說出心裏的煩惱。	1	2	3	4	5
10. 當我憤怒時，母親會體諒我。	1	2	3	4	5
11. 我會找母親傾吐心事。	1	2	3	4	5
12. 母親知道我有煩惱時，她會關心我。	1	2	3	4	5

Parental attachment & problem behaviour

II. 下列句子問及你對自己父親的感受。若你有多於一位父親(例如：生父及繼父)，請以對你影響最深的一人為對象。請細閱每一句子，並圈出對你現時來說，最能代表該句子準確程度的數字。

	完 全 不 準 確	有 些 不 準 確	半 準 確	有 些 準 確	完 全 準 確
13. 我的父親尊重我的感受。	1	2	3	4	5
14. 我的父親接納我。	1	2	3	4	5
15. 向父親表達自己的感受是沒有用的。	1	2	3	4	5
16. 與父親在一起時，我容易感到不快樂。	1	2	3	4	5
17. 父親對我的不快事情所知甚少。	1	2	3	4	5
18. 我的父親信賴我的判斷。	1	2	3	4	5
19. 我會向父親說出我的問題與煩惱。	1	2	3	4	5
20. 我的父親不大理會我。	1	2	3	4	5
21. 我的父親能引導我說出心裏的煩惱。	1	2	3	4	5
21. 當我憤怒時，父親會體諒我。	1	2	3	4	5
23. 我會找父親傾吐心事。	1	2	3	4	5
24. 父親知道我有煩惱時，他會關心我。	1	2	3	4	5

~全卷完，多謝合作!~

個人成長體驗訪談

您好！我來自香港城市大學，多謝同學參與訪談。

你所提供的資料，將可以讓我們更了解現時青少年的需要。而這次訪談的內容將會絕對保密，只會用作學術研究用途，任何資料均不會洩露予學校，請放心回答。

在訪談中，請確保所講述的內容全屬真實。訪談完畢後，請不要和別人討論有關的內容，多謝合作!

與父母的關係

- a. 如果 1 分代表非常之差，10 分代表非常之好，咁你認為，你同爸爸之間的關係有幾多分呢？同媽媽嘅關係又值幾多分呢？
(如果爸爸分數較低，請去問題 b / 如果媽媽分數較低，請跳至問題 c / 如果分數相同，請跳至問題 d)
- b. 點解你會俾低 D 分你爸爸，高 D 分你媽媽嘅？(請跳至問題 9d)
- c. 點解你會俾低 D 分你媽媽，高 D 分你爸爸嘅？
- d. 你會用 D 乜嘢形容詞，嚟分別形容你爸爸同媽媽呢？
- e. 你覺得你同爸爸之間嘅關係點？可唔可以舉一兩個例子嚟聽吓？
- f. 有乜嘢事或者原因會令你覺得你同爸爸相處嘅情況係咁樣？
- g. 咁你覺得你同你媽媽嘅關係又係點嘅呢？又舉一兩個例子嚟聽吓！
- h. 有乜嘢事或者原因會令你覺得你同媽媽相處嘅情況係咁樣？
- i. 你覺得爸爸對你嘅影響大 D，定媽媽對你嘅影響大 D 呢？
- j. 點解你會咁唸呢？
- k. 你爸爸會影響你邊方面多 D 呀？
- l. 你媽媽又影響你邊方面多 D 呢？
- m. 如果你有嘢煩有心事，會不會搵爸爸或者媽媽傾吓？
(答會，請去問題 n / 答唔會，請跳至問題 p)
- n. 你多數會搵爸爸定媽媽傾呢？
- o. 點解呀？(全份問卷完畢)
- p. 點解你唔搵爸爸媽媽傾嘅？(全份問卷完畢)