

Abstract

The objective of the present study was to examine the mediating effect of triangulation between interparental conflicts and adolescent's adjustments in terms of internalizing and externalizing behaviours. In this study, triangulation refers to the process where a child is drawn into an unstable conflicting relationship between his or her parents. Community Sample of 898 secondary students in Hong Kong were included. Each participant was given a questionnaire including scales for measuring their perceived interparental conflicts, triangulation, and their internalizing as well as externalizing behaviour problems. Results showed that triangulation was statistically significant in predicting adolescents externalizing behaviour problems but not internalizing behaviour problems when the effect of interparental conflicts were controlled. In addition, interparental conflicts had significant contribution in predicting adolescent's adjustments. These suggested that triangulation exerted the mediating effect between interparental conflicts and adolescent's adjustments. More important, there may be other pathways through which the interparental conflicts affected the adjustments of adolescents. Differences in family conditions on perceived interparental conflicts, triangulation, internalizing and externalizing behaviours were also demonstrated. The present findings were discussed in relation to the perspective of family system theory to explain the relationship between interparental conflicts and adolescents' adjustments. Other alternative pathways through which interparental conflicts affected adolescents' adjustment were also discussed. Implications for clinical practice were explained.