

Abstract

A cross-sectional study was carried out to investigate the effects of corporal punishment, non-corporal punishment, parental nurturance on adolescents' psychological adjustment and cognitive processes. Four hundred and forty-five Chinese adolescents from a mainstream secondary school in Hong Kong were recruited to complete a self-report questionnaire. Univariate results showed that higher amount of corporal punishment, non-corporal punishment and lower level of parental nurturance were associated with more externalizing behaviors, anxious/depressed behaviors, and cognitive distortions. More benign attributions were associated with higher level of nurturance but not with any type of punishment. Further investigation revealed an interaction effect between non-corporal punishment and parental nurturance on adolescents' externalizing and anxious/depressed behaviors. With more nurturing parents, adolescents did not develop more externalizing or anxious/depressed behaviors, even when a greater amount of non-corporal punishment was received. However, no interaction effect was found between corporal punishment and nurturance. Our current findings thus suggested that high parental nurturance could buffer part of the negative consequences of punishment, but its buffering effect was limited to non-corporal punishment only and did not extend to corporal punishment.