

Original article

Associations between coparenting, parent-adolescent relationship quality, marital quality, and adolescent problem behavior in China

Na Luo¹, Zixi Liao¹, Rongbo Liu¹, Karla Van Leeuwen²

¹Ningbo University, Ningbo, China

²KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Received: December 5, 2025

Revised: January 2, 2026

Accepted: January 20, 2026

Published: January 25, 2026

Cited as:

Luo, N., Liao, Z., Liu, R., Leeuwen, K. V. (2026). Associations between coparenting, parent-adolescent relationship quality, marital quality, and adolescent problem behavior in China. *Educational Research Advances*, 1(1), 51-64.

<https://doi.org/10.46690/era.2026.01.05>

Abstract: Attachment theory suggests that secure attachment is associated with better adjustment among children. We hypothesized that coparenting relationship quality might be associated with child adjustment through parental attachment, inspired by the spillover hypothesis. Although couple relationship quality is also known to influence family dynamics, the specific mechanisms underlying these associations remain unclear. The sample of the current study included 1122 Chinese adolescents aged 10-13 years, 962 mothers, and 836 fathers. Mediation and moderation analyses were conducted for data analysis. The results show that adolescents' parental attachment mediates the association between coparenting and early adolescents' problem behaviors, based on both mothers' and fathers' reports. Mothers' reports of couple relationship quality moderated the association between mothers' perceptions of coparenting and adolescents' problem behaviors, and fathers' reports of couple relationship quality moderated the association between fathers' perceptions of coparenting and adolescents' attachment to fathers. The results indicate that enhancing coparenting quality and couple relationships may enhance adolescents' parental attachment and reduce behavioral problems. The findings also showed a spillover effect, supporting the principle of interdependency of family subsystems within the family systems theory.

Keywords: Coparenting; parental attachment; couple relationship quality; adolescent problem behavior.

1. Introduction

The family systems theory conceptualizes the family as a complex organization of multiple interacting family subsystems, such as the parent-child/adolescent and the mother-father subsystems. These subsystems are interdependent, meaning that processes and changes within one subsystem (e.g., the couple relationship) can affect the operating of other subsystems (e.g., parent-adolescent relationship), consequently impacting individual adjustment and well-being (Bonds & Gondoli, 2007; Cox & Paley, 1997). Within this framework, coparenting has been identified as a distinct and important component of family functioning (McHale & Cowan, 1996). Coparenting refers to the subsystem of parenting adults and can be defined as the way two adults work together as parental figures (Feinberg, 2003). Coparenting is not only practiced by married or cohabiting parents, but also among divorced parents or between a parent and other caregiving figures such as grandparents (Baker et al., 2010).

Coparenting has been verified as a unique predictor of child and adolescent development (Campbell, 2023). A growing body of research has found that supportive coparenting is related to more prosocial behaviors in children aged 3-9 years (Liu et al., 2014; Cunha et al., 2025), less sibling conflict (Chen, 2019), and fewer problem behaviors in children (Zhao et al., 2022). Coparenting can also affect children's outcomes *indirectly* (e.g., mediated) through other family factors, such as parenting behaviors (Lu et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2017) and parenting stress (Liu et al., 2016). In turn, coparenting has been shown to mediate the relationship between couple relationship quality and parent-child relationships (Holland & McElwain, 2013).

1.1 Coparenting: Concept and dimensions

In the current study, we adopt the multidimensional model of coparenting proposed by Feinberg et al.'s (2012), which includes five domains: childrearing agreement, coparenting support, coparenting undermining, joint management of family dynamics, and division of labor. *Childrearing agreement* refers to the degree to which parents' ideas on parenting practices or topics are similar. *Coparenting support/undermining* consists of three dimensions: coparenting support (respecting and affirming partner's parenting contributions), endorsement of partner's parenting (positive attitudes toward partner's childrearing), and coparenting undermining (criticizing, blaming partner's parenting practices). *Joint management of family dynamics* refers to parents explicitly or implicitly guiding the structure of family relationships and the degree of cohesion, allowing or avoiding parent-child unions, and determining the degree of balance in parent-child interactions. This domain is represented by the dimension "exposure to conflict," which refers to how much or how often coparenting parents expose their children to conflict. *Division of labor* captured each parent's satisfaction with the way caregiving tasks are shared. *Parent-based closeness*, represented by the dimension "coparenting closeness", refers to the degree to which coparenting enhances a couple's intimacy.

1.2 Associations between coparenting, parental attachment, and adolescent problem behaviors

From a theoretical perspective, this study is guided by both the family systems theory and the spillover hypothesis. The spillover hypothesis suggests that behaviors or emotions emanating from one subsystem (e.g., the coparenting subsystem) are reflected in another subsystem (e.g., the parent-child subsystem) (Cox & Paley, 1997). Previous empirical research has supported this framework by showing that positive mother-father coparenting quality is associated with better parent-infant attachment (Brown et al., 2010), parent-toddler attachment (Holland & McElwain, 2013), and parent-adolescent attachment, as well as parental involvement (Zou et al., 2019). Attachment may be considered an indicator of the parent-child relationship quality (Waters & Waters, 2006). The attachment theory posits that children's quality of attachment to others is an important factor in their psychological well-being (Ridenour et al., 2006). Studies have found that a more secure parental attachment is related to better child development for children and adolescents (Chan & Koo, 2011; Liu, 2011). Insecure parental attachment has been related to more problem behaviors and depression in toddlers (Zhang et al., 2008) and early adolescents (Allen et al., 2007).

Although early adolescence is often seen as a period of increasing independence, attachment relationships with parents remain important during this transition. Adolescents continue to seek emotional support from parents as they explore new relationships and social roles (Li et al., 2020). Research also indicates that a supportive parent-child bond can serve as a protective factor during early adolescence (Wu, 2007). Therefore, attachment may be a key pathway through which coparenting influences adolescent adjustment.

Empirical studies investigating the spillover hypothesis and attachment theory have suggested that coparenting is related to parental attachment (i.e., spillover hypothesis), and parental attachment, in turn, is related to adolescent outcomes (Zou et al., 2019; Liu, 2011). Thus, we hypothesize that the quality of the mother-father coparenting relationship is related to early adolescents' problem behavior through the mechanism of adolescents' parental attachment. In addition, a recent Chinese study examined maternal and paternal coparenting behaviors and found that both mothers' and fathers' positive coparenting behaviors were significantly associated with early adolescents' attachment to their parents (Zou et al., 2020), supporting the inclusion of both mothers' and fathers' perceptions of coparenting in this study.

1.3 Couple relationship quality as a moderator

Parents' couple relationship quality is the core element for family harmony and cohesion (e.g., Davies & Cicchetti, 2004). Family systems theory indicates that the marital subsystem is related to both the parent-child and coparenting subsystems. According to the spillover hypothesis, emotions and behaviors from one subsystem (e.g., marital subsystem) can be expressed in another subsystem (e.g., coparenting subsystem and parent-child subsystem) (Almeida et al., 1999). Studies have confirmed that more marital conflict is related to children's problem behaviors (James et al., 2022), and that marriage dissatisfaction undermines both coparenting alliance and parent-child attachment (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000).

However, while substantial attention has been given to the influence of couple relationship quality on coparenting or parenting individually, limited research has explored whether marital satisfaction moderates the association between coparenting quality and parent-child attachment, or between coparenting and adolescent outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, such moderation is plausible. When the couple relationship is distressed, one parent may compensate by becoming overinvolved in the child's life, while the other may withdraw from both marital and parenting roles (Gable et al., 1994; Kwok et al., 2013). In some cases, effective coparenting may persist despite marital difficulties; in others, couple conflict may be transferred into childrearing contexts, thereby disrupting both coparenting collaboration and attachment bonds (Deal et al., 1989).

Emotional Security Theory (EST; Davies & Cummings, 1994) offers a valuable lens through which to understand these dynamics. EST posits that children's emotional security is shaped by their observations of interparental interactions and the emotional climate of the family. Insecure environments-marked by unresolved conflict or lack of cohesion-can undermine a child's emotional regulation and lead to elevated behavioral problems. From this perspective, couple relationship quality may moderate how coparenting dynamics influence adolescent adjustment by altering the emotional context in which parenting takes place.

Moreover, empirical studies suggest that such moderating effects may differ between mothers and fathers. For instance, Stroud et al. (2011) found that fathers' emotions and coparenting behavior were more sensitive to the quality of the couple relationship compared to mothers. Similarly, marital conflict has been linked to reduced paternal involvement

and lower father-child attachment (Katz & Gottman, 2010), and fathers have been observed to become more intrusive when interparental conflict is handled with hostility (Gottman et al., 1997). This pattern is encapsulated in the “fathering vulnerability hypothesis” (Cummings et al., 2004), which suggests that fathers may be particularly susceptible to the negative effects of marital discord. Belsky et al. (1991) also noted that while mothers may become more emotionally reactive in response to marital dissatisfaction, fathers are more likely to exhibit intrusive and negative parenting behaviors.

Therefore, the quality of the couple relationship may function as either a risk or protective factor in the associations between coparenting and both parent – child attachment and adolescent problem behavior. These effects may further vary depending on whether reports are provided by mothers or fathers.

Against this background, we hypothesize that higher-quality coparenting will be associated with fewer adolescent problem behaviors, and that this association will be mediated by the quality of parent-adolescent attachment, and that the result could be different for mother and father reports. Further, we hypothesize an association between coparenting relationship and adolescents’ parental attachment and between coparenting and early adolescents’ problem behaviors, depending on the couple relationship quality. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual model of this study.

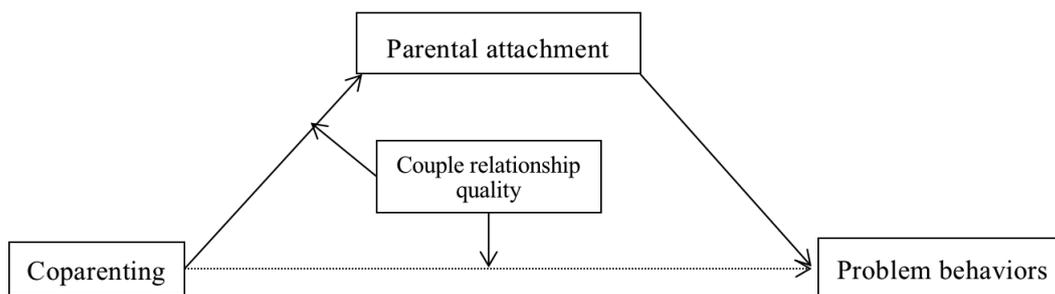


Figure 1 CONCEPTUAL MODEL SHOWING THE HYPOTHESIZED MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants and procedure

The sample of the present study includes 1122 early adolescents aged 10–13 years (44.4% boys, 40.9% having siblings, $M_{age} = 10.99$ years, $SD = 0.81$), as well as 962 mothers ($M_{age} = 37.76$ years, $SD = 4.15$) and 836 fathers ($M_{age} = 40.23$ years, $SD = 4.29$). Among these families, 32 were divorced, 14 were remarried and 2 identified as “other type of family”; the remaining families were two-parent households. Parents’ educational background were as follows: middle school (38.6% of mothers and 41.7% of fathers), technical secondary school (13.2% and 11.5%), university graduation (10.7% and 12.6%), college graduation (11.5% and 10.8%), elementary school (12.2% and 7.5%), and high school (9.7% and 9.4%). The median family income reported by mothers was between 50,000 to 100,000 Chinese Yuan (1 CNY = 0.137 Dollars). It should be noted that this sample is not nationally representative. Of the initial 1165 families, 3.5% early adolescents, 17.4% mothers, and 28.2% fathers (i.e., coparenting data) with over 50% missing data were excluded.

Participants were recruited from 12 primary schools (6 from Xi’an in northwest China, and 6 from Ningbo in the east), with each school contributing two classes. These included both urban and suburban schools. First, we contacted the schools and invited them to attend this study. We contacted 13 schools and 12 schools that agreed to attend the study. After obtaining school approval, parents were informed of the study, and written consent was collected. Adolescents received a survey package at school, which included an instruction letter, a consent form, questionnaires for both adolescents and parents, and a return envelope. Adolescents completed the questionnaires in class under the guidance of teachers. They were then asked to take the rest of the materials home for their parents to complete. Once the forms were filled out, parents returned the sealed envelopes to the school. The overall return rate was 95%. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (blinded for review).

2.2 Measures

Coparenting. Coparenting was assessed using the Coparenting Relationship Scale (CRS; Feinberg et al., 2012), a self-report questionnaire completed by both mothers and fathers. The full version includes 35 items across seven subscales: coparenting support, endorsement of partner’s parenting, coparenting undermining, childrearing agreement, coparenting closeness, exposure to conflict, and division of labor. Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Not true of us” (0) to “Very true of us” (6), with the exception of the exposure to conflict subscale, which was rated from “Never” (0) to “Very often” (6). This study used the brief version of the CRS, which includes 14 items—two from each subscale—that were selected for their strong correlation with the full subscale scores and their ability to represent the core meaning of each domain. Higher total scores indicated more positive coparenting. Cronbach’s alpha values for mothers’ and fathers’ reports were 0.78 and 0.76, respectively.

Parental attachment. Adolescents’ perceptions of their relationships with their parents were measured using the abbreviated version of the People in My Life (PIML) questionnaire (Gifford-Smith, 2000; based on Cook et al., 1995).

The scale includes three subdimensions: trust (6 items; e.g., “My mother is proud of me”), communication (4 items; e.g., “My mother can tell when I’m upset”), and alienation (5 items; e.g., “I feel angry with my mother”). In the present study, adolescents rated their attachment separately to mothers and to fathers on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “Almost never or never true” to “Almost always or always true.” Internal consistency was good, with Cronbach’s alpha values of 0.84 for maternal and 0.86 for paternal attachment.

Problem behaviors. Problem behaviors were assessed using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997), which contains 25 items across five subscales: conduct problems, emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, peer problems, and prosocial behavior. Only the four difficulty subscales were used in this study. Items were rated by both adolescents and mothers on a 3-point scale from “Not true” to “Certainly true”. Fathers did not rate child behavior due to concerns about response burden and lower awareness of children’s behavior (Phares, 1997). Following Goodman et al.’s (2010) recommendation for low-risk populations, we calculated two composite scores: internalizing problems (mean of emotional symptoms and peer problems; $\alpha = 0.63$, $M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.59$) and externalizing problems (mean of conduct problems and hyperactivity; $\alpha = 0.69$, $M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.57$). These scores were averaged across adolescent and mother reports.

Couple relationship quality. Couple relationship quality was measured using the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959), which has been widely used in Chinese populations (Tang, 2006). The scale includes 15 items assessing various aspects of the couple relationship, such as shared interests and emotional closeness (e.g., “Do you confide in your mate?”). Responses were summed to generate a total score, with higher scores indicating better marital quality. Cronbach’s alpha values were 0.79 for mothers and 0.77 for fathers.

Chinese versions of all the questionnaires were developed from the English versions using a translation and back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980).

2.3 Analysis Strategy

First, descriptive statistics (i.e., M , SD) and Spearman’s and Pearson’s correlations between all variables were calculated. Second, mediation and moderation analyses were conducted using Hayes’s (2013) PROCESS Macro (see Figure 1). We used the bootstrapping procedure (Preacher & Hayes, 2004), which is the most adequate method for testing mediation effects (MacKinnon et al., 2004). Using bootstrapping could prevent bias (Cole & Preacher, 2013) and non-normality of sample distribution when using traditional regression analysis (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Moreover, specific indirect effects control variables’ effects can be easily tested (Lau & Cheung, 2012). Bootstrapping (bias-corrected with repeated 5,000 samples and accelerated 95% confidence interval) was used to test the significance of indirect effects in our mediation and moderation models. The indirect effects was statistically significant if confidence intervals does not include zero.

This study was not preregistered. The data, study materials, and analysis code are available from the corresponding author upon request.

3. Results

3.1 Preliminary analyses

We first computed Spearman correlations to identify appropriate control variables. Results (Table 1) showed that socioeconomic status (SES) was significantly associated with both mothers’ and fathers’ perceptions of coparenting, couple relationship quality, and adolescents’ problem behaviors. In addition, adolescents’ gender was significantly related to their problem behaviors. Therefore, SES and gender were included as control variables in all subsequent models.

Pearson correlations among key study variables (coparenting, couple relationship quality, parental attachment, and adolescent problem behaviors) indicated small to moderate associations (Table 1). Both mothers’ and fathers’ perceptions of coparenting were positively related to their perceptions of couple relationship quality, and both were negatively associated with adolescents’ problem behaviors. Coparenting was also positively correlated with adolescent-reported attachment to parents.

3.2 Testing for mediation effect

Mediation analyses using Hayes’s (2012) PROCESS evaluated four models (two outcome variables \times two informants): the impact of coparenting relationship on outcome variables (a) adolescents’ internalizing and (b) externalizing problem behaviors, mediated by the adolescents’ attachment to their mothers and fathers. Separate models were run for both parents’ perceptions of coparenting relationships with their partners, controlling for SES and child gender.

Results (Tables 2 and 3) showed that more positive coparenting relationship reported by mothers was positively related to adolescents’ attachment to their mothers and negatively associated with both early adolescents’ internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors. Similarly, fathers’ reports of more positive coparenting were related to stronger adolescent-father attachment and fewer adolescent problem behaviors. In both maternal and paternal models, adolescents’ attachment to their parents was significantly linked to lower levels of internalizing and externalizing problems. The mediation effect was statistically significant in all models. Specifically, adolescents’ attachment to mothers mediated the association between mothers’ coparenting and problem behaviors, accounting for 17.9% of the effect on internalizing

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Pearson's Correlations Among the Study Measures.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.SES										
2.Child gender	.02									
3.Mother_coparenting	.21***	.07*								
4.Father_coparenting	.15***	.07*	.49***							
5.Attachment to mother	.25***	.03	.21***	.21***						
6.Attachment to father	.16***	.03	.28***	.25***	.56***					
7.Mother_CRQ	.17***	.02	.60***	.38***	.16***	.21***				
8.Father_CRQ	.17***	.02	.43***	.58***	.18***	.15***	.57***			
9.INT	-.25***	-.07*	-.30***	-.31***	-.37***	-.32***	-.22***	-.22***		
10.EXT	-.24***	-.18***	-.33***	-.33***	-.40***	-.32***	-.26***	-.22***	.52***	
<i>M</i>	0.01	—	4.60	4.66	4.44	4.15	102.76	106.00	0.50	0.56
<i>SD</i>	0.78	—	0.81	0.77	1.50	1.68	24.13	21.19	0.28	0.26

Note. The table presents descriptive statistics, Spearman's correlations (child gender) and Pearson's correlations among all other study measures. SES = Social economic status; INT = Internalizing problem behaviors; EXT = Externalizing problem behaviors. Mother/father_coparenting = mothers'/fathers' reports of coparenting; mother/father_CRQ = mothers'/fathers' reports of couple relationship quality. *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 2. Models Testing for Mediation and Moderation Effects for Mothers (N = 912).

Model A (DV = INT)					Model B (DV = EXT)									
INT	<i>B</i>	Boot- strappe d SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI Bias Corrected		EXT	β	Boot- strappe d SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI Bias Cor- rected		
					LLCI	ULCI						LLCI	ULCI	
S→ATM	.42	.06	6.95	<.001	.30	.54	SES→ATM	.42	.06	6.95	<.001	.30	.54	
SES→INT	-.19	.04	-5.12	<.001	-.27	-.12	SES→EXT	-.14	.04	-3.79	<.001	-.21	-.07	
Child gen- der→ATM	-.02	.09	-.16	.87	-.19	.17	Child gender→ATM	-.02	.09	-.16	.87	-.19	.16	
Child gen- der→INT	-.08	.06	-1.34	.18	-.19	.04	Child gender→EXT	-.30	.06	-5.43	<.001	-.41	-.20	
M_CO→AT M	.29	.08	3.93	<.001	.14	.44	M_CO→ATM	.29	.08	3.93	<.001	.14	.45	
ATM→INT	-.18	.02	-9.14	<.001	-.22	-.14	ATM→EXT	-.20	.02	-10.39	<.001	-.24	-.16	
M_CO→INT (direct)	-.25	.05	-5.40	<.001	-.35	-.14	M_CO→EXT (direct)	-.26	.04	-5.88	<.001	-.35	-.17	
M_CO→INT (indirect)	-.05	.02			-.09	-.02	M_CO→EXT (indirect)	-.06	.02			-.09	-.03	
M_CO × M_CRQ→A TM	.001	.002	.71	.48	-.003	.006	M_CO × M_CRQ→ATM	.001	.002	.71	.48	-.003	.006	
M_CO × M_CRQ→IN T	-.004	.001	-3.12	.002	-.006	-.001	M_CO × M_CRQ→EXT	-.004	.001	-3.37	<.001	-.006	-.002	

Note. Model A: INT (internalizing problem behaviors) as the dependent variable; Model B: EXT (externalizing problem behaviors) as the dependent variable. β = standardized coefficient. DV = Dependent variable. CI = Confidence interval; SE = Standard Error. LLCI = Lower limit confidence interval. ULC = Upper limit confidence interval. M_CO = Mothers' perceptions of coparenting. SES = Social economic status. ATM = attachment to mother. M_CRQ = Mothers' perceptions of couple relationship quality. No *p*-values were given for indirect effects.

Table 3. Testing for Mediation and Moderation Effects for Fathers (N = 786).

Model A (DV = INT)					Model B (DV = EXT)								
INT	<i>B</i>	Bootstrapped SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI Bias Corrected		EXT	β	Bootstrapped SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI Bias Corrected	
					LLCI	ULCI						LLCI	ULCI
SES→ATF	.24	.07	3.28	<.001	.10	.39	SES→ATF	.24	.07	3.28	<.001	.10	.38
SES→INT	-.25	.04	-5.91	<.001	-.33	-.16	SES→EXT	-.22	.04	-5.30	<.001	-.30	-.13
Child gender→ATF	-.02	.12	-.15	.88	-.23	.22	Child gender→ATF	-.02	.12	-.15	.88	-.24	.22
Child gender→INT	-.11	.07	-1.66	.10	-.23	.02	Child gender→EXT	-.31	.06	-4.87	<.001	-.43	-.18
F_CO→ATF	.51	.09	5.46	<.001	.33	.70	F_CO→ATF	.51	.09	5.46	<.001	.33	.70
ATF→INT	-.14	.02	-7.21	<.001	-.18	-.10	ATF→EXT	-.13	.02	-6.89	<.001	-.17	-.09
F_CO→INT (direct)	-.27	.06	-5.08	<.001	-.39	-.16	F_CO→EXT (direct)	-.27	.05	-5.19	<.001	-.37	-.17
F_CO→INT (indirect)	-.07	.02			-.11	-.04	F_CO→EXT (indirect)	-.07	.02			-.10	-.04
F_CO × F_CRQ→ATF	.007	.004	2.34	.019	.00	.014	F_CO × F_CRQ→ATF	.01	.00	2.34	.019	.001	.015
F_CO × F_CRQ→INT	.00	.002	-.03	.98	-.004	.004	F_CO × F_CRQ→EXT	.00	.00	.10	.92	-.003	.004

Note. Model A: INT as the dependent variable; Model B: EXT as the dependent variable. DV = Dependent variable. CI = Confidence interval; SE = Standard Error. LLCI = Lower limit confidence interval. ULC = Upper limit confidence interval. F_CO = Fathers' perceptions of coparenting with mother. SES = Social economic status. ATF = attachment to father. INT = Internalizing problem behavior. EXT = Externalizing problem behavior. F_CRQ = Fathers' perceptions of couple relationship quality. No *p*-values were given for indirect effects.

and 19% on externalizing behaviors (Table 2, Figure S1). Similarly, adolescents' attachment to fathers mediated the association between fathers' coparenting and problem behaviors, accounting for 17.6% (internalizing) and 14.7% (externalizing) of the total effect (Table 3, Figure S2).

3.3 Testing for moderation effect

We then used Model 8 of Hayes' s PROCESS macro to test whether couple relationship quality moderated the associations between coparenting and (a) adolescents' attachment to parents, and (b) adolescents' internalizing and externalizing behaviors. These analyses were conducted separately for mothers' and fathers' reports, with SES and gender as covariates.

For mothers, results (Table 2, Figure S1) showed that coparenting was significantly associated with adolescents' attachment to mothers, but this association was not moderated by mothers' perceptions of couple relationship quality. However, couple relationship quality did moderate the relationship between coparenting and adolescent problem behaviors. Simple slope tests (Figure 2) showed that for internalizing problem behaviors as the dependent variable, the slopes for mothers scoring high ($t = -6.76, p = .000$) and low ($t = -4.54, p = .000$) on couple relationship quality were significant. For externalizing problem behaviors as the dependent variable, the slopes for mothers scoring high ($t = -7.61, p = .000$) and low ($t = -4.93, p = .000$) on couple relationship quality were also significant.

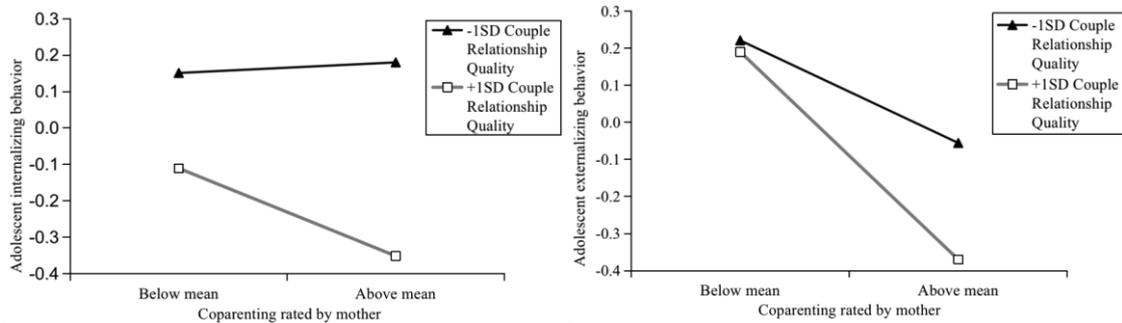


Figure 2 MOTHERS' PERCEIVED COUPLE RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AS A MODERATOR IN THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MOTHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF COPARENTING AND ADOLESCENTS' INTERNALIZING AND EXTERNALIZING PROBLEM BEHAVIORS.

For fathers, results (Table 3, Figure S2) indicated that couple relationship quality moderated the relationship between coparenting and adolescents' attachment to fathers. Coparenting was positively associated with adolescent-father attachment, and this relationship was stronger when fathers reported higher couple relationship quality (Figure 3). Simple slope tests (Figure 3) showed that slopes for fathers scoring high ($t = 5.40, p = .000$) and low ($t = 3.36, p = .001$) on couple relationship quality were all significant. In contrast, the relationship between coparenting and adolescent problem behaviors was not moderated by fathers' couple relationship quality.

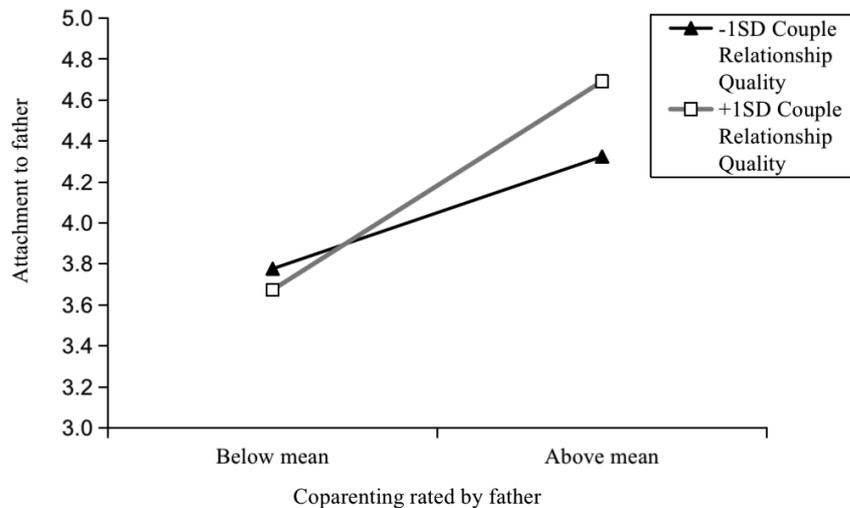


Figure 3 FATHERS' PERCEIVED COUPLE RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AS A MODERATOR IN THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN FATHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF COPARENTING AND ADOLESCENTS' ATTACHMENT TO FATHERS.

4. Discussion

The results of the direct effect models showed that more positive coparenting was associated with stronger adolescent-parent attachment and fewer problem behaviors, regardless of whether the mother or father was the informant. These findings support the spillover hypothesis and are consistent with prior research suggesting that supportive coparenting promotes closer parent-adolescent relationships (Zou et al., 2020) and reduces adolescents' maladaptive outcomes (Zhao et al., 2022). Riina and McHale (2014) found that both mothers' and fathers' shared parenting involvement tends to peak during early adolescence (around age 12) and decline in later adolescence. In this sensitive developmental period, a harmonious coparenting relationship—not only from the mother's side but also the father's—can enhance emotional connection and engagement in daily interactions (McHale & Irace, 2011). Fathers' positive coparenting, such as affirming their partner's parenting and expressing agreement in childrearing, may reflect fathers' active efforts to enhance family cohesion (McHale, 1997). These efforts may contribute to stronger father-adolescent attachment and, in turn, fewer behavioral problems. In contrast, negative perceptions of coparenting, including frequent disagreement or undermining behaviors, may reduce fathers' authority and connection with their adolescents (Chen et al., 2014). The findings also showed that more secure adolescent attachment to both mothers and fathers was associated with fewer behavioral problems, which is in line with attachment theory and prior studies (Liu, 2011). These results reaffirm the importance of maintaining warm, supportive relationships between parents and adolescents during early adolescence.

The mediation analyses confirmed that adolescents' attachment to parents played a mediating role in the relationship between coparenting and adolescent problem behaviors. In other words, coparenting was related to behavioral adjustment both directly and indirectly through the quality of the adolescent-parent attachment. This finding supports the notion of interdependence among family subsystems, as proposed in family systems theory (Bonds & Gondoli, 2007).

The moderation analyses revealed that mothers' perceptions of high couple relationship quality served as a protective factor against adolescent problem behaviors, especially when the coparenting relationship was perceived as low in quality. In contrast, fathers' reports of couple relationship quality did not moderate the link between coparenting and adolescent behavioral outcomes. These findings partially support our second hypothesis and align with prior research suggesting that mothers are particularly sensitive to the emotional quality of their couple relationship, which may influence their parenting behaviors and adolescents' adjustment (Lu et al., 2019). In the Chinese cultural context, where mothers are traditionally expected to take the primary caregiving role, marital dissatisfaction may have a more direct impact on their emotional involvement in parenting. Drawing on Emotional Security Theory (EST; Davies & Cummings, 1994), one possible explanation is that low couple relationship quality reduces mothers' ability to remain emotionally consistent and responsive in parenting. This emotional instability may weaken adolescents' sense of security in the family system, which could increase the likelihood of internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Wu et al., 2017). In contexts of marital distress, mothers have been found to exhibit more inconsistent or harsh parenting behaviors (e.g., verbal threats or physical discipline; Xia et al., 2016), further contributing to children's emotional insecurity. As primary caregivers in most families, mothers' emotional states may shape the overall family climate in ways that strongly influence adolescent development, amplifying the spillover effects predicted by EST.

Interestingly, a different pattern was observed for fathers. The results indicated that fathers' perceptions of lower couple relationship quality can be a risk factor for adolescents' attachment to their fathers when fathers report high levels of coparenting. This finding supports earlier research indicating that father-child attachment is particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in interparental relationship quality (Cummings et al., 2010). In modern Chinese families, fathers are increasingly encouraged to take a more active role in childrearing. However, traditional expectations of fathers as economic providers may limit their involvement in emotional caregiving, especially under marital stress. An explanation for our findings could be that when couple relationship quality is high, fathers are more likely to express warmth and involvement both as partners and as parents, reinforcing adolescents' emotional security across domains (Lu et al., 2019). However, a particularly notable finding is that under conditions of low couple relationship quality, lower coparenting quality was paradoxically associated with higher adolescent attachment to fathers. One interpretation, consistent with prior work (Zhou et al., 2017; Katz & Gottman, 2010), is that fathers in conflicted relationships may withdraw from coparenting interactions to avoid conflict but redirect emotional investment toward their children, providing a compensatory source of emotional security. In such cases, adolescents may perceive their fathers as a stable and supportive figure, despite broader interparental discord. This may be especially relevant in collectivistic societies like China, where children tend to maintain strong emotional dependency on parents, and the father's presence—even in tension—can offer a unique form of relational security. These findings highlight the nuanced role of couple relationship quality in shaping family dynamics and underscore the importance of adopting a family systems perspective informed by Emotional Security Theory. The observed gender differences further suggest that interventions aimed at promoting adolescent adjustment should consider how mothers and fathers experience and respond to couple distress differently in their parenting roles.

5. Conclusion

This study also contributes to a culturally specific understanding of parenting dynamics in contemporary Chinese families. This study provides insights into how coparenting and couple relationship quality influence adolescents' attachment to parents and their behavioral outcomes. By using reports from both mothers and fathers, the study revealed that adolescents' attachment to parents mediated the link between coparenting and adolescent problem behaviors. In addition, couple relationship quality moderated some of these associations, with different patterns emerging for mothers and fathers.

5.1. Implications

These findings have practical implications for schools and communities. Promoting stable and cooperative coparenting relationships may foster adolescents' emotional security and enhance parental attachment, thereby reducing behavioral problems. When adolescents present behavioral challenges, it may be useful for practitioners to consider multiple family subsystems, including coparenting and the couple relationship, in their assessment and intervention efforts. Importantly, the results suggest that different strategies may be needed for mothers and fathers. For example, while low-quality couple relationships may disrupt mothers' parenting consistency and influence child adjustment, fathers may maintain positive involvement with their children even in the context of poor marital quality. However, as shown in this study, even when coparenting appears supportive, low couple relationship satisfaction reported by fathers may still weaken father-adolescent attachment. Therefore, interventions aimed at improving couple relationship quality, particularly for fathers, may be beneficial.

This study also highlights the value of including multiple informants. Prior parenting education programs in China have often focused on mothers (Wen, 2012), yet our findings underscore the importance of involving fathers as well. Since fathers typically have fewer opportunities to participate in caregiving activities (Parke & Brott, 1999), providing targeted support for fathers may strengthen their engagement and enhance outcomes for children.

5.2. Limitations and future directions

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationships among coparenting, parental attachment, couple relationship quality, and adolescent problem behaviors. Future longitudinal research is needed to better understand how these associations evolve over time. Second, while the current study examined the effects of mothers' and fathers' perceptions separately, it did not investigate the potential interpersonal or dyadic influences between parents. Future research could explore how mismatched perceptions of coparenting or relationship satisfaction between partners might influence adolescent outcomes. Third, the sample was limited to two-parent families in relatively developed urban areas, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should include families from rural regions, less economically developed areas, or those with non-traditional structures (e.g., single-parent or same-sex parents) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of family dynamics in diverse Chinese contexts.

Data Availability Statement

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author upon request.

Acknowledgments

This study was supported by the Zhejiang Provincial Planning Project of Philosophy and Social Sciences (Grant No.: 25NDJC046YBMS)

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Use of AI and AI-assisted Technologies

No AI tools were utilized for this paper.

Open Access

This article is distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC-ND) license, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

References

- Allen, J. P., Porter, M., McFarland, C., McElhaney, K. B., & Marsh, P. (2007). The relation of attachment security to adolescents' paternal and peer relationships, depression and externalizing behaviour. *Child Development, 78*, 1222-1239. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01062.x>
- Almeida, D. M., Wethington, E., & Chandler, A. L. (1999). Daily transmission of tensions between marital dyads and parent-child dyads. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 61*, 49-61. <https://doi.org/10.2307/353882>
- Baker, J., Mchale, J., Strozier, A., & Cecil, D. (2010). Mother-grandmother coparenting relationships in families with incarcerated mothers: a pilot investigation. *Family Process, 49*(2), 165-184. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2010.01316.x>
- Belsky, J., Youngblade, L., Rovine, M., & Volling, B. (1991). Patterns of marital change and parent-child interaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 53* (2), 487-498. <https://doi.org/10.2307/352914>
- Bonds, D. D., & Gondoli, D. M. (2007). Examining the process by which marital adjustment affects maternal warmth: The role of coparenting support as a mediator. *Journal of Family Psychology, 21*, 288-296. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-3200.21.2.288>

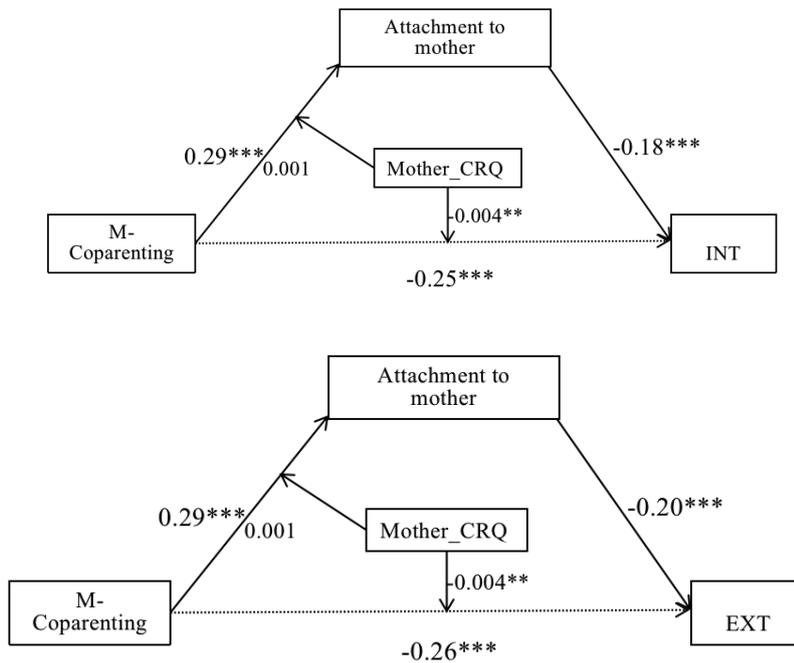
- Brislin, R. W. (1980). Translation and content analysis of oral and written materials. In H. C. Triandis & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Vol. 2, Methodology* (pp. 389-444). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Brown, G. L., Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Mangelsdorf, S. C., & Neff, C. (2010). Observed and reported supportive co-parenting as predictors of infant-mother and infant-father attachment security. *Early Child Development and Care, 1-2*, 121-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430903415015>
- Campbell, C. G. (2023). Two decades of coparenting research: A scoping review. *Marriage & Family Review, 59*(6), 379-411. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2022.2152520>
- Chen, B. B. (2019). Chinese mothers' sibling status, perceived supportive coparenting, and their children's sibling relationships. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 28*, 684-692. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-01322-3>
- Chen, L., Wu, X., & Liu, C. (2014). The relationship between marital satisfaction and father involvement: the mediation effect of coparenting. *Psychological Development and Education, 3*, 268-276. <https://doi.org/10.3724/SP.J.1041.2019.00816>
- Cole, D. A., & Preacher, K. J. (2013). Manifest variable path analysis: Potentially serious and misleading consequences due to uncorrected measurement error. *Psychological Methods, 19*, 300-315. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033805>
- Cook, E.T., Greenberg, M.T., Kusche, C. A. (1995). People in my life: attachment relationships in middle childhood. Paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Cox, M. J., & Paley, B. (1997). Families as systems. *Annual Review of Psychology, 48*(1), 243-267. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.48.1.243>
- Cummings, E. M., Goeke-Morey, M. C., & Raymond, J. A. (2004). Fathers in family context: Effects of marital quality and marital conflict. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (4th ed., pp. 196-221). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Cummings, E. M., Merrilees, C. E., & George, M. W. (2010). *Fathers, Marriages, and Families: Revisiting and Updating the Framework for Fathering in Family Context*. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (p. 154-176). John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Cunha, A. I., Alves, M. P., & Major, S. O. (2025). Linking family functioning and child's socioemotional behaviour: the role of coparenting. *Early Child Development and Care, 195*(3), 235-248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2025.2474662>
- Davies, P. T., & Cicchetti, D. (2004). Toward an integration of family systems and developmental psychopathology approaches. *Development and Psychopathology, 16*(3), 477-481. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579404004626>
- Davies, P. T., & Cummings, E. M. (1994). Marital conflict and child adjustment: an emotional security hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin, 116*(3): 387-411. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.116.3.387>
- Deal, J. E., Halverson, C. F., Jr., & Wampler, K. S. (1989). Parental agreement on child-rearing orientations: Relations to parental, marital, family, and child characteristics. *Child Development, 60*, 1025-1034. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1130776>
- Feinberg, M. E. (2003). The internal structure and ecological context of coparenting: A framework for research and intervention. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 3*, 95-131. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327922PAR0302_01
- Feinberg, M. E., Brown, L. D., & Kan, M. L. (2012). A multi-domain self-report measure of coparenting. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 12*(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295192.2012.638870>
- Gable, S., Crnic, K., & Belsky, J. (1994). Coparenting within the family system: Influences on children's development. *Family relations, 43*(4), 380-386. <https://doi.org/10.2307/585368>
- Gifford-Smith, M. (2000). People in My Life (Technical Report) [On-line]. Retrieved from <https://fasttrackproject.org/techrept/p/pml/>
- Goodman R. (1997). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: A research note. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 38*, 581-586. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0176605>
- Goodman, A, Lamping, D. L., & Ploubidis, G. B. (2010) When to use broader internalizing and externalizing subscales instead of the hypothesized five subscales on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ): Data from British parents, teachers and children. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 38*, 1179-1191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-010-9434-x>
- Gottman, J. M., Katz, L. F., & Hooven, C. (1997). *Meta-emotion: How families communicate emotionally*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York: Guilford Press. Jia,
- Holland, A. S., & McElwain, N. L. (2013). Maternal and paternal perceptions of coparenting as a link between marital quality and the parent-toddler relationship. *Journal of Family Psychology, 27*(1), 117-126. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031427>
- James, S., Nelson, D., Jorgensen-Wells, M., & Calder, D. (2022). Marital quality over the life course and child well-being from childhood to early adolescence. *Development and Psychopathology, 34*(4), 1492-1505. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579421000122>
- Katz, L. F., & Gottman, J. M. (2010). Spillover effects of marital conflict: In search of parenting and coparenting mechanisms. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 74*, 57-76. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.23219967406>

- Krishnakumar, A., & Buehler, C. (2000). Interparental conflict and parenting behaviors: A meta-analytic review. *Family Relations, 49*(1), 25-44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.17413729.2000.00025.x>
- Kwok, S. Y., Cheng, L., Chow, B. W., & Ling, C. C. (2013). The spillover effect of parenting on marital satisfaction among Chinese mothers. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24*(3), 772-783. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9888-x>
- Lau, R. S., & Cheung, G. W. (2012). Estimating and comparing specific mediation effects in complex latent variable models. *Organizational Research Methods, 15*, 3-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428110391673>
- Li, J., Guo, Y., Delvecchio, E., and Mazzeschi, C. (2020). Chinese adolescents' psychosocial adjustment: the contribution of mothers' attachment style and adolescents' attachment to mother. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 37* (8-9), 2594-2619. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520932667>
- Li, X., & Liu, Q. (2020). Parent-grandparent coparenting relationship, marital conflict, and parent-child relationship in Chinese Parent-grandparent coparenting families. *Children and Youth Services Review, 109*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2019.104733>
- Liu, J. (2011). Early health risk factors for violence: conceptualization, review of the evidence, and implications. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 16*(1), 63-73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2010.12.003>
- Liu, C., Wu, X., & Chen, L. L. (2014). Psychometric properties of the Chinese revision of coparenting scale. *Chinese Journal of Clinical Psychology, 22*(4), 727-730. <https://doi.org/10.16128/j.cnki.1005-3611.2014.04.036>
- Liu, X., Xie, J., & Song, Y. (2016). Grandparents-parents coparenting and its relationship with maternal parenting stress and children's behavioral problems. *Chinese Journal of Special Education (Monthly), 4*, 71-78. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1007-3728.2016.04.011>
- Locke, H. J., & Wallace, K. M. (1959). Short marital adjustment and prediction tests: Their reliability and validity. *Marriage and Family Living, 21*, 251-255. <https://doi.org/10.2307/348022>
- Lu, F., Zhang, C., & Liu, D. (2019). The effect of parental marital quality and coparenting on adolescent problem behavior: simultaneously spillover or lagged spillover? *Psychological Development and Education, 35*(6), 740-748. <https://doi.org/10.16187/j.cnki.issn1001-4918.2019.06.11>
- MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., & Williams, J. (2004). Confidence limits for the indirect effect: Distribution of the product and resampling methods. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 39*, 99-128. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327906mbr3901_4
- McHale, J. P. (1997). Overt and covert coparenting processes in the family. *Family Process, 36*(2), 183-201. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.1997.00183.x>
- McHale, J. P., & Cowan, P. A. (Eds.) (1996). *New directions for child development, No. 74. Understanding how family-level dynamics affect children's development: Studies of two-parent families*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- McHale, J., & Itrace, K. (2011). Coparenting in diverse family system. In J. McHale & K. M. Lindahl (Eds.), *Coparenting: A conceptual and clinical examination of family systems* (pp. 15038). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Parke, R. D., & Brott, A. A. (1999). *Throwaway dads: The myths and barriers that keep men from being the fathers they want to be*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2004). SPSS and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, and Computers, 36*, 717-731. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03206553>
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40*, 879-891. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.40.3.879>
- Stroud, C. B., Durbin, C. E., Wilson, S., & Mendelsohn, K. A. (2011). Spillover to triadic and dyadic systems in families with young children. *Journal of Family Psychology, 25*(6), 919-930. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025443>
- Ridenour, T. A., Greenberg, M. T., & Cook, E. T. (2006). Structure and validity of people in my life: a self-report measure of attachment in late childhood. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 35*(6), 1037-1053. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-006-9070-5>
- Riina, E.M., & Mchale, S.M. (2014). Bidirectional influences between dimensions of coparenting and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 43*(2), 257-269. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-013-9940-6>
- Tang, C. S.(2006). Corporal punishment and physical maltreatment against children: a community study on Chinese parents in Hong Kong. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 30*(8), 893-907. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.02.012>
- Sun, S., & Li, Y. (2016). Improving the quality of co-parenting and promoting children's overall development. *Journal of Shanghai Normal University (Philosophy & Social Sciences Edition), 45*(4), 145-152. <https://doi.org/10.12852/J.CNKI.JSHNU.2016.04.017>
- Waters, H. S., & Waters, E. (2006). The attachment working models concept: Among other things, we build script-like representations of secure base experiences. *Attachment & Human Development, 8* (3), 185-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730600856016>
- Wen, N. (2012). Characteristics, functions, and management of early childhood education. *Education Teaching Forum, 22*, 75-76.
- Wu, C. I. (2007). The interlocking trajectories between negative parenting practices and adolescent depressive symptoms. *Current Sociology, 55*(4), 579-598. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392107077640>

- Wu, Y. T., Guo, F., Wang, Y. X., Jiang, L., & Chen, Z. Y. (2017). The effect of parents' marital quality on adolescent externalizing problem: the mediation role of parenting. *Psychological Development and Education, 33*(3), 345-351. <https://doi.org/10.16187/j.cnki.issn1001-4918.2017.03.12>
- Xia, T., Liu, J., Gu, H., & Dong, S. (2016). The effects of interparental conflicts on adolescents' aggressive behavior: a moderated mediation model. *Psychological Development and Education, 32*(4), 503-512. <https://doi.org/10.16187/j.cnki.issn1001-4918.2016.04.15>
- Zhang, X., Chen, H., Zhang, G., Zhou, B., & Wu, W. (2008). A longitudinal study of parent-child relationships and problem behaviors in early childhood: transactional models. *Acta Psychologica Sinica, 40*(5), 571-582. <https://doi.org/10.3724/SP.J.1041.2008.00571>
- Zhao F, Wu H, Li Y, Zhang H, & Hou J. (2022). The association between coparenting behavior and internalizing/externalizing problems of children and adolescents: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(16), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191610346>
- Zhou, L., Li, X., Liu, T., & Chen, Y. (2017). Influence of marital satisfaction on child psychological adaptability: multiple mediation effects of adult attachment, child-parent attachment, parents' emotional expressiveness. *Studies of Psychology and Behavior, 15*(5), 714-720. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1672-0628.2017.05.020>
- Zou, S., Wu, X., Huang, B., & Liu, C. (2019). Maternal gatekeeping behavior, mother involvement and mother-adolescent attachment, and differences in their developmental stages. *Acta Psychologica Sinica, 51*(7), 816-828. <https://doi.org/10.3724/SP.J.1041.2019.00816>
- Zou, S., Wu, X., & Li, X. (2020). Coparenting behavior, parent-adolescent attachment, and peer attachment: an examination of gender difference. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 49*(1), 178-191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01068-1>

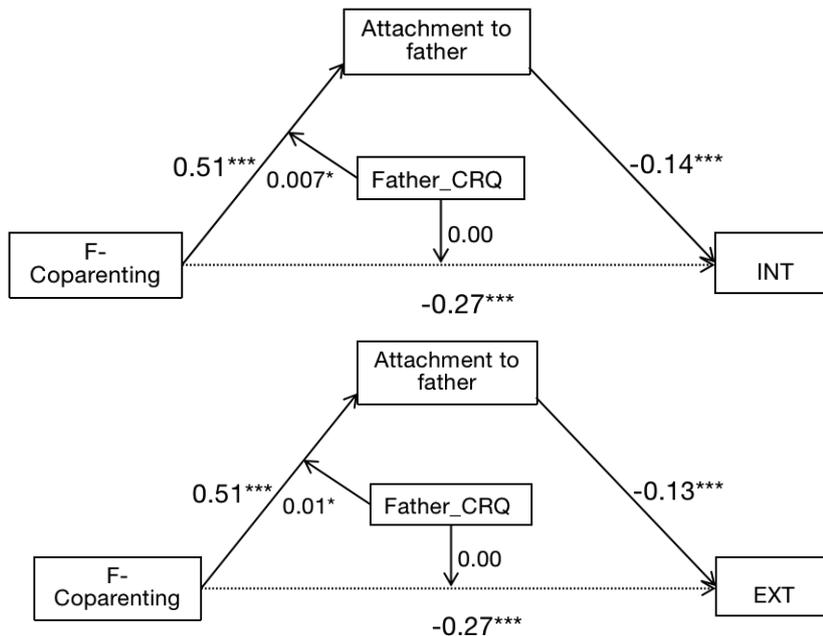
Supplemental Materials

Figure S1 Mediating of the Indirect Effect and Moderation effect of Marital Quality (Mother; N = 912)



Note. *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$ INT = Internalizing problem behavior. EXT = Externalizing problem behavior. M-Coparenting = Mother’s perception of coparenting with father. Mother_CRQ = Mother’s perception of couple relationship quality.

Figure S2 Mediating of the Indirect Effect and Moderation Effect (Father; N= 786)



Note. *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$ INT = Internalizing problem behavior. EXT = Externalizing problem behavior. F-Coparenting = Father’s perception of coparenting with mother. Father_CRQ = Mother’s perception of couple relationship quality.