Relation between emotional intelligence and quality of attachment in high school administrators

Ali Akbar Haddadi Koohsar*, Bagher Ghobary Bonab*

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and quality of attachment in high school administrators. In this study 88 high school administrators (43 men and 45 women) were selected by means of voluntarily sampling procedure from Tabriz City in Iran. These high school administrators completed measures of Trait Meta-Mood Scale (Salovey et al., 1995), and Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996). Analysis of data with utilization of multiple regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence of high school administrators can be predicted from the magnitude of their quality of attachment. Moreover, data revealed that high school administrators with anxious attachment were lower in emotional intelligence than individuals with a secure attachment style. Individuals who could depend attachment (dependability of others) on their couples and find them available were higher in emotional intelligence.

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1. Introduction

Bowlby (1980) believed that emotional regulation ability is related to individuals’ attachment style and emotional distresses are shaped and maintained in consistent with individual’s attachment styles (Mikulincer et al., 1998). Studies show that attachment orientation of individuals is associated with their emotional intelligence (e.g., Bringen & Robinson, 1991; Magi, Distel & Liker, 1995). Magi et al., found that secure individuals were relatively accurate in decoding facial expressions of negative emotions, while avoidant individuals were lower in emotion decoding accuracy. Moreover, they found that anxious/ambivalent individuals were inaccurate in decoding anger, showing the relation of emotional decoding and attachment orientation.

Relation between attachment quality and emotion perception has been demonstrated by Feeney, Noller & Callan (1999). These investigators demonstrated that anxious attachment was negatively related to accuracy in decoding partner's positive non verbal behaviors as measured by a naturalistic test of non verbal accuracy. Kafetsios (2000) employed both laboratory and naturalistic tasks of emotion decoding accuracy of partner’s facial expression. He

* Ali Akbar Haddadi Koohsar. Tel.: +98-912-695-6577; fax: +98-21-882-54734
E-mail address: yamola280@yahoo.com (A.A Haddadi Koohsar), bghobari@ut.ac.ir (B.Ghobary Bonab).
found a positive association between secure attachment and emotion decoding accuracy of partner’s facial expressions.

In addition to emotion perception, attachment orientations are related to differences in emotion regulations at different life-stages (Kobak & Scerey, 1988; Mikulincer & Florian, 2001). Insecure adolescents are less ego-resilient, more anxious, and hostile than their secure friends when they grow-up as adults. They experience less positive and more negative emotions their relationship-with others.

Insecure partners not only tend to experience more negative emotions but also suppress their emotions more than secure partners (Feeney, 1995). Suppressing emotion make them more vulnerable to psychological distresses, and lead them to more inhibition of emotion rather than appreciation, and management of their emotions. Studies also suggest that avoidance individuals pay less attention to affect and are less attentive to emotional events (Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995; Fraley, Garner & Shaver, 2000) However, anxious individuals pay particular attention to negative emotions (Collins, 1996; Fraley & Shaver, 1997).

Although avoidant people activities deny felling distress, they show more physiological symptoms in stressful situation (Dozier, Kobak, 1992). Kafetsios (2004) investigated the relation between emotional intelligence abilities, and individual attachment orientation. He used MSCEIT (Mayer et al., 2002) and concluded that all subscale of emotional intelligence test was correlated with a secure attachment. In another study Kafetsios (2002) found that with controlling gender, and age of participant attachment quality was a reliable predictor a emotional intelligence.

Kafetsios & Yeadou (2003) and Fullam (2002) discovered that individuals with a secure attachment were more emotionally intelligent in compare with avoidant and anxious attachment. Marylene and associates (2008) discovered that attachment orientation and components of emotional intelligence were associated with each other. Moreover, they reported that a secure attachment was a reliable predictor of all components of emotional intelligence (Hamarta et al., 2009).

There are some evidence that some demographic data can have impact on individual's emotional perception (e.g., Mayer & Geher, 1996; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Studies also found that gender differences can influence individual’s performance in all domains of emotional intelligence as measured by MSCEIT (Mayer et al., 2002)

Although research finding show that quality of attachment is related to individual’s emotional intelligence, most of these investigations have been conducted in the United States and European countries. Due to child raring style, in Islamic countries, individuals in Islamic countries may show different emotion regulation and attachment orientation. These countries, Iran also is one of Islamic countries predominantly with Shia Muslim.

Since people in Iran are different from Americans and European countries in terms of their cultural and religious backgrounds, investigating the relation of these constructs in individuals who live in Iran is necessary. This study fills the existing gap in the area.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Population in the current study was consisted of high school administrators in Tabriz City in Iran. A voluntarily sampling procedure was utilized in this study and 88 high school administrators between 24-50 years were selected as a sample. In this study 53% of the participants were female, and 47% of them were male, 15% were single, 100% were Shia Muslim, in Tabriz City, and 26% were from other major cities. After preparation of assessment devices, questionnaires were administered on high school administrators by a trained research assistant. Permission of instructors was sought to distribute questionnaires at the high school. All instructors that we contacted had a good cooperation. In general 88 individuals completed the questionnaires.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS; Salovey et al., 1995).

We used the Farsi version of the TMMS (Haddadi Koohsar, 2010). This instrument is made up of 30 items and makes an index of the levels of perceived EI. Respondents are asked to rate their degree of agreement on each of the
items on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale includes there sub factors: Attention to one’s feelings, Clearness of emotions clarity, and mood repair attention to fallings, measured by first 13 items, shows the degree to which people behavior they pay attention to their feeling (i.e., “I think about my mood constantly”)11 items in this measure assesses to the clarity of emotion (i.e., “I frequently make mistakes about my feelings”), and mood repair measured by the remaining 6 items which refers to the capacity of individuals to control negative emotions (i.e., “Although, I sometimes feel sad, I usually have an optimistic outlook”) internal consistency with values of 86, 88 and 82 was estimated for attention, clarity, and repair respectively (Salovey et al., 1995). In the present study, we obtained Cronbach alphas values for each of the TMMS dimensions and total of .62, .49, .14 and .70 for attention, clarity, repair, and full scale respectively.

2.2.2 Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS; Collins, 1996).

We used the Farsi version of the RAAS (Haddadi Koohsar, 2010). his scale is consisted of 18 items and three subscales 1) Discomfort with dependency, higher scores reflect greater discomfort depending on others. 2) the discomfort with closeness scale, higher scores reflect greater discomfort with closeness and intimacy, and, 3) the anxious score, higher scores reflect stronger fear of being rejected or unloved. Internal consistency for all subscales has been calculated in a high level: alpha coefficients for discomfort with closeness was 0.82, for discomfort with dependency was estimated 0.80, and for the anxious subscale was 0.83 (Collins, 1996). In the current investigation alpha coefficient for the close, depend, and anxious subscales was 0.48, 0.55, and 0.79 respectively.

3. Results

The results have been presented in the following tables:

Table 1. Matrix of correlation between emotional intelligence and attachment styles in high school administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.TMMS-Attention</td>
<td>41.03</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.TMMS-Clarity</td>
<td>34.25</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.TMMS-Mood Repair</td>
<td>19.69</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.RAAS-Close Attachment</td>
<td>20.48</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.RAAS-Depend Attachment</td>
<td>22.41</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>-0.24*</td>
<td>-0.19*</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.27*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.RAAS-Anxious Attachment</td>
<td>19.66</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.76**</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
<td>0.45**</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>-0.25*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** P < 0.01  * P < 0.05

Table 1 shows that depend and anxious attachment was associated with emotional intelligence dimensions (attention, clarity and mood repair). Individuals who show a depend attachment were higher in emotional intelligence dimensions (attention and mood repair).

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis method to predict emotional intelligence from student's attachment styles in high school administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Rdj-R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SEB</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TMMS-Attention</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>104.96</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.24**</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMMS-Clarity</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>23.72</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMMS-Mood Repair</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>20.82</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** P < 0.01  * P < 0.05

As indicated in table 2 only anxious attachment were significant predictors of attention to feelings (R²= 57%), clarity (R²= 22%), and mood repair (R²= 20%). In other words attention to feelings, clarity and mood repair of high school administrators with anxious attachment were higher than other administrators. Moreover, attention to feelings, clarity and mood repair of high school administrators with anxious attachment were lower than other high school administrators. Inspecting beta analysis shows that anxious attachment can positively predicts magnitude of attention to feelings, clarity and mood repair of administrators, while anxious attachment were negatively associated with attention to feelings, clarity and mood repair.
4. Discussion

In the current study relation between emotional intelligence and attachment styles in high school administrators has been investigated. Results of multiple regression analysis indicated that emotional intelligence in high school administrators can be predicted by their attachment styles. Individuals, who hold a close attachment style, were higher in emotional intelligence in compare to others, and individuals who had a anxious attachment style, were lower in emotional intelligence. The results of the current study were consistent with some other investigation (e.g., Biringen & Robinson, 1991; Magi, Distel, & Liker, 1995; Kafetsios, 2004, 2002; Mayer et al., 2002; Kafetsios and Yeadou, 2003; Marylene et al. 2008; Hamarta et al., 2009).

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Kafetsios & Yeadou (2003) and Fullam (2002) discovered that individuals with a secure attachment were more emotionally intelligent in compare with avoidant and anxious individuals. These findings are consistent with result of the current study.

Since the current study was an expost facto research developing a causal relation between emotional intelligence and attachment styles, investigators in the future can design an experimental design in which environmental prompting instigate the attachment styles in individuals, and study their consequence in development or escalation of emotional intelligence.

Current study has implications for prevention, and interventions of emotional problems in high school administrators. Improvement of individuals’ attachment style yields to enhancement in their emotional intelligence.

References


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