Relation between quality of attachment and anxiety in delinquent adolescents

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Abstract

The aim of the current study was to investigate relationship between quality of attachment and anxiety in delinquent adolescents. To fulfil the stated goal 75 delinquent adolescents from Remdial and Training Institute of delinquent adolescents in Iran were selected by means of accessible sampling procedure. The following scale were administered on them: Revised Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996), and Symptom Checklist90-R (Derogatis, 1973). Analysis of data with utilization of multiple regression analyses revealed that anxiety of delinquent adolescents can be predicted from the magnitude of their quality of attachment. Moreover, data revealed that delinquent adolescents with insecure attachment (anxious) were higher in anxiety. Theroretical implications and practical applications of the findings in have been discussed in the original article.

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1. Introduction

Attachment security is an important factor in emotional regulation and provision of mental health (Bowlby, 1982). Bowlby (1973, 1980) emphasized that loosing attachment figure during the childhood or adolescence increases the chance of depression in adulthood. In Psychological research, relation between quality of attachment and mental health has been investigated.

Lee and Hakins (2009) studied the relation between quality of attachment with depression and anxiety. They concluded that anxious an avoidant attachment significantly predicted depression and anxiety in individuals.

Research studies show that quality of attachment is an important factor in improving the tolerance of individuals, coping of people with life hassles, and sustaining mental health (Liu et al., 2009). Duggal and associates (2001) found that insecure attachment during the childhood is strong predictor of adulthood depression. The relationship between insecure attachment and mental health in problems including depression has been replicated in other studies (e.g., Takeuchi et al., 2003; Cole-Detke, & Koback, 1996; Rosenstien & Horowitz, 1996).

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Harris, Brown, and Bifulco concluded that death of parents or extended separation from one or two parents increase the probability of being depressed during the adulthood. Individuals with depressive moods tend to report their own parents unavailable, rejecting, and cold (Cassidy, 1995; Ens, Cox & Clara, 2003).

Marchand-Reiley (2009) investigated the relation between quality of attachment, conflicts with spouse, and depression in college students. Performing regression analysis, she found that insecure attachment and conflicting behavior both independently predicted depressive moods in spouses. Moreover in clinical samples the relation between depressive moods and insecure attachment were associated (Bifulco et al., 2004).

Relationships between insecure attachment and depression have been studies in patient with a chronic pains (Cicchanowski et al., 2004), diabetic patients (Cicchanowski et al., 2001). HIV patients (Cicchanowski et al., 2004) and out patient client with eating disorders addicted patients, and patient with social anxiety (Eng et al., 2001) In all these patient significant relations were found between attachment insecurity and depression.

In a Meta analysis of literature Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) found more than 100 studies that indicated negative association between a secure attachment with anxiety and depression.

Although research findings show that quality of attachment is related to individuals personal characteristics and their mental health status, most of these investigations have been conducted in the United States and European countries. 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 Remedial and Training Institute of delinquent adolescents in Iran. An accessible sampling procedure was utilized in this study and 75 delinquent adolescents between 13-25 years were selected as a sample. In this study 100% of the participants were male, single, Shia Muslim, in Tehran (the capital city). After preparation of assessment devices, questionnaires were administered on delinquent adolescents by a trained research assistant. Permission of instructors was sought to distribute questionnaires at the Remedial and Training Institute of delinquents. All instructors that we contacted had a good cooperation. In general 75 individuals completed the questionnaires.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Anxiety Scale of Symptom Checklist90-R (SCL90-R, Derogatis et al., 1973)

This symptom checklist is consisted of 90 items in which each item requires responding in degree of symptom intensity (from 1-5) in which he/she has experienced during the past week. This scale consisted of nine subscale (dimensions) including somatization, obsessive-compulsive disorders, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. In order to calculate the internal consistency of the scale Cronbach alpha coefficient has been used, and the results indicated that internal consistency for all subscales were at a satisfactory level. The maximum alpha coefficient was 0.90 for depression, and the minimum value was for psychoticism \(\alpha = 0.77\). Stability coefficient that was computed for test-retest reliability in the interval of one week was between 0.87 and 0.90. In the current investigation alpha coefficient for the anxiety scale was 0.90.

2.2.2. Revised Attachment Scale (RAS; Collins, 1996).

We used the Farsi version of the RAS (Haddadi Kooahs, 2010). This 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 Farsi version 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 attachment styles and anxiety in delinquent adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SCL90-R-Anxiety</td>
<td>15.60</td>
<td>9.28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RAS-Close Attachment</td>
<td>17.75</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. RAS-Depend Attachment</td>
<td>17.82</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. RAS-Anxious Attachment</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>-0.22*</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** P < 0.01   * P < 0.05

Table 1 Shows that anxious Attachment is associated with anxiety delinquent adolescents. Individuals who show a depend Attachment believe on the dependability of their caregivers were lower in anxiety and had a higher health status.

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis method to predict anxiety from student's attachment styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SEB</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SCL-90R-Anxiety | Stepwise Regression | 0.66 | 0.44 | 41.67 | 0.001 | 1.16** | 0.18 | 0.66 | **P < 0.01   * P < 0.05

As indicated in table 2 only anxious attachment is significant predictors of anxiety (R² = 44%). In other words anxiety of delinquent adolescents with anxious attachment was higher than other delinquent adolescents. Moreover, anxiety of delinquent adolescents with depend attachment were lower than other delinquent adolescents. Inspecting beta analysis shows that anxious attachment can positively predicts magnitude of anxiety in delinquent adolescents, while depend attachment believe on the dependability of their caregivers were negatively associated with anxiety.

4. Discussion

In the current study relation between attachment styles and anxiety in delinquent adolescents has been investigated. Results of multiple regression analysis indicated that anxiety in delinquent adolescents can be predicted by their attachment styles. Individuals, who hold a secure attachment style, are lower in anxiety in compare to others, and individuals who had a insecure attachment style, were higher in anxiety. The results of the current study are consistent with some other investigations (e.g., Lee and Hakins, 2009; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007; Takeuchi, et al., 2003; Cole-Detke & Koback, 1996; Rosenstien & Horowitz, 1996; Ciechanowski et al., 2004).

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These findings are consistent with result of the current study. Since the current study was an expost facto research developing a causal relation between attachment styles and psychological distress was not possible. 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 psychological distress.

Review Current study has implications for prevention, and interventions of psychological problems in individuals. Improvement of individuals' attachment style yields to enhancement in their health status.

References


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