Investigation of Marital adjustment in people with secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful attachment styles

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate relationship between marital adjustment and attachment styles. The research sample consisted of 700 people (350 man – 350 women) that have 20 to 40 Years old from Ardebil city. Bartholomew & Horowitz attachment style questionnaire) and Spaniers Marital adjustment questionnaire (DAS) have been used to collecting of data. Results showed that Levels of Marital adjustment is different among divers attachment styles, levels of marital adjustment of people with Fearful attachment style is the most in comparison with other groups and Dismissing attachment style is Less than others, and levels of marital adjustment of people with secure and preoccupied Attachment styles is between tow this groups. These results can used in educating and informing marital, therefore, it can reduce marital problems and divorce stem from marital maladjustment.

Keywords: attachment style; marital adjustment; marital satisfaction.

1. Introduction

The family is one of main elements of society. Achieving a safe society needs to have safe families and the intact family can be achieved provided that its members enjoy mental health and have desired relation with each other, so if family members and their relationships are made sound, it will have positive effects on society.

The most important issue in marriage and family-starting is the calmness which is obtained by individuals. The life desirability, life satisfaction, and the quality and degree of marital adjustment are under the influence of different factors which their evaluation is a part of consultation literature of marriage and family.

Balby’s predictions about long-term consequences of initial attachment were reflected not only in personal reports of adults, but also in their social behaviors and the reports of their friends. Coevals describe the youth, who remember the history of secure attachment, as deserved, kind, cheerful and friendlier people in comparison with their insecure coevals. The reason is that secure adults choose the spouses who have had the history of...
secure attachment so that their solutions for disagreements are more constructive and their relationships and matrimonial life are more satisfied and permanent (Feeney, 1995; Hill, Young, & Nord, 2001). The attachment is an emotional bond between the mother and her growing child which is established at the birth moment but its effect isn’t limited to the childhood and The attachment styles have been classified into four categories on the basis of the studies done by Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991). According to these researchers, these four styles can be placed in defined dimensions through people representation of their own relationships and others. The secure individuals are exclusively described as people with positive representation about themselves (a deserved person) and positive representation about others (the kind people) and the Pre-occupied people are described as people with negative representation about themselves and positive representation about others. Also people who have Dismissing attachment style are described as individuals with positive representation about themselves and negative representation about others and people possessing Fearful attachment style are described as people with negative representation about both themselves and others. So each attachment style is created by unique combination of positive and negative models of themselves and others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

The research indicates that there are clear sex differences in marital adjustment. The men report more satisfaction from marital life than women do (Levinson, Carstensen, & Gotman, 2000).

Vivona, (2000) investigated the quality of attachment relationships and the youth adjustment and observed that the young people with secure attachment have reported more depression and anxiety in comparison with the youth who had secure attachment.

A research has been done by Feeney (1999) to investigate how the couples match are matched considering the attachment style and marital adjustment. The results have indicated that the secure couple had higher marital adjustment in comparison with two insecure groups. But there was no significant difference between different groups with secure attachment. Also Heene, Buysse, & Von oset (2005) concluded that there is a negative relation between secure style and depression and there is a positive relationship between secure attachment style and marital adjustment. On the other hand, insecure attachment style had a significant negative relationship with marital adjustment and a positive relationship with depression. simon (2002) has shown that attachment styles can be predictors of marital adjustment (Marial, 2008). Considering all of these, the current study intends to examine marital adjustment in different attachment styles.

2. Method

2.1. Sample

This study was conducted in Ardabil city in 2009. The men and women (n=700) married for 2 to 10 years who had already been selected through available sampling method participated in the study. They ranged in age from 20 to 40. In this research, two measurements were used to collect the data.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments

Attachment Styles Scale: The 16-item PAM was based on existing measures of attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan et al., 1998). Items referred to thoughts, feelings and behaviors in close interpersonal relationships, but did not refer specifically to romantic relationships. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each item was characteristic of them using a four-point scale ranging from ‘not at all’ to ‘very much’. Psychometric properties of this scale have been approved in past researches (eg., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan, et al., 1998).

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS): This Scale is a 32-itemscale which was developed for measuring the characteristics of dual relationships parallel to the perceptions of the couples. It was developed by Spanier (1976). The validity and reliability study of this scale was carried out by Fisilog’lu and Demir (2000) in Turkey. The scale has sub-dimensions such as marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, expression of the emotions and the couple’s fidelity. The total score is the addition of all items and ranges between 0 and 151. The high total adjustment score indicates better relationship or better marital adjustment of the individual. The reliability of this scale (as utilized in this study) was 0.90 (Aydin Avci, & et al., 2009).
2.3 Data analysis

The obtained data were evaluated by using SPSS 15.00 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Mean and standard deviation were used as descriptive analysis. ANOVA and LSD test was used to comparing of attachment styles groups in marital adjustment.

3. Results

Descriptive indexes of research variables are presented in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment styles</th>
<th>Secure</th>
<th>Preoccupied</th>
<th>Dismissing</th>
<th>Fearful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital adjustment</td>
<td>12/67±110/61</td>
<td>5/90± 107/32</td>
<td>10/18 ± 102/16</td>
<td>11/40± 113/39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of table 2 shows that there is significant difference among four groups of attachment styles (secure, Preoccupied, Dismissing, Fearful) in marital adjustment (F=26/366,P<0/001), marital satisfaction (F=57/633,P<0/001), and among four groups of attachment styles in dyadic cohesion (F=12/597,P<0/001), dyadic consensus (F=12/194,P<0/001), expression love (F=30/643,P<0/001).

LSD test showed that the marital adjustment of people with Fearful attachment style is the most in comparison with other groups and the marital adjustment of people with dismissing attachment style is the least. Although the marital adjustment of people with secure and preoccupied attachment style is within these two above mentioned groups.

4. Conclusion

This research investigated marital adjustment in different attachment styles among 700 people. The research results indicated that individuals with secure, Preoccupied, Dismissing, Fearful have different marital adjustment. The marital adjustment of people with Fearful attachment style is the most in comparison with other groups and the marital adjustment of people with dismissing attachment style is the least. Although the marital adjustment of people with secure and preoccupied attachment style is within these two above mentioned groups. The findings of this research are in consistent with other studies like (Davila, Bradbury & Funcham, 1998; Jacob, 1999; Fincham, & Bradbury, 1998 ). To best of our knowledge, there was no research to indicate that there is no difference between different attachment styles considering marital adjustment. It seems that the most adjustment of the persons with Pre-occupied attachment style is resulted from incorrect measurement of Spanier’s test, (1976). Being rejected by their spouses that are they are afraid of being rejected because of the trivial adjustment, so they unwillingly accept to be more compatible in order to get rid of rejection anxiety. Also, the reason of being the least compatible in people with Dismissing attachment style is that...
independency is the most important thing for this group and they’re not at ease to make friendly relation and they keep distance with others (spouse) because they believe that the spouse can’t be a supporting one and they limit expressing their inner feelings so that these factors lead to reduction in marital adjustment. This group dismiss attachment for everything and pretend to have low marital adjustment.

In consultations before marriage, it is possible to predict degree of marital satisfaction through determining attachment styles and if need be, necessary instructions can be offered to have satisfaction and compatibility in matrimonial life.

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