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The Relationship between parenting styles and Attachment Styles in men and women with infidelity

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Abstract

Marital infidelity is one of the major reasons of divorce and ruining the marital life. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship of parenting styles and attachment styles in those who had infidelities in their marital life. 90 participants (48 women and 42 men) who came to the welfare centres in Tehran province from Oct. 2009 to Oct. 2010 for infidelity completed the questionnaires. The instruments of current study were parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Adult Attachment style Questionnaire (AAQ), which were completed by them. The result of analyzing the data showed that the attachment style of those who had infidelity in their marital life were avoiding attachment style also the result of Pearson correlation test demonstrated that there was a positive significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and avoidant attachment style.

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Keywords: infidelity; parenting styles; attachment styles.

1. Introduction

In the United States, majority of the people expect to be monogamous in their marital life (Wiederman & Allgeier, 1996) and people greatly disagree with extra marital sexual relationships (Johnson et al., 2002) couple therapists consequently encounter with the problem of infidelity in their clinical works; Infidelity can be a confusing and heart breaking for all those involved in this problem including therapists who have their own fears and personal values about infidelity (Shackelford et al., 2008).

Furthermore infidelity is one of the major causes of divorce and the collapse of marital life (Shackelford et al., 2008, Amato & Previti, 2003). Many specialists posit that insecure attachment style can be mentioned for explaining infidelity (Jeanfreau, 2009) and those with secure attachment style are more likely to be against infidelity and less attracted to it. The reason may be that these people feel more comfortable in their marital relationships that can be an appropriate barrier against the start of sexual extra marital relationships (Jeanfreau, 2009). On the other hand, some researches indicate that those with insecure attachment style are more likely to end up with divorce and have short time relationships (Campbell, 2009).

Attachment style is an almost consistent affective and emotional connection that is formed between the child and mother or the person responsible for caring the child consistently (Paplia, 2002). Those people with positive feeling

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toward themselves (low anxiety) and have positive understanding of others (low avoidance) are secure in their relationships and have high self-confidence in society and are more successful in their life (Cann, A; Norman, Welbourne, and Calhoun, 2008). These adults are more likely to have positive look at their spouse and themselves. These people are comfortable when they belong or are independent (Bogaerts, Dallder, Knap, Kunst, & Buschman, 2008). The adults with avoiding attachment styles see themselves as self-sufficient. Also they ignore their vulnerability and claim that they don't need close relationships and are likely to avoid intimacy (Wearden et al, 2008); it has been found that these people are indecisive in their romantic relationships and consequently have the lowest degree of marital commitment (Morgan, Shaver, 1990). Anxious attachment reflects the personal level of person's comfort in search of intimacy with other people based upon a personal value (Cann et al, 2008). These adults tend to have a less positive image of themselves. They often are doubtful about themselves as a spouse and blame themselves for not being responsive enough (Bogaerts et al, 2008).

Although all people form a kind of attachment style, it is believed that personal differences in attachment styles are determined directly by caring behaviors of figures of attachment. And not by the child's own factors (Clements, Barnett, 2004). Poorhussein (2000) has stated that the style of the person's attachment style and whether it is secure or insecure is related to some factors that one of them is parenting style. Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) emphasized on being sensitive and respondent in parenting style in forming the normal adoptive in childhood and following studies (Karavasilis, L. ; Doyle, A. B. and Markiewicz, D., 2003) indicated that attachment consequently has important consequences in security and psychological adaptation in time of adolescent and adulthood (Steiger, 2008).

Three decade of research has proved that being caring and responsive of the figure of first attachment who is often mother is a base in determining the child's secure attachment style in his or her first years of life (Karavasilis et al, 2003). It has been found that parenting styles with high quality predicts secure attachment styles in children with different backgrounds and even for those children with chronic medical status (Clements and Barnett, 2004). Many studies have shown a theoretical relationship between parent's caring styles and the attachment styles of children (Wearden et al, 2008). The mothers of 1 years old children with secure attachment styles, it was revealed that were kinder more sensitive, more responsive and more affectionate (Karavasilis et al, 2003) so the self-reported attachment style in adulthood is related to the parent's caring (Wearden et al., 2008).

Darling & Steinberg (1993) has defined the parenting style as a of attitudes and behaviors which makes a widespread emotional atmosphere that determines the nature child and parent interaction. Baumrind has proposed three kind of parenting style models: Authoritative, authoritarian, and Permissive (Hillstrom, 2009). Parents with authoritative parenting styles are described with following characteristics: controlling, demandingness, warmth, rationality and receptiveness (Babiarz, 2009). These parents support their children with affection and close relationships and their expectations is in congruency with their children's abilities (Önder, Gülay, 2009). Authoritarian parents emphasize on following and controlling while preventing from verbal exchange an Autonomous and independence (Goplan, 2009). Permissive parents are warm and receptive to their children's behavior and use the minimum of punishment (Hillstrom, 2009). These parents are patient, receptive and warm but have no or a few expect of self-regulation or behavior (Goplan, 2009).

The projects done by Karavasilis, Doyle, and Markiewicz, 2003, Fang, 2004 Heer, 2008 Sumer, & Guengoer, 1999 indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between authoritative parenting style and secure attachment style. The projects done by Fricker, 2006 and Cohen, Alexis, 2005 indicated that people with secure attachment style in comparison with those with insecure attachment styles, has less infidelity. As there was no study considering the relationship between the person's attachment style and his representative parenting style in the community of people with infidelity, and the importance of infidelity in healthy marital life, this study is going to investigate the relationship between the representative parenting style and attachment styles in people with marital infidelity.

The hypotheses of present project are:

There is a relationship between the attachment style and parenting style of women with infidelity.

There is a relationship between the attachment style and parenting style of men with infidelity.

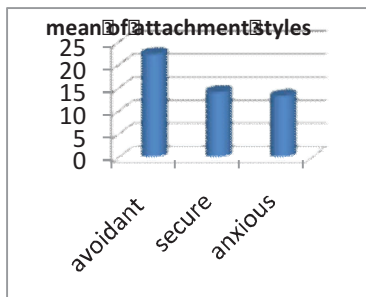
Methods

The sample consisted of (42 men, 48 women) in Tehran city (in Iran) that came to the welfare counselling centres for the problem of infidelity. The sample was chosen by asking the manager of the welfare centre to ask them to fill the questionnaire any of them who accepted were asked to fill and data were collected. The instrument used were: PAQ

Parenting Authoritative Questionnaire is a 30 items questionnaire which assesses the understanding of the dolescents and adults from their parents parenting styles (1991).theoretically this questionnaire is based upon the Baumrind’s parenting style typology. There is an especial questionnaire. And for each there are 3 styles of parenting styles: Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive. Each of these styles has 10 questions, and the maximum score of each is 50. It is a 5 Likert questionnaire. And AAQ (Adult Attachment styles Questionnaire) made by Hazan and Shavar .The Iranian version of this questionnaire was used which was normed on the students of Tehran university. This questionnaire has 15 questions and 3 styles of attachment (Avoidant, Secure, anxious) is determined by it .

The Result

Table 1. Mean and std. deviation



variable	mean	SD
avoidant	22.66	7.60
secure	14.47	2.44
anxious	13.65	2.99

The first Question of this study was: people with infidelity tend more to which attachment styles? T answer this question first The Mean and standard Deviation of different attachment styles were obtained which is shown in Table 1. The results indicated that the Mean of avoidant attachment style is higher than the Mean of Secure and anxious attachment style. Multi variable variance analysis of repeated measure was used to determine whether there was a significant difference among the Mean of the attachment styles. Analysis indicated that there was significant differences among the 3 attachment styles($F(2,88)=53.85$, $sig= <.01$).The Result of F indicated that there was a significant differences between at least 2 attachment styles. To follow up the difference correlated T-Test was used. The result of T-test indicated that there is a significant difference between the mean of avoidant attachment style and secure attachment style and Avoidant attachment style and anxious attachment style. Consequently as the mean of the scores of people in avoidant attachment style was higher than secure and anxious attachment style had significant differences and the result of t-test also revealed that the difference is significant, this can be concluded that those people with infidelity are more likely to have avoidant attachment style.

Table 2. Correlation coefficients of the variable used in the study

Variable	sex: female	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 authoritarian p of father		-								
2 permissive p of father		.16	-							
3 authoritative p of father		-.26	.23	-						
4 authoritarian p of mother		.99**	.16	-.27	-					
5 permissive p of mother		-.07	-.24	.03	-.06	-				
6 authoritative p of mother		.05	.18	-.00	.05	-.21	-			
7 avoidant attachment		.39**	.10	.05	.39**	.00	-.04	-		
8 secure attachment		-.06	-.04	-.15	-.06	-.02	.07	-.17	-	
9 anxious attachment		.11	-.11	-.03	.10	-.05	.12	-.05	.23	-
Variable	sex :male									
1 authoritarian p of father		-								
2 permissive p of father		.18	-							
3 authoritative p of father		-.28	.08	-						
4 authoritarian p of mother		.99**	.19	-.29	-					
5 permissive p of mother		-.11	-.22	.13	-.09	-				
6 authoritative p of mother		.21	.27	-.13	.21	-.07	-			
7 avoidant attachment		.31*	-.04	-.20	.31*	.05	.01	-		
8 secure attachment		-.06	-.22	-.11	-.06	.11	-.15	-.14	-	
9 anxious attachment		.16	-.04	.04	.15	-.10	.18	.05	.38*	-

Note: **:p<.01 * : p<.05 N:90 N, Femel:48 N: male:42

Question 2.is there any relationship between parenting style and attachment style in people with infidelity?

To answer this question Correlation test was used. The results are shown in table 2. the results indicated that there was a positive significant correlation between representative parenting style of fathers and mothers with attachment style of both women ($P < .01$) and men ($P < .05$) with infidelity. It means that the more the understanding of people from their authoritarian parenting style is higher the more avoidant attachment style is shown. And there was no significant difference between men and women.

Discussion

The result of present study indicated that the mean of avoidant attachment style was much higher than secure and anxious attachment style. This result was in the same line as the study of Hazen, Zeifman, & Middleton, (1994) and the study of Allen & Baucom (2004) and Amidon, (2008) that showed that people avoidant attachment style more get involve with marital infidelity. the result also was in line with the study of Pistol and lorange (1999) that considered the attachment styles and commitment in people and indicated that people with anxious and secure attachment style were more loyal in comparison with those with avoidant attachment style. people with avoidant attachment style have problem in trusting and relying on other people, they can't get close to other people easily Bogaert & Sadava, (2002). These people consider the emotional distance and are doubtful in investment in their romantic relationships (Thomas, 2008). The experiences of the people with avoidant attachment styles includes people whose needs has not been satisfied with important people of their life so it is more possible that these people seek support from people who are less intimate and committed in their relationships (Jeanfreau, 2009) and use extra marital relationship as a way to get away from the threat of getting close and intimacy.

The other finding of this study was that between the Authoritative parenting style of both mother and father and attachment style of both men and women there was a significant positive relationship. This result was also in line with the study of Heer (2008) which showed that the father's Authoritative parenting style significantly predict the avoidant attachment style positively in students. Also this result was in line with the study of Fang (2004) that was on a sample in china and it's result indicated that authoritative parenting style had a positive significant relationship with insecure attachment style. Authoritative parents strongly resist against any attempt of their children to challenge their power (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Authoritative parents not like authoritarian parents are more impulsive, inflexible, dominant and are ignorant to the needs of their children. (momeni and amiri, 2008). these parents are rejecting and cold and are low in being respondent and these characteristics are in line with the result of stranger situation which showed that the mothers of avoidant children have high levels of aggression and low levels of emotional expression (Byers, 2009). people with avoidant attachment styles according to their childhood experiences in their internal working models get to this result that others won't be respondent and they themselves should try to satisfy their own needs and as an adult escape from intimate and close relationship and consequently more get involved in extra marital relationships in order to get away from threatening intimate relationships.

It is suggested that other studies examine the primitive maladaptive schemas, religiosity, and sexual satisfaction so that this topic can get clearer. Also the same study be done on committed people so that the results can be compared.

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