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INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP OF ATTACHMENT STYLES AND TENSION CONFRONTATION STRATEGY WITH THE ADOLESCENTS' SELF-ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present research was to investigate the relationship of attachment style and tension confrontation style with the adolescents' self – esteem. The design of the research was correlation type and the society of the research included the high school girl students of Ilam who were studying in the academic year of 2013-2014. 380 students were selected through multi – stage cluster random sampling. The instruments for data collection were the Adults' attachment style inventory, the scale of tension confrontation, and the Cooper – Smith self – esteem questionnaire. To analyze the data of the research the statistical indices and methods including mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient, and regression analysis were used. The results showed that the secure attachment style had a positive relationship with self – esteem. The same relationship is negative for stressful/ambivalent and avoiding styles increase, the self – esteem decreases. Moreover, problem – centered confrontation strategies have a positive relationship and emotion – centered and avoiding – centered strategies have a negative relationship with self – esteem, that is to say, when problem – centered strategy increases, self – esteem decreases.

Keywords: *Attachment Styles, Confrontation Styles, Self – Esteem, Adolescents*

INTRODUCTION

The adolescents period is one of the most sensitive and critical periods of the human's life. The adolescent has passed through the childhood and has entered a new phase. Entering into this phase puts a great deal of problems in front of the individuals (Ahmadi, 2008).

Self – esteem is a fundamental need which has an important role in life processes, because it helps one's growth, health and naturalness. Therefore, without positive self – esteem, the one's psychological development stops. In fact, self – esteem acts consciously like an immune system and provides the individual with the necessary resistance and capability for his/her life. On the other hand, low self – esteem, decrease the individual's flexibility in confronting the difficulties (Biabangard, 1997).

Many psychologists believe that safe attachment style affects one's attitude of the self. Being loved by others leads one to have a positive evaluation of oneself. Therefore, attachment styles can predict interpersonal and interactive processes and personal differences (Serjostava, 2005). Personal differences in self – esteem effect different behaviors as in competition, progress, attractiveness and helping others. Talking into account the scope of affective and social problems in adolescence period and the importance of the effect of self – esteem on different life backgrounds and its impressionability from attachment styles, it has been tried in this research to investigate the relationship between attachment style and the adolescent's self – esteem. Huntsinger and Lucan (2004), by studying 793 students, showed that compared to unsafe individuals, the individuals having a safe attachment style have healthier behaviors and higher self – esteem and self – esteem plays an intermediation role between attachment style and healthy behavior. Sayadpour (2007) showed in her research that self – esteem has a positive relationship with safe attachment style a negative relationship with avoiding attachment style. The results of the research by Mo'ayed – Far reveals that increasing safe attachment style results in increasing social self – esteem and increasing the attachment styles of avoiding and stressful/ambivalent reduces one's social self – esteem. The results of the study by Micolinsler (1998) illustrated that avoiding individuals have obsessively a

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positive attitude of them, try to promote the feeling of confidence in them, and attempt to repress their own deficiencies.

Increasing self – confidence is a barrier to tension, a factor for improving interpersonal relationships and attracting affective supports. The researches have reported a positive correlation between self – esteem and problem – centered confrontation styles, and a negative one between self – esteem and negative confrontation styles. Numerous researches have shown that self – esteem is positively related to higher levels of psychological well – being and problem – solving oriented confrontation style. Lou (2002) showed that among nursing students, there is a relationship between chronic tension, avoiding behavior, and negative self – esteem. Pearlin and Scholar (1978) illustrated that the more the more positive attitudes toward one self, the more the confrontation would be noticeable in reducing the effects of tension in the life. Mas'oud – Nia (2008) showed also that the individuals with high level self – esteem more frequently use emotion – centered confrontation re – evaluation adjustment styles. Kohen (2004) suggests that the children having a high self – esteem have a good performance and see their success as the result of their own attempts and abilities, they do not surrender the failures and mistakes and profit from them.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The design of this research is a correlation type. The statistical universe included high school girl students who were studying in academic year of 2013 – 14. Through multi – stage cluster random sampling 380 grade 1, 2 and 3 students were selected that voluntarily completed the adults' attachment style inventory (Colinz & Reed, 1996), and Cooper Smith's self – esteem inventory (1967).

Instrument

The inventory of the adults' attachment styles was first provided in 1990 by Colinz and Reed and revised in 1996. The theoretical background of this inventory is attachment theory. This inventory includes a self – assessment of the skills of making relationships and a self –description of attachment formation manner relationships as to the close attachment graphs which contains 18 items which are measured on a 5 – point Linkert scale. Colinz & Reed reported Cronbach α of closeness scale (safe attachment) at 0, 69, dependence scale (opposite of avoiding attachment) at 0, 75, stress scale (stressful/ambivalent attachment) at 0, 72. In numerous researches the Cronbach alpha of 0, 80 has been reported which remained stable between the time span of 2 and even 8 methods. In this research, the Cronbach alpha of 0, 71 were obtained.

Cooper smith provided his self – esteem scale based on a revision he performed Rajroud Diamond scale (1954). Cooper smith's self – esteem inventory contains 58 propositions and I and includes 5 scales. The general subscale contains 26 propositions and four subscales which are familial, social, occupational – institutional (educational scale), and lie, each of which including 2 propositions. The validity of this inventory through assessing internal consistency, retesting, and its reliability, convergent and divergently, has been frequently reported. Cronbach α for short and long forms has been reported to be 0.80 and the validity of its retesting has been reported to be high. In this research the Cronbach alpha of 0.85 was obtained which is statistically significant.

The questionnaire of confrontation with stressful conditions was built in 1990 by Andler and Parker in order to evaluate the individual's manner of confrontation with his/her problems. That test has 48 expressions which measure three main styles of confrontation (problem – centered, emotion – centered and avoidance – centered). This questionnaire is a self – report instrument in which the participants should answer on a 5 – point Linkert scale. The Cronbach alpha for three subscales for various samples has been reported higher than 0, 80, which is 0,85 in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to describe the relationship between attachment styles, styles of confrontation with tension, and self – esteem, first of all the mean and the standard deviation of the scores of the subjects has been

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provided and, then, the relationship between these variables has been assessed through Pearson correlation coefficient (Table 1).

Table 1: The mean, standard deviation, and the matrix of the correlation of attachment styles, confrontation with tension strategies, and self – esteem

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	
Self-esteem	28,89	10,84	1					
Safe attachment	3,37	2,02	0,86 *	1				
Stressful/ambivalent	2,99	1,84	-0,73 *	0,66 *	1			
Avoiding style	3,75	1,83	-0,54 *	-0,49 *	0,60 *	1		
Problem-centered	50,89	10,59	0,70 *	0,74 *	-0,73 *	-0,59 *	1	
Emotion-centered	58,31	11,02	0,66 *	-0,69 *	-0,76 *	0,66 *	-0,84 *	1
Avoidance-centered	52,16	11,46	-0,58 *	-0,57 *	0,53 *	0,54 *	0,65 *	0,70 *

In this relationship, attachment styles and the strategies of confrontation with tension are predictor variables and self – esteem is the criterion variable. The results of covariance analysis and the statistical features of regression of attachment styles with self – esteem are provided in tables 3 and 4. As it can be seen in table 3, the amount of observed F for attachment styles is significant ($p < 0.01$) and 79% of variance related to self – esteem is explained by attachment styles.

Table 2: Summary of regression model of attachment styles with self – esteem

	SS	df	MS	F	P	R	R ²	S.E
Regression	353229.34	3	1176.45	479,54	0,001	0,89	0,79	0,79
remaining	9233,64	379	24,55					

In table 2, the regression coefficients of predictor variables show that attachment styles can explain significantly the variance of the variables of the students' self – esteem. The coefficients of the relationship of safe attachment style ($B=3.55$), stressful/ambivalent style ($B= -0.47$), with the significance level of $p < 0.01$ show that these variables can with 99 percent certainly and the coefficient of the relationship of avoiding attachment style ($B= -0.37$) with 99 percent certainly predict the changes related to social self – esteem variable. That is to say, increasing the level of safe attachment style in individuals can increase self – esteem, and increasing stressful/ambivalent attachment can decrease self – esteem.

Table 3: The coefficients of regression analysis of attachment styles on self – esteem

Variables	B	SEB	Beta	T	Sig
Safe attachment	3.55	0.17	0.66	20.88	0.001
Stressful/ambivalent	-1.47	0.20	-0.25	-7.22	0.001
Avoiding style	-0.37	0.17	-0.06	-2.10	0.005

Moreover, the results of variance analysis and the statistical indices of social self – esteem regression and the strategies of coping with tension are provided in table 3. As it can be observed in table 3, the level of observed F for coping strategies is significant ($p < 0.01$) and can 52 percent explain the variance of self – esteem.

Table 4: The summary of regression model of tension coping strategies on self – esteem

	SS	df	MS	F	P	R	R ²	S.E
Regression	23441.28	3	7813.76	139.09	0.001	0.72	0.52	0.52
remaining	21121.71	379	56.17					

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The coefficients of regression of predictor variables show that tension coping strategies can explain the variance of the variable of the students' self – esteem. Problem – centered strategy (B= 0.47) and avoidance – centered (B= -0.17) with significance level of $p < 0.00$ show that these variables with 99% certainty have significant relationships ($p < 0.05$) centered strategy (B= -0.14) and can with, 95 percent certainty predict the changes related to social self – esteem variable. This means that increasing the level of problem – centered strategy in individuals can increase his/her self – esteem, and increasing the level of emotion – centered and avoidance centered strategies can reduce self – esteem.

Table 5: The results of regression coefficients of stress coping strategies on self – esteem

Variables	B	SEB	Beta	T	Sig
Problem-centered	0.47	0.06	0.46	6.88	0.001
Emotion-centered	-0.14	0.07	-0.14	-1.96	0.005
Avoidance-centered	-0.17	0.04	-0.18	-3.62	0.001

Discussion

The findings of present research showed that self – esteem is related to attachment styles. The adolescent having safe attachment style enjoys higher self – esteem.

This is in line with social relationship theory which is in accord with Bolbi attachment theory. According to this theory, the child who, in his/her years of life, sees his/her parents as good, respected and lovely, honors him/her self greatly. Therefore, the individuals having safe attachment styles possess a high self – esteem. The researches have revealed that this self – esteem in individuals having safe attachment styles is higher than those having avoiding/ambivalent styles. On the other hands, the individuals the individuals who have avoiding/ambivalent styles, due to improper social relationships and emotional vulnerability as to tension, possess lower self – esteem (Hun singer & Lucan, 2004; Peter, Monaco & Fledman, 2005; Seriestava, 2005). The results of Mccarti (1999) research showed that the level of self – esteem in women having unsafe attachment style (avoiding, stressful/ambivalent) is lower than those having a safe attachment style.

According to the findings of the research, the adolescents having high self – esteem more frequently use problem – centered coping strategies, compared to those having lower self – esteem. The one having high self – esteem know the environmental symptoms of tension well and selects them in a way to be able to response them. But those having low self – esteem, do not see the ability to cope with tension in them and understand fewer factors of tension and are not capable of understanding the effective factors for coping with tension and cope with tension with earlier symptoms. So, self – esteem is a supportive factor in increasing resilience and the manner of coping with tension. Sovarez and Garousi (2000) showed in a research that a positive and significant interaction exists between problem – centered coping and self – esteem. King and others (1999) showed in their study that high self – esteem is related to efficient coping strategies and reported a positive correlation between self – esteem and coping. Toes (1995) showed that individuals have low self – esteem, compared to those having high self – esteem, more frequently use avoiding coping strategy.

The limitation of the statistical society of the research makes generalization difficult. It is advised this research to be done on larger samples and different age groups. According to the results found, it is suggested to use proper strategies for increasing self – esteem to enhance the adolescents mental well – being. It is also necessary to perform similar researches on other societies.

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