

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMPONENTS OF THE ATTACHMENT STYLES AND LOVE ATTITUDES IN THE DIVORCING COUPLES WITH EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between the components of the attachment styles and love attitudes in the divorcing couples with extramarital affairs. The participants of the study were the 150 divorcing couples with extramarital affairs, which were selected by available sampling method. The research data were collected through *Hazan and Shaver Attachment Styles Questionnaire* (1987), and *Hendrik and Hendrik Love Attitude Scale* (1998). In order to investigate the relationship between the predictor variables (attachment styles) and each criterion variables (love attitudes), and to determine the amount of variance explained by each attachment styles, advanced *canonical correlation analysis* (CCA) was used. The results indicated that the predictor variables (attachment styles) were able to explain 17% of the variance of the attachment styles in the first canonical correlation, and 10% of the variance of the attachment styles in the second canonical correlation. In the first canonical correlation, *Peragma* (53%) and *Mania* (36%), which possessed the highest load factor, had the strongest correlation with the love attitudes. In the second canonical correlation, *Ludos* (42%), *Storge* (33%), and *Agape* (31%), which possessed the highest load factor, had the strongest correlation with the love attitudes. The results of the study indicated the importance of the relationship between the attachment styles and love attitudes in the divorcing couples with extramarital affairs.

Keywords: *Attachment Styles, Love Attitudes, Extramarital Affairs, Divorcing Couples*

INTRODUCTION

A set number of factors determine the success or failure of a marriage. Among the variables that have a large role in divorce and marriage are the attachment styles. Early childhood experience is the origin of these styles, which is formed in relation to the caregivers, and plays an important role in the future life of an individual, particularly in his relations (Halford, 2000). Moreover, there are three main attachment styles: secure attachment style, insecure-avoidant attachment style, and anxious-ambivalent attachment style. A child with secure attachment style tends to see others reliable and himself as someone worthy of love and care (Wiederman, 1996). In the classical theory of attachment, adults with secure attachment have a positive sense of self and a positive perception of others, are socially more successful, and have more confidence in themselves (Cann *et al.*, 2008). Adults with avoidant attachment style perceive themselves needless of others. These individuals deny vulnerabilities, and claim that they do not need to have close relations, and show tendency to avoid intimacy (Wearden *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, adults with anxious-ambivalent attachment style less likely to have a positive view about them. They often are skeptical about their value of being spouse, and blame themselves for their spouses' lack of responsibility (Bogaerts *et al.*, 2008).

The results of this study indicated that the secure couples take extra care in their sexual interactions, which is effective in the face of danger (Banse, 2004; Shaver *et al.*, 2005; Forness, 2003; Lopez *et al.*, 2011; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). Adults with secure attachment style tend to describe their romantic relationships as happy and trusted. They are easily able to be close to others, and to protect their partners (Rafiee *et al.*, 2011). Many experts have raised the claim that the insecure attachment can be used to explain the betrayal, and those with secure attachment are less inclined to have infidel marital relationships, because they feel comfortable and confident in their marital relations, and this feeling acts as an obstacle to the start of the extramarital relationships (Jeanfreau, 2009).

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Bowlby (1980) explains that infants pull out their experiences with their caregivers to create internal attachment representations or internal activation patterns about themselves and others, and the followed attachment manifestations form the expectations about future and relationships. On the other hand, schemes include holistic assessment beliefs about themselves and others. It is explained that the attachment representations can be conceptualized as cognitive schemas for the relationship, which were formed in response to the childhood experiences with caregivers (Wearden *et al.*, 2008).

Love is a complex neurological phenomenon, which is based on trust, belief, joy, and rewarding activities of the brain "the limbic structure" (Ish and Stefano, 2005). Psychologists introduce love as a fundamental and positive emotion. However, there is no common concept of love and its variants (Rafienia and Asghari, 2007). In a study by Lee (1973), typology of love styles can be found. The love styles show some of the factors by examples, which confirm and emphasize the success of relationships. The same as the attitudes and characteristics of individuals, by which they enter into a romantic relationship are essential to create and develop links. Lee suggested that the different love attitudes, that to some extent are received by the previous family experiences of the individual can affect feelings and behavior. They can be classified into six main styles. According to Lee, there are three main love styles, and a set of secondary love styles that are created by mixing these three main types. The six styles include Eros, Storge, and Ludos (main styles), and Mania, Pragma, and Agape "secondary styles" (Ameli, 2012). One of the important aspects of marriage is studying the emotional issues, which are sometimes are referred to as love (Darvish and Pasha, 2010).

Personal-relationship theorists also believe that married individuals bring unique and separate mental heritage into their relationships. According to Ferimo, who is one of the proponents of this view, the biggest obstacle in the way of human beings' change is attachment. In this case, it can also refer to the early theory of Young's Schemes, which says the acquired schemes due to their impact on our perceptions can also be effective in the field of marriage and choice of spouse (Sho'a and Jafari, 2009). Hazan and Shaver also stated that the people with different attachment styles have different experiences in their romantic relationships. Secure adults experience the love as a triangle of friendship, trust, and happiness. They accept their spouses, support them, and their relationships last for several years. Insecure-avoidant adults experience the love as a fear of intimacy and commitment; they often feel jealous, and there is no positive emotion in them. Anxious-ambivalent adults experience the love as an obsession and desire for reunification; they feel intense attractiveness and jealousy, which brings increased and decreased sensation (Hazan and Shaver, 1987).

For various reasons including inadequate knowledge of each other, unrealistic expectations of marriage and spouse, economic, social, and moral problems, couples experience many problems in marriage and relationship with each other (Navabinejad, 2001). Some of these problems have a crucial role in the divorce (Zargar and Neshat, 2007). According to couple-therapists, marital disturbances caused and continued by negative emotions and attachment damages (Johnson and Greenberg, 1985). The disturbances have different forms. One of them is involving in extramarital relationships and infidelity within marriage or extramarital affairs (Hassan *et al.*, 2011). Marital infidelity is one of the threatening factors of the stability and continuity of marriage (Mark *et al.*, 2011). Betrayal is referred to any sexual or emotional relationship beyond any committed relationship between two spouses (Yeniceri and Kdemir, 2006). Studies about the factors associated with marital infidelity show that in general, these factors are included in the three areas of individual differences (such as personality traits and attitudes), the nature of the relationship (level of commitment and satisfaction with the relationship), and environmental conditions (such as opportunity for infidelity or attractiveness of the third person) (Sharifi *et al.*, 2012).

It looks like that avoidant attachment is associated with the sexual libertinism (Brenner and Shaver, 1995), and on the contrary, secure individuals have a very few tendency toward sexual relations outside of marriage (Hazan *et al.*, 1994). Dissatisfaction with the relationships is the result of the failure to attach to a relationship, in which one of the spouses or both are following an ensuring support. In the relationship between husband and wife, attachment is determined by loving relationships, in which both people feel the sense of intimacy and security (Johnson *et al.*, 2001). Secure attachments are determined by the

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availability and accountability of the couples to each other. These secure connections will allow couples to help each other through the management of emotional distress (Johnson, 2004).

Marital infidelity is an issue that couples therapists face in their clinical work on a regular basis, and it can be confusing and painful experience for all of those who are involved with it. Furthermore, betrayal is of one of the main reasons for the divorce and the collapse of marriage (Glass and Wright, 1997 quoted by Shackelford, 2008). In the area of individual differences, attitudes and beliefs of individuals about love, sexual desire, marriage, and infidelity are the most important factors in the occurrence of extramarital affairs (Sharifi *et al.*, 2012). Attachment representations can be conceptualized as cognitive schemas for the relationship, which were formed in response to the childhood experiences with caregivers (Wearden *et al.*, 2008). It seems that these factors can explain the extramarital affairs and relationship problems of couples.

Since the extramarital affairs in society are increasing, and this creates problems in the relationships between spouses and family foundations, and in some cases lead to the collapse of the families, it is necessary that risk factors related to this issue be examined in order to identify the causes and effects of each role in this phenomenon, and adjust programs to treat and prevent, and reduce this phenomenon. In summary, this study attempts to achieve the question that whether there is a relationship between the components of the attachment styles and love attitudes in the divorcing couples with extramarital affairs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is applicable for the sake of purpose and the method is descriptive correlative. The research is also a field study, because it was performed in real situations, and the results could be generalized. Method for data collection was based on the scores obtained from questionnaires, and for data analysis, advanced Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) was used. The population consists of all people who referred to the divorce interference centers of *Welfare Organization* of Guilan Province, who had had extramarital relationships, and were selected by *Available Sampling Method*. The correlative coefficients were strongly influenced by sample size. In correlation researches, to avoid this error, the sample size is selected per predictor variables (factors) 30 to 50 persons. In this study, predictor variables (attachment styles) include three areas, and a total sample of 200 people was selected. However, then 10 people cancelled their corporation with us, and 40 questionnaires were denied because of the defect. Finally, 150 subjects, including 77 women and 73 men who have extramarital affairs from 21 to 45 years old and from under diploma degree to higher education be formed the sample.

Hazan and Shaver Attachment Styles Questionnaire

The measuring instrument for the attachment styles is *Hazan and Shaver Attachment Styles Questionnaire*. Adults' attachment styles scale was created for the first time by Hazan and Shaver (1987). It is a self-report scale which is designed based on Ainsworth's three attachment styles (secure, avoidant, and ambivalent), by the assumption that like children, in the relations of adults, attachment styles can be found (Bartolomieu and Shaver, 1998). The test consists of 15 words of one's feelings about the interpersonal relationships, which each of the five questions grade on of the attachment styles (secure, avoidant, and ambivalent) in 5-Scale Likert: 1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Sometimes, 4. Mostly, and 5. Almost Always, and "never" zero, and "Almost Always" will get score four. Questions 1 to 5 are insecure attachment style subscale, 6 to 11 are secure attachment style subscale, 11 to 15 are ambivalent attachment style subscale, and scores are distributed continuously to individuals. After completion of the questionnaire and scoring the subscales, the subscale that received the higher scores is considered as the person's attachment style.

Hendrik and Hendrik Love Attitudes Questionnaire

The measuring instrument for the love attitudes is *Hendrik and Hendrik Love Attitudes Questionnaire*. This questionnaire is a short form of *Love Attitude Scale* that was used in 1998 to measure lovemaking styles of Lee (1973). This questionnaire consists of six subscales, each of which contains four factors or agents to be a representative of love: *Eros* (erotic love), *Ludos* (playful love), *Storge* (friendship love), *Pragma* (rational love), *Mania* (obsessive love), and *Agape* (altruistic love). It is graded by a 5-scale

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Likert method. In the grading, 1 represents the "full compliance" and 5 indicate "strong opposition". Replies were all reversed to show that high scores indicate the strong presence of that particular lovemaking style. Then the responses were gathered together for each love style to achieve points, which is in the range of 4 to 20. High reliability coefficients, good internal consistency, and high validity have been reported for the questionnaire. In the conducted researches 68% alpha coefficients for Storge subscale, 83% for Agape, 70% test-retest coefficients for Mania, and up to 82% for Ludos have been reported. In an inter-cultural study, Neto (2000) found the reliability of this test 89%. In this study to evaluate data and analyze the results, the inferential statistics such as advanced Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) method were used, and statistical data analysis were done by statistical SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

To check that to what extent predictive variables (attachment styles) explain the criterion variables (attitude of love), advanced canonical correlation analysis was used.

Table 1: Summarizes of canonical correlation analysis attachment styles with attitude to love

Multivariate tests	value	F	df1	df2	P
Pillai's trace	0.302	2.66	18	429	0.01
Lawley–Hotelling Trace	0.350	2.72	18	419	0.01
Wilks' Lambda	0.722	2.69	18	399	0.01

In this table, the results of the multivariate variance analysis are provided on a set of criterion variables (love attitudes). Significant results ($p < 0.01$) in all three statistics show that there is a significant canonical correlation between the two sets of variables. Wilks' Lambda test, which is significant in the above table (Sig= 0.001) show that with the probability of 99%, there is a canonical correlation between the two sets of variables.

Table 2: Summary of canonical correlation attachment styles with an attitude to love

Focus	Canonical Correlation	Common variance	Wilks' Lambda	F	df1	df2	P
1	0.42	0.17	0.723	2.69	18	399.29	0.01
2	0.32	0.10	0.873	1.99	10	284	0.01
3	0.16	0.02	0.942	0.95	4	143	0.01

In order to investigate the relationship between predictor variables (attachment styles) and each criterion variables (love attitudes), and to determine the amount of variance explained by each of attachment styles, the results of the canonical correlation analysis is presented.

The results of the canonical correlation analysis based on the data of above table show that the amount of canonical correlation attachment styles is significant with love attitudes in the two canons of correlation. In other words, predictor variables (attachment styles) have been able to explain 17% and 10% of the variance of the attachment styles in the first and second canonical correlation, respectively.

Standardized canonical correlation coefficients show the relative importance of each main variable in the calculation of the canonical variables for the whole dependent variables, of which three are dependent variables and three canonical correlations (based on a minimum of two independent and dependent variables). The rate exists of such values in the Beta regression analysis. The 0.30 criterion was considered as the cut point (Tabachenk and Fidel, 2001) and the loads of the factors more than 0.30 were evaluated to identify the relationships between variables. As Table 4.8 shows, in the first canonical correlation, the strongest correlations with the love attitudes belong to anxious-ambivalent attachment variable 0.54, and secure attachment variable 0.46. In the second canonical correlation, the strongest correlations with the love attitudes belong to insecure-avoidant variable 0.61, secure variable 0.42, and

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anxious-ambivalent variable 0.31. The results of the first canonical correlation showed that anxious attachment style, and secure attachment style were able to explain the love attitudes 29%, 21%, respectively. The results of the second canonical correlation showed that avoidant attachment style, anxious attachment style, and secure attachment style were able to explain the love attitudes 37%, 18%, and 10%, respectively.

Table 3: Coefficients of attachment styles with attitude to love

Dimensions Variables		first variable		second variable		third variable	
		Loads	Focal	Loads	Focal	Loads	Focal
		Focal	coefficients	Focal	coefficients	Focal	coefficients
Attitude to love	Eros	0.24	0.37	0.14	0.61	-0.14	0.44
	Ludos	0.26	0.18	0.18	0.28	0.13	0.67
	Storge	0.17	0.12	0.12	0.31	-0.08	0.71
	Peragma	0.53	0.34	0.34	0.29	-0.21	0.24
	Maniya	0.36	0.19	0.19	0.87	0.26	0.48
Attach ment styles	Agape	0.12	0.31	0.31	0.19	0.12	0.64
	Evidence	0.14	0.21	0.61	0.47	0.24	0.13
	Secure	0.46	0.22	0.42	0.19	0.21	0.26
	Anxiety	0.54	0.29	0.31	0.14	0.15	0.67

In connection to the criterion variables, in the first canonical correlation, the strongest correlation with the love attitudes for the Peragma and Maniya were 0.53 and 0.36, respectively, which had the highest load factors. In the second canonical correlation, the strongest correlation with the love attitudes for Ludos, Storge, and Agape were 0.42, 0.33, and 0.31, respectively, which had the highest load factors. If the values of the dependent variable structure are squared, the percentage of variance, which is explained by main or canonical variables, can be obtained. The fundamental correlations, i.e. Pragma and Mania explained 29%, and 13% of the variance of the attachment styles, respectively. The secondary fundamental correlations, I.e. Ludos, Storge, and Agape explained 18%, 11%, and 10% of the variance of the attachment styles, respectively.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between the components of the attachment styles and love attitudes in the divorcing couples with extramarital affairs in Guilan Province. To examine the question of the research, the advanced Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) was used.

The results showed that the amount of the canonical correlation of the attachment styles is significant with love attitudes between the two canons. In other words, predictor variables (attachment styles) have been able to explain 17% and 10% of the variance of the attachment styles in the first and second canonical correlation, respectively. In the first canonical correlation, anxious attachment style, and secure attachment style were able to explain the love attitudes 29%, 21%, respectively. The results of the second canonical correlation showed that avoidant attachment style, anxious attachment style, and secure attachment style were able to explain the love attitudes 37%, 18%, and 10%, respectively. In connection with the criterion variables, the fundamental correlations, i.e. Pragma and Mania explained 29%, and 13% of the variance of the attachment styles, respectively. The secondary fundamental correlations, I.e. Ludos, Storge, and Agape explained 18%, 11%, and 10% of the variance of the attachment styles, respectively.

The obtained results were consistent with the findings of Zahedian *et al.*, (2011), Teymour *et al.*, (2010), Noori (2011), Mahmoudi and Hafez (2010), Cohen (2005), Simpson (1990), and Finney and Nuler (1990). The findings of Zahedian *et al.*, (2011), which was conducted to find the role of attachment styles in sexual addiction, showed that the anxious-ambivalent attachment style is the best predictor of sexual addiction. Sexual addiction can be one of the factors underlying tendency of people to extramarital affairs. When a person's sexual need is high, and his/ her needs are not provided within marital life, this possibility existed that the person seeks the relationships outside of marital relationships. Research of

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Teymour *et al.*, (2010) is also in line with the study. Their findings show that people with anxious attachment style rely heavily on sex. Research of Noori (2011) is in line with this study.

The data analysis in his study showed that the ability to predict marital values existed through the love varieties and attachment styles, in a way that there is a negative relationship between Agape, hierarchical value, and rational value. Mahmoudi and Hafez (2010) also found in their research that the lovemaking styles influence the marital satisfaction. Satisfaction of individuals with the romantic, passionate, perfect, and silly love is more than the empty and empathic love. This is in line with the research. Findings are also in line with the results of Cohen (2005). His study, which was intended to investigate the relationship between attachment styles and infidelity in romantic relationships, showed that those with secure attachment style less betrayed than the insecure attachment style. It is also in line with the research of Simpson (1990).

His study showed that the secure couples trust more than insecure ones, and show higher levels of satisfaction and commitment in their relationships. When commitment and intimacy in couples is high, they trust each other, pursue all their needs in their life, and less tend to have extramarital affairs. Finney and Nuler (1990) conducted a study on 374 individuals from the University of Queensland, Australia, which investigated the addicting love, relationships beliefs, self-esteem, attachment history, and lovemaking styles. The results indicated that individuals with secure attachment style reported a positive perception of their early family relationships, and people with an avoidant attachment style reported separation from mother in childhood, and distrust to others.

These individuals are more likely to develop an addicting love that can be a context for the tendency of people to learn about extramarital affairs.

For a compatible individual, attachment (of course secure one) is one of the most basic factors of the proper personality development, and causes the person to be motivated in his/ her work. On the other hand, people with secure attachment styles and high performance have high communicational skills. They are also optimistic about the issues and events that happen to them, and they are full of hope and have a sense of humor and joking, and see and accept other people as they are. Anxious and depressed people, it is the opposite. Because these people have incompatible schemes, they are pessimistic about the around situations.

These people do not possess a good and secure attachment style. This form of experience, like any emotional disturbances associated with both psychological and physical levels, can be an objective anxious threat (direct or indirect threat of death, personal catastrophe, or punishment).

It seems that these people have not been living a good attachment style in the past. It can be said that during their search of the environment, women have a secure attachment style based on their caregivers. These people have more confidence in the availability of caregivers. Because they have learned that they can easily reach their needs and can affect the world, and as a result, they have positive attitudes as well.

The study also had limitations.

Despite the fact that extramarital affairs are increasing in society, accessing to this population is very difficult because they cannot be proved. Unless proven through the courts, and in this condition, these individuals were not willing to cooperate. Their satisfaction to answer the questions was a very hard and exhausting work. The similar researches inside and outside the country to allow comparison of results were low. Given the high rates of divorce in Iran, and its negative consequences, heading to earlier intervention by clinicians and researchers before marriage seems necessary. It is recommended that in the pre-marriage counseling sessions, attachment styles, and love attitudes of individuals be considered, so that the level and marital loyalty be predicted before marital life. As well as workshops be held for parents to become familiar with attachment styles in order to be aware of the importance of attachment styles in adulthood and of their role in life.

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