

STUDIES ON ADOLESCENT ATTACHMENT AND QUESTIONNAIRE – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT: One of the most influential and current theories that opened new windows towards the horizon of theorizing and psychotherapy is *attachment theory* that was developed out of works by Bowlby and Ainsworth. Of course it is worth noting that nearly none of the measures in this area specifically devised for the adolescence. The present study examined the relationship between adolescents' attachment to parents and their feelings of alienation in the school context by considering the mediating role of adjustment and self-esteem. It was proposed that the degree of attachment to one's parents was associated with adjustment and self-esteem, which in turn predicted possible school alienation.

KEYWORDS:- Adolescents, attachment and Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION:-

One of the most important and well-known products of contemporary psychology is attachment theory. Some of the researchers (for example, Shaver and Mikulincer, 2005) consider attachment theory to be a resurrection of psychoanalysis and the important factor in reviving this school. As John Bowlby believes attachment is one of the human's basic needs (Ghorbani, 2003). As Bowlby (1973, 1982) states, a bond is shaped with the primary caregiver (mainly mother) and according to the quality of this bond the child forms Internal Working Models of him/herself. Internal Working Models of others and self is the main reason for continuity and coherence between primary attachment experiences and later cognitions, behaviors, and relationships. These patterns tend to be displayed and applied in new conditions and relationships and can influence the function of attachment system in future social interactions and close relationships. In other words, individuals' attachment styles are based on the internalization of interpersonal expectations regarding the availability and responsiveness of attachment figures and the efficiency and value of oneself (Kafetsios, 2004).

The authors conclude that attachment theory does not attend to (dimensional or class) structure of individual

differences. In spite of this, if there are enough studies to cover the behavior of secure base in natural situations the methods of investigating categorizations can play an important role in studying attachment. The attachment behaviors in adolescence seem to have been rapidly deviated from the attachment behavior patterns in early years of life. Bowlby (1980) and Bertherton (1990 cited in Zimmerman and Becker-Stoll, 2002) describe the adolescence in this way: in adolescence active internal patterns may finally become constant and as the result they become resistant to change. During the childhood, as the abilities grow, the attachment behaviours would be less than the infancy. Therefore, there is less possibility to observe proximity seeking behavior and instead we would observe communicating through expression of feelings and concerns towards caregivers when it is needed. Allen and Land (2008) believe that exploratory system in adolescence, particularly with regards to the attachment to parents and also lowering the dependence on them, have higher importance. They believe that without such exploration, completion of the important task of social evolution in adolescence and early adulthood, such as starting long term romantic relationship and constructive jobs would be difficult – if not impossible. In adolescence and adulthood attachment system (or organization) is usually evaluated through Adult Attachment Interview. Main (1991) introduces AAI as: a semi-structured interview which evaluates the state of mind with regard to the history of individual attachment that is coherence of issues about attachment experiences and emotional integration about these experiences.

Hazan and Shaver also investigated uses of attachment theory in general and Ainsworth's categorizations for infancy in particular, with the aim of studying feelings and behaviors of adolescents and adults in affective relationships. Different researchers aimed at introducing interviews for evaluating attachment representations for adults' affective relationships, including Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), Cowan et al. (1999), Crowell and Owens (1996), Dickstein et al. (2004), and Furman and Simon (2006).

Purpose:

Up to the present time, the same questionnaire for adults have been used in order to evaluate attachment in

adolescents, such as questionnaires by Hazen and Shaver (1987; 1990), and Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) and other instruments mentioned above. But, to the best knowledge of researchers, there are two instruments that specifically measures attachment in adolescence, the new and revised version of Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) and Parental Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ). It is worth mentioning that attachment categorizations are not applied in Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment-Revised (IPPA-R) and the relationship components between adolescents and their parents are measured. On this basis and as it was stated before, each subject gets one score for each of the attachment variables to mother, father, and peer, and finally the general attachment score would be calculated. In each of the three sub-scales, three other sub-scales called trust, relationship, and alienation are measured.

METHODS:

Participants: The participants of this study were 380 students from two educational districts of Mashhad, which includes 166 boys (Standard Deviation (SD) =.93 and mean (M) =15.9) and 214 girls (SD=.91 and M=16.2).

Procedure: In this study, 42 questions are devised with regard to the attachment literature and with reference to instruments such as Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), adult attachment questionnaires by Hazen and Shaver (1990) and Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment-Revised (IPPA-R) (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987) and also the studies of researchers in this field. The questions that are based on three attachment styles of secure, avoidant, and ambivalent are sent to two experienced professors in this filed as well as two PHD students of psychology for review. After receiving the feedbacks and comments from the reviewers the questionnaire is reduced to 40 questions.

RESULTS:-

The factor structure of this scale was examined in two stages through exploratory factor analysis as well as confirmatory factor analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA):- After complete data correction, the data were analyzed by SPSS. In order to reduce the questions to significant factors, at first factor analysis was done on 40 questions by the main elements. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin Measure of Sampling Adequacy showed that the sample is suitable for factor analysis (KMO=.83), also Bartlett's Test of

Sphericity with the degree of freedom (df) equal to 378 and chi-square (χ^2) equal to 3295.50 was significant at the level of $p < .01$. All of the Antiimage Matrices (except for items 15 and 17) were above .71. Based on all of the mentioned indices the (EFA) of the questions resulted in 8 factors with Eigen value more than 1. Generally, these 8 factors explain 60.4% of the total variance. Considering the Eigen values showed four items with Eigen value above 2. For the aim of final selection of factors besides the criterion of Eigen value, the Kattel's Scree plot was also considered. Considering the plot showed that the peak for the plot can be determined from the fourth factor. On the other side, these four factors totally explain 43.83% of the variance.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA): For the aim of confirmatory factor analysis, first through examining the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each item and their correlation coefficients and the total score of each scale, it was shown that elimination of none of the items would not lead to increase in α coefficient. For item 23, since the content was related to factor C (ambivalent), it was eliminated from factor A and was added to factor C. Examining the reliability of factor B showed that this scale has acceptable reliability (.85) and it would not change by eliminating or reversing any of the items.

Reliability: In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted on 56 high school boy students with the mean age of 15.3 and standard deviation of .95; three participant were excluded due to incomplete answers. After three weeks the questionnaire was administered again and each of the abovementioned sub-scales was determined. The correlation coefficients between the two administrations were: .74 for secure sub-scale, .70 for ambivalent, and .84 for avoidant; all of the sub-scales showed significance level of .01. The internal consistency test through Cronbach's alpha ($n=380$) showed acceptable internal consistency for the questionnaire ($\alpha=.88$). The internal consistency for each of the sub-scales was: .81 for secure, .77 for ambivalent, and .87 for avoidant, which indicated fairly good reliability for the questionnaire.

DISCUSSION:-

In order to evaluate attachment in adolescence there are few instruments available among which we can name The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment-Revised (IPPA-R) and Parental Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ). As it was explained, the categorization for attachment was not used IPPA-R and the quality of attachment and relational elements between adolescents and their parents (such as trust, relationship and

alienation) are evaluated. Parental Attachment Questionnaire (Kenny, 1990) is another instrument that is used for measuring adolescent's attachment to his/her parents (individually or both of them together) and it includes 41 items with two scales: 1- the affective quality of relationship with parents (PAQa), and 2- parents as facilitators of autonomy (PAQb). The first scale measures the elements of connection and bond while the second scale measures the psychological self-determining element of attachment. The scales in this questionnaire showed high internal consistency through (.96, .88, and .88 respectively) Cronbach's alpha (Kenny, 1990). In the present study, in order to estimate the correlation coefficient of test-retest reliability the questionnaire was administered to a sample of 56 individuals. The correlation coefficient for test-retest reliability was as follows: .74 for secure, .70 for ambivalent, and .84 for avoidant scales, which all of them were significant at the level of .01. Also, investigating the internal consistency of the questionnaire through Cronbach's alpha (n=380) indicated that the questionnaire has good internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$). This amount was .81 for secure, .77 for ambivalent, and .87 for avoidant scales, which confirms good reliability for the questionnaire.

Considering the literature on attachment, the Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire is one of the few instruments which specifically measure the attachment styles in adolescence. This questionnaire can be applied in two ways: This questionnaire is applicable for adolescence ages. Some of limitations of this questionnaire are: A) regarding the fact that the population under study were from adolescents of 14-17 ages from two districts from Mashhad, the results may not be generalizable and it may require further research with other populations and age groups. B) Another limitation, usually reported for the self-report instruments, is prejudice and social acceptance. As the results revealed significant difference between boys and girls, it is recommended that the questionnaire is separately normalized for each gender.

CONCLUSION:-

Adolescence is a vulnerable phase of an individual's life. It is a crucial phase of a person's life where he/she undergoes many changes. Family provides warm and intimate surroundings and plays an important role in human development. The attitudes and behaviors that parents use in raising their children have tremendous influence on their children. Parental care and support affects the mental health of the adolescents. The purpose of this review is to understand the role of parenting style on mental health and coping style of the adolescents. Authoritarian parenting style has been found to have a

negative influence on mental health and it also leads to development of ineffective ways of coping among the adolescents.

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