A survey of attachment styles and the social acceptance

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Abstract: in the present study, the relation between attachment styles and the social acceptance was investigated in a sample of students. The aim of this study was to investigate the relation between secure, avoidant, and anxious attachment styles and the social acceptance level in high school students in boarding schools. A total of 329 students (male and female) from boarding high school in the province of lorestan participated in the study. They filled out adult attachment inventory (AAI) and social acceptance scale (SAS). Findings showed that there is a negative meaningful association between secure and anxious attachment styles and the social acceptance. And avoidant attachment style is not meaningfully associated with the social acceptance. In this regard, secure and anxious styles could account for changes related to the social acceptance. And according to these findings, one can observe the correlation between attachment styles and the social acceptance.

Keywords: attachment styles (secure, avoidant, anxious), social acceptance

Introduction

Undoubtedly early experiences of a child will affect his/her future life on a massive scale.((mother and child)) are two beings whose lives are amazingly interconnected. They are so close that can strongly cause two opposite effects on the formation of human personality. One hand, it could change the child into a fully developed and normal human and on the other hand, if this relationship is damaged, it can cause different types of mental disorders and mental suffering to the self and others. Parents, according to their personality and psychological characteristics, treat their children differently than other, and these different parenting practices from three types of attachment.

These are: A-secure, B-avoid and insecure, C-ambivalent insecure attachment.

 Secure attachment style is frequently seen among children who consider caretakers a secure base for experience in the environment, and they would not experience separation anxiety in the absence of the caretaker, or they would get sedated as the caretaker comes back. Secure attachment is a proper tendency to identify and respond to threats for reassurance. Avoidant attachment is a tendency to suppress feeling, show violent behavior for security, avoid attachment mode, and show inner feelings towards caregivers. In such individuals, ambivalent anxious attachment tends to be conscious and concerned about security threats. Although the caregiver is available to them and they attempt to approach her/him, the result of their efforts would fail because of lack of trust. Complicated changes in the relationship between child, father, and mother happen in adolescence. Although some studies show that only a particular component is changed and the relationships remain in attachment mode. Further,

even though the frequency and intensity of some attachment behaviors decrease with age, the quality of the attachment bond is relatively stable.

Attachment theory (Bowlby,1988, as quoted by Kafersios, 2004), highlighting the emotional roots of interpersonal communication in adulthood, emphasizes that emotional defenses related to insecure attachment cause obstacles to emotional information processing and awareness of one's own and others feelings and needs. Individuals with anxious attachment style are not sure that are loved by others and worth loving, and they are likely to be supported by others. This situation coupled with doubts and fears lead to alertness and suspicion following reassurance, frequent hostile objections and jealousy in such individuals. Erickson believed that children in the second year of their lives try to have a sense of independence against their parents. Children who are not able to achieve sense of independence may be prone to feel shame and doubt and unable to do anything independently. When peer groups of children enter adolescence, they have a huge impact on sociability. In terms of definition, individuals with more popularity at each stage of development are nearly the ones skilled in speech and non-speech norms within their peer group. In line with what we said above, the following question is posed: is there a relationship between secure, avoidant, and anxious attachment styles and the social acceptance or popularity among boarding school adolescent students in lorestan province? Some psychologists quoting Erickson et al (translated by Baraheni, 2004), believe that lack of development of attachment to one or more major individuals in the early years of life is associated with his/her inability to establish close relationship with others later in adulthood. Adult attachment is referred to individuals.

Enduring desire for serious to maintain proximity to and contact with one or more specific people who provide mental facilities for his/her physical and mental comfort and security. This enduring desire is adjusted by internal working models (IWM) of attachment which are cognitive-affective-motivational schemata (mental structures) emerged from the individuals experiences gained from interpersonal relationships (Barman and Sperling, 1994) . Thompson, Lamb, and Estes (1982) reported that when children experience changes in care (e.g. changes in the way caregivers care for children), they are likely to change their attachment style. In this way, children change from secure style to insecure or vice versa. In a study designed to replicate the results of babyhood so as to show that life events have an impact on attachment change, Barhaim, saton , fox, and Marvin (2000) - the researchers who studied attachment have confirmed the effect of early experiences on the emerging inner visualizations of self and others and investigated the ways in which (IWM) of attachment affect the future relationship and emotion regulation strategies in adulthood (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1988, 1980, 1973, and 1969). These visualizations influence the perception individuals have of themselves and others regarding whether or not they are worthy of care, and if one could rely on others for providing care or not (Bartholomew and Hurwitz, 1991; Besharat, 2009). In this regard, ainsworth stressed the attachment behavior in human life core. He stated that secure attachment facilitates performance and competence in interpersonal relationship (John Bowlby, Eri Ainsworth, 1991, as quoted by Mousavi Akramsadat, 2009).

Social Acceptance: one of the factors attracting acceptance in evaluating individuals relationship in society is self-esteem, and social attractiveness depends on coordination in the social role. In many roles, the apparent popularity determines social acceptance, and self-esteem has a greater role in coordinating these characteristics. As for social acceptance it must be said that when we say something to other that they expect to hear, actually we exhibit a behavior which is socially acceptable. Conforming to social acceptance effect can make us transform our ideas and experiences in interviews and responses to psychological tests(ganji,1381{Persian year}).Each individuals success in life makes sense in terms of achieving goals which they have set in their family, social, and personal affairs and these goals will be achieved in the context of human society and in the framework of communications. Based on Maslow's theory, we all have a hierarchy of needs and at the third level of the hierarchy we reach social

needs and attachment. If we pay attention to ones feelings, we will notice that we all need to socialize with others and gain their acceptance . We all look for those whom we feel happy with loneliness is one of the most painful feelings that could be experienced at the fourth level of hierarchy of needs is self-esteem which is valuing oneself and being valuable from others point of view. Communication is among tools by which we can understand the extent to which we value and credit ourselves, and how much others consider us as respectable and credible ones (brickham, 1991).no doubt, adolescence year are one of the most important and critical period of human life during this period, personality is founded and in childhood, it is formed and displayed better and clearer. It is in this period that puberty begins at the of 12-13 and continues to the ages of 18-19. In this regard, several features contribute to the formations of popularity or unpopularity among peers. Adolescents who grow in strong and reassuring families, not only do they have a good relationship with the parents and adults. But also they have a relatively good relationship with their peers. In contrast, children grown in easygoing families are often aggressive and hostile, and children grown in authoritarian families are often anxious and capricious. Normal and non-normal properties of the interpersonal relationships are deeply influenced by the individual's attachment styles. According to the results, secure attachment is associated with positive relationship features including intimacy and pleasure; avoidant attachment is associated with the levels lower than intimacy and commitment; and double oriented attachment is associated with excitement and concern about relationships with low satisfaction. Gender differences, s in early given the attachment pattern childhood as well as childhood, are not usually strong both theoretically and in terms of perception; However in late adolescence and adulthood, Gender differences in insecure attachment patterns are sometimes avoidant in most men and anxious in women(Bartholomew and horowitz,1991). In a study by (David Schwartz et al)of southern California university entitled ((popularity, social acceptance in adolescent peers associated with academic performance and attendance or absence at school)) on a sample consisted of 342.adolescents at an average age of 14 years for four semesters, the data showed that a for highly aggressive adolescents, the academic records bring about increased popularity or social acceptance. On the contrary, increased unjustified absences and reduced averages bring about social exclusion or unpopularity (Hague's, 1999). Also there is evidence that social acceptance increases the adolescent's motivation and interest I interest in school while facilitating a feeling to join

the environment and have cognitive interactions with peers in the classroom (Wentzel, 1991). Adolescence has a social and biological nature. An adolescent looks for freedom and seeks freedom from his/her parents. He/she would like others to understand that he/she is grown up and give him/her adequate and proper responsibilities and pay attention to his/her ideas (Ban,2006). In this period, making friends, intimacy, and honesty with friends, the ability to establish lasting bonds with them, and competition and cooperation all have constructive roles in an adolescent's life.

Hypotheses: 1-there is a relationship between attachment styles and social acceptance.2-secure attachment style and anxious attachment style are significantly associated. 3- there is a significant association between avoidant attachment style and anxious attachment style. 4- there is a relationship between secure attachment style and avoidant attachment style.5- attachment styles and gender are significantly associated.

Tools: the data in the present study consist of the information related to attachment styles and the social acceptance of boarding school students in lorestan province. Measuring tools used in this study are respectively: adult attachment inventory (AAI), and attachment styles. This scale which was constructed using Hazen and shaver attachment test materials (1987) and standardized in the case of the students of Tehran university (Besharet,1387), is a 15 question test that measures 3 styles of attachment including secure, avoidant, and double-oriented by a five-point liker scale(very small=1, small=2, average=3, large=4.very large=5).max and min score below the test scores are 5 and 25, respectively. Cranach's alpha coefficients of the questions below secure, avoidant, and double-oriented scales in a sample of students (n=1480,860 females and 620 males) were calculated as follows: for all subjects, ./.85,%84, and./.85, for female students, 83/86, ./. , and ./84,indicates a good internal consistency of adult attachment inventory (AAI).in order to measure the reliability of retesting the correlation coefficients between the scores of a sample consisted of 300 subjects, they were calculated with a four-week interval. The coefficients as for secure, avoidant, and double-oriented, were calculated as follows: . /87 , ./83,and ./84 for all subjects,./86,85/82,and ./. For female students, and 83/88, 83/. , and. /. For male students, respectively. This shows the satisfactory reliability of retesting the scale. Content validity of (AAI) was investigated by measuring correlation coefficients between the scores of 15 psychologists. Kendall coefficient of agreement

for adult attachment styles was assessed in a sample of 300 subjects by concurrent implementation of ((interpersonal problems)) scale and cooper smith self-esteem scale. Results of Pearson's correlation coefficients showed that there is a negative significant correlation between the subjects scores in secure attachment style and subscales of the interpersonal problems (from $r=-./61$ to $r=-./83$), also they are positively and significantly correlated with subscales of self-esteem (from $r=./39$ to $r=./41$) , and in addition, they positively and significantly correlated with subscales of self-esteem($r=./39$ to $r=./41$). There is a positive significant correlation between the subjects scores in insecure attachment styles and subscales of interpersonal problems(from $r=./28$ to $r=./45$), However the scores were not significantly correlated with self-esteem subscales. The results indicate sufficient validity of (AAI)(Besharat, 1384{Persian year}).

Social Acceptance scale (SAS): crown and marl's scale (1960) which consists of 33 questions in the form of true-false answers. By answering the questions, it would be clear that what percentage of individuals are not socially accepted most of the time, and on average, what percentage of them consider the social acceptance, and what percentage of them may care for social approvals and answer the question in such a way to keep safe from peoples exclusions . their actual behavior shows great compatibility with social rules and norms(Hamzeh ganji, 1381(Persian year)).

Research method:
Statistical population of this study consisted of all first and second year high school students in lorestan province boarding centers in the academic year (1388).the sample was selected from the original sample using multi-stage cluster sampling. Cities including Veysion,aleshtar, chegeni, and khorramabad were selected randomly among lorestan province boarding school, and of all male and female boarding school students, a sample was selected and given some questionnaires to fill out. 390 questionnaires of the adult attachment styles and the social acceptance were distributed among first and second year high school students. Of the total 390 questionnaires, 329 ones being fully completed. Were investigated.

Research plan: this survey is a correlation study in which the relationship between attachment styles and the social acceptance is measured. In this study, attachment styles are predictor variables and the social acceptance is criterion variable. According to the descriptive table, the average secure attachment

style of the students is 14/50 and their average avoidant attachment style is 12/50. The average anxious attachment style of the students is 13/73; thus, secure attachment style is the dominant style among students and avoidant and anxious attachment styles are , respectively the next priorities

Data Analysis: *first hypothesis:* there is a relationship between attachment styles and the social acceptance. As you see in table (2), secure attachment variable with significance level of p=./.26 is negatively correlated with the social acceptance, also anxious attachment style with significance level of p=-./.21 shows a negative correlation with the social acceptance. And as for avoidant attachment variable, a significant relationship with the social acceptance is not seen.

Second hypothesis: there is a significant association between secure attachment style and anxious attachment style. According to the data presented in table (2), secure attachment style shows a positive significant relationship with anxious attachment style at p=-./.. Level.

Third hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between avoidant attachment style and anxious attachment style. According to table (2), avoidant style and anxious style are not significantly associated.

Fourth hypothesis: there is a relationship between secure attachment style and avoidant attachment style. As table (2)suggests , there is no association between secure and avoidant attachment styles.

Fifth hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between attachment styles and gender.

Table (1): Description of the social acceptance information according to attachment style

Attachment Styles	Standard Deviation	The acceptance of social cohesion	Significance Level
Secure	3/175	-123	./.26
Avoidant	2/297	-./58	./297
Anxious	2/877	-127	-./.21

Table (2): Correlation between the study's variables

Variables	Gender	Avoidant Attachment	Secure Attachment	Anxious Attachment	Social acceptance
Gender	1				
Avoidant attachment	737	1			
Secure attachment	./..4**	./.78	1		
Anxious attachment	310	136	-./..**	1	
Social acceptance	-./.12*	-292	-./.26	-./.21	1

In fifth hypothesis , according to the data presented in table(2), gender is positively and significantly associated with secure attachment style variables at p=./..4 level , and it is negatively and significantly associated with social acceptance variable at p=-./.12 level

Results:

In findings, the correlation matrix was used for associating variables. As you see, there are the following association between attachment styles(avoidant, secure, and anxious) and gender and the students social acceptance: respectively, there is a negative significant relationship between secure attachment and the social acceptance at significance level of (p<./.5 , r=-./.26).also , there is a negative significant relationship between anxious attachment and the social acceptance at (P<./.5 , r=-./.21) level . further, there is a positive significant relationship between secure attachment style and gender at (p<./.1 , r=./..4) , and also there is a negative significant association between the social acceptance and gender at the level of (p<./.5 , r=./.12).among attachment styles, the highest association with the social acceptance was observed in secure attachment style at negative significance level of (p<./.5 , r=-./.26) , and the highest association of attachment styles with gender was observed in secure attachment style with a negative significance level of (p<./.1 , r=-./..4).

Discussions and conclusion:

The aim of this study is to investigate the association between attachment styles and the social acceptance among male and female students in boarding school. Numerous and various studies have been conducted in the area of attachment and attachment styles; However as for attachment styles , the social acceptance , and gender , limited research has been perform and one can hardly find researches fully aligned with the present study. In this study we showed that there is a negative significant relationship between attachment styles and the social acceptance. In other words, students with a high secure attachment style, because of their high self-confidence and self-esteem, are less concerned about the way other value and respect them , and they can easily interact with other in their occupational and living environment in their social positions. also, they do not need much to be accepted by other and exhibit good interpersonal relationship . Studies conducted by brickham, 1991;ainsworth, blehar, waters, and wall , 1978,1988,1980,1973,1969)are consistent with the findings.it can be noted that characteristics of normal and non-normal individuals and interpersonal relationships are deeply influenced by the individuals attachment style. Thus, results of studies on secure attachment are associated with positive communication features including intimacy and satisfaction and have positive effects on the individuals' social acceptance among peers and their interpersonal relationships. This means that individuals with secure attachment style are more likely to develop greater social acceptance and popularity, which is confirmed by studies conducted by (bawlby,1988,quoted by kafetsios, 2004; Bartholomew and Horowitz,19991; Besharat, 1388{Persian year}). In research findings also a negative significant relationshlip between anxious attachment style and the social acceptance was demonstrated . these findings are confirmed by studies conducted by phini.j.E   et al (1999), and Erickson (translated by mahshid yasaei, 1380). In other words, individuals with anxious attachment style are not sure that if they are loved by other or not; or weather they are probably worth loving and supported by others or not. They suffer from conflict and indecision in their social relationships. On one hand they tend to be among their peers and on the other hand, they feel and distrust, because their decision –making power is poor . this makes them neither accept other nor act in the interpersonal relationships in such a way that they could gain popularity and acceptance among others. Significant relationship of the adolescents social acceptance with attachment styles confirms that despite biological nature of attachment, it is also influenced by social and environmental nature, in other words, although attachment styles originate from the individuals nature, the process of attachment formation results from learning experiences. It seems that although attachment, in a sense, justifies the survival aspect, it is possible to make changes in individuals attachment by teaching and learning in educational and social situations such that an individual could adapt to the situation in which he/she lives. He/she should behave in a way that is popular and socially accepted. In this regard, studies by Thompson, lamb and Estes(1982);Ban(2006); barhaim, saton fox and Marvin (2000) confirm these findings.it can be found that there is a relationship between attachment styles in adolescents and their social acceptance, popularity, and type of behavior. Adolescents who have good social acceptance and capable of establishing a desirable relationship with their parents and peers, and act successfully in their interpersonal relationships originate from the attachment style they experienced in childhood such that when peer groups enter adolescence from childhood, they could have a great impact on increasing sociability. Nearly most individuals who have greater popularity and social acceptance are those skilled in speech and non-speech norms available within their peer groups in case of success

In gaining coordination and changing the type of attachment style and increasing the level of secure attachment style, we can observe the growth of social acceptance and good relations in academic areas and motivation and interest in school and cognitive interaction with peers in the classroom. These findings are consistent with studies by(John bowlbl and eri ainworth,1991;anna dowel and marlen, 2000;hagues and wentzel, 1999). We can say that one of the factors of attracting acceptance in measuring the individuals relationships in the society is self-esteem and attracting social acceptance depends on the coordination of social role. We can find out that self-esteemed individuals are able to increase their rick potentials , interpersonal relationships, and social acceptance. But individuals with anxious style somehow lack this ability and their trust in others in social relationships and developing popularity is low. The results of this study indicate that the social acceptance in individuals is more associated with secure attachment style. And the individuals social acceptance has more difficulties with anxious attachment style. In individuals with anxious and double-oriented attachment, we can observe a concern about security threats, and such individuals would fail in their relationships because of lack of confidence. As for avoidant attachment style, it should be noted that in this study we did not

observe a significant relationship , and it is not necessary to explain its relationship with social acceptance in students. On the other hand, another finding of the present study is a significant relationship of attachment style and social acceptance with gender . in order to explain this finding we can state that the more secure the attachment style is , the more reduced the gender role will be. On the other hand, according to the findings we can find out that the less the gender difference is, the social acceptance will be greater. However, the difference is not qualitatively obvious in early life. These findings are consistent with those by Bartholomew and Horowitz ,1991. It seems that the base for. Any emotional and social relationships later in human life originates from secure attachment styles in childhood.

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