



Investigating The Mediating Role of Positive Affection On the Relationship Between Attachment Styles and Maladaptive Schemas of Depressed Women

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Abstract: *The objective of this study was to investigate the mediating role of positive affection on the relationship between attachment styles and maladaptive schemas of depressed women. The method of this research is descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of this study included all depressed women admitted to Sina Hospital in Mashhad in 2017. The sample of study was selected using convenient random sampling method. To collect data, the Adult Attachment Styles Questionnaire (AAI), the Short Form of the Young's Early Maladaptive Schema Questionnaire (1988), Watson & Clark Positive Affection Questionnaire (1988), and Beck Depression Scale were used. The results of analysis of ANOVA showed that attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas directly and indirectly have significant effect on depression. The results of this study also showed that positive affection plays mediating role in the relationship between attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas and depression. In other words, attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas with leaving impact on positive affection of individuals decrease depression, and the therapists and counselors in counseling and mental health centers can take necessary medical measures to treat the depression by examining type of attachment style and early maladaptive schemas of people.*

Key words: *positive affection, attachment styles, early maladaptive schemas, depressed women.*

INTRODUCTION

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders (Watts & Marquham, 2005; quoted by Montazeri et al., 2012) and one of the most common psychiatric disorders among adults. The revised text of the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSMIV) (Kaplan & Saduk, 2007) defines major depressive disorder as a mental illness in which a person experiences deep and persistent discomfort and reduced interest in all activities for a period of at least two weeks. A person with major depressive disorder usually experiences despair, worthless, difficulty thinking and concentrating, and even suicide in some situations. Recognizing the psychological factors and variables that form depression with regard to the disabling process that this disease has is necessary. To this day, researchers in the field of psychology have found various psychological variables and factors in the process of developing the course of this disorder. One of the first works can be attributed to Aaron T. Whit Aron T. beck's cognitive theory, which presents four components in depressed people: self-emerging thoughts, schemas, logical errors, and cognitive triangle (Frey, 1999). Subsequently, many researchers proposed several theories about depression. The most important and most effective hypotheses related to depression are the following: positive affection theory, attachment styles, and early maladaptive schema. According to primary studies of (Watson et al. 1988), emotional structure has two areas of positive and negative affections that are independent of each other. Positive affection refers to the level of individual's sense of euphoria, being active, and consciousness, and it has sub-dimensions of goodness (such as cheerfulness and liveliness), self-reliance (such as sure, strong and bold) and alertness (such as conscious, focused and

determined) (Grentet, 2008). In various researches, positive affection has had a negative correlation with depression, and by its improvement, symptoms of depression have been removed in people (Bakhshi-Pour & Dejkam, 2005). On the other hand, the relationship between attachment quality and psychological harms is one of the domains that have been investigated widely by psychological studies. The main result of the interaction between mother and child is the emergence of an attachment between the child and the mother (Balbi, 1969). This attachment, which reflects the emotional relationship between the child and the mother, makes the child look for comfort from mother, especially when he feels fear and uncertainty (Ainsworth, 1989). Bfolkko et al. (2002) showed that any unsecure attachment has correlation with one-year depression. They also showed that insecure styles have mutual relationship with depressive vulnerability factors, including intimate relationships and self-esteem within a model of depression. In the most well-known theory of the schema, Yang (1999) presented a schematic model focused on cognitive-behavioral problems. According to him, early maladaptive schemes are deep schematic patterns formed in childhood or adolescence, lasting in life, related to one's relationship with oneself and others, and they are severely inefficient. The existence of early maladaptive schemes has been confirmed in adults with depression (Montazeri et al., 2012). Additionally, Holversen, Wang, (Eisman et al. 2010) (Montazeri et al., 2012) in a 9-year longitudinal study examined the stability of dysfunctional attitudes and early maladaptive schemas in depressed people. The results of this study showed that early maladaptive schemas and dysfunctional attitudes are stable over time and could be a vulnerability factor for depression. Looking at the literature of studies conducted in Iran and foreign countries, it is found that the relatively large share of research papers to depression has been linked with the above three theories. In the majority of them, the degree of correlation among these variables and depression has been considered. However, no study has studied these three variables at the same time (the simultaneous effect of these factors on each other) and the control group has not been included in their studies. Using this research project, we aim to fill this gap in depression studies.

Methodology

The method of this research is descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of this study included all depressed women admitted to Mashhad hospitals in 2017. Samples of the study included 60 depressed women hospitalized. The convenient and random sampling method was used in this study. Samples of study were randomly selected from Sina Hospital of Mashhad among those who met the inclusion criteria of study. Inclusion criteria of study included 1) the age group 20 to 40 years, 2) the lack of previous use of substances, 3) clinical diagnosis of depression through diagnostic interviews SCID-1 by the psychiatrist and based on Beck's Depression Self-Assessment Scale, 4) having no specific disease and physical symptom

Research tools

Adult Attachment Styles Questionnaire: Adult Attachment Index (AAI) was used to measure attachment styles. The standardized form of this test normalized on the students of the University of Tehran by Besharat has 15 questions assessing secure, avoidance and ambivalence attachment styles on Likert scale (five-point). The minimum and maximum test scores were 5 and 25, respectively. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the questions related to secure, avoidance and ambivalence styles were 0.85, 0.84, and 0.85 for all samples, respectively.

Correlation coefficients were calculated between scores of 300 subjects twice in four weeks' intervals to assess re-test validity. These coefficients for secure, avoidance and ambivalent attachment styles for all subjects were 0.87, 0.83, and 0.84, respectively, which indicates that test re-test validity is acceptable (Besharat, 2005). Content validity of adult attachment scale was assessed by measuring the correlation coefficients among the scores of 15 psychologists. The Kendall consensus coefficients for secure, avoidance, and ambivalent attachment styles were calculated to be 0.80, 0.61 and 0.57, respectively (Besharat, 2005).

Early maladaptive schemas questionnaire: This questionnaire consists of a short form of Yang's Schematic Questionnaire (YSQ-SF). The questionnaire contains 75 items that were developed by Jeffrey Young (1988) to evaluate 15 early maladaptive schemas. Standardization of the Yang Schema Questionnaire (YSQ-SF) in Iran was conducted by (Ahi, 2005). The internal consistency of this questionnaire was obtained 0.97 in female population 0.98 in male population using Cronbach's alpha (Ahi, 2005, quoted by Lotfi, 2006). This questionnaire has a face validity of 0.66 to 0.84 (Fati and Motaby, 2006). Several studies have also shown its efficacy in differentiating patients based on early maladaptive schemas (Yang, 2007). The psychometric properties of the questionnaire were presented in Smith et al., 1995. In this study, the alpha coefficient was obtained from 0.83 to 0.96 for each early maladaptive schemas and the test-retest coefficient in the non-clinical population was obtained between 0.50 and 0.82. The internal validity of through calculating the internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire and Cronbach's alpha for total score was reported 0.94 (Zolfaghari & Fatehizadeh, 2008).

-Positive Affection Questionnaire: To measure positive affection, a Positive and Negative Affection Questionnaire will be used that it was developed by (Watson et al. 1988). This scale consists of 20 categories that express 20 feelings (10 positive feelings and 10 negative feelings) and are presented in terms of words, and the complement view of these feelings at three dimensions of the past, present and future, and it is evaluated on a 5-point scale (Soltanizadeh & Malekpour, 2008; quoted by Bakhshi Pour and Dejkam, 2005). The range of scores for each subscale is from 10 to 50 (Bakhshi Pour & Dejkam, 2005). In the recent study, the subjects responded to the items based on their general state. The coefficients of internal consistency (alpha) for the positive affection subscale and for the negative affection sub-scale are 0.88 and 0.87, respectively. In confirming the validity of the test using test-retest method with 8-week interval, it was reported 0.68 for a positive affection sub-scale and 0.71 for negative affection sub-scale (Watson & Clark, 1988). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale in the (Husseini, 2002) research was equal to 0.85, indicating internal stability. (Abolghasemi, 2003) obtained the coefficient of internal correlation of components and total scale between 0.44 and 0.49, which all of them were significant and indicate the construct validity of this scale (quoted in Soltanizadeh et al., 2008).

-Beck Depression Inventory - Second Edition: The questionnaire consists of 21 questions, developed to measure the feedback and symptoms of depressed patients and its items have been developed based on the observation and presentation of common attitudes and symptoms among mentally depressed patients. This questionnaire is a type of self-assessment test. Subjects should respond on a four-point Likert scale from zero to three. This scale determines the varying degrees of depression from mild to very severe, and its scores range from minimum of zero to a maximum of 63. This questionnaire is revised form of Beck Depression Inventory developed to measure the severity of depression (Beck et al., 1996). Beck, Steer and Brown's research results showed that this questionnaire has a high internal stability (Beck et al., 1996). Another study also reported a coefficient of alpha of 0.91, split-half correlation coefficient of 0.89, and test re-test coefficient of 0.93 at one-week interval. In a sample of 94 people in Iran, Fati reported that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.91 and the re-test reliability of this scale was 0.96 at one-week interval (Fati, 2003).

Data analysis method:

Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation were used to analyze the data, and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to investigate the research question.

Findings:

Positive affection has a mediating role in the relationship between attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas of depressed women.

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the studied variables.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviations of research variables

Variables	Mean	SD
Positive affection	8.65	2.28
Attachment Styles	7.58	2.64
Early maladaptive schema	3.11	0.88
Depression	10.28	5.12

Table 2: Correlation coefficients between positive affection scores and attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas of depressed women

Variables	Correlation coefficient	p-value
Positive affection	0.36	0.01
Attachment Styles	0.42	0.01
Early maladaptive schema	0.33	0.01
Depression	0.39	0.01

Investigating the correlation coefficients between positive affection scores on the relationship between attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas of depressed women showed positive affection (0.36), attachment style (0.42), early maladaptive schema (0.33), and depression (0.39) have significant relationship ($p \leq 0.01$). These correlation coefficients show that with the increase of positive affection scores and its effect on attachment style and early maladaptive schema, depression symptoms reduced in depressed women.

Discussion and conclusion

According to the findings of this research, positive affection showed a significant mediating role in our hypothesized model. Therefore, it can be concluded that attachment styles, both directly and indirectly, can affect depression in an individual due to the variable of early maladaptive schema. This means that the secure attachment style of a person has a positive effect on his schema, and thereby decreases the level of depression in a person. On the other hand, an insecure attachment style with a negative effect on the person's schema increases depression in the person. In line with this study, Lumely and Harkens (2007) study showed that early maladaptive schemas related to worthless topics preferentially moderate the relationship between childhood discomfort and unpleasantness that are the main symptoms of depression, Rainer research (2008) suggests a relationship between attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas, and Ahi research (2005) showed that part of depression variance (99%) is predicted by early maladaptive schemas. According to the findings of this study, it can be concluded that depression is predictable issue due to the nature of the early formation of attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas in depressed women. Accordingly, considering

the importance of attachment styles and schemas and their outcomes, it is suggested that more attention to be paid on the factors affecting their formation, and research to be conducted to identify these factors. It is recommended that all counselors and psychotherapists take measure to change and modify insecure attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas by positive affection to take an important step in prevention of depression and its relapse. Since the formation of secure and insecure attachment styles and early maladaptive schemas are effective in depression, it is suggested that counseling sessions to be hold during the life of people, and according to results of such research, it is required that comprehensive programs to be planned and implemented to reduce depression and prevent it by specialists.

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