Exploring relationship between parents attachment styles, identity styles and substance abuse among male high-school students in Bandar Abbas

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ABSTRACT

Object: This study investigated the relationship between parent’s attachment styles, identity styles and substance abuse among male high-school students. Multiple regression analysis was used to test research hypothesis. Method: Participants included 380 high-school male students selected randomly from area 1 and 2 high-schools of Bandar Abbas Educational system. Data collecting tools of the research include questionnaire of Attachment Styles, extended Objective measure of ego identity status and questionnaire of drug and alcohol use. Results: Results indicated the variables included in the model explain 73 percent of the variation in criterion variable (substance abuse). Among the predictor variables, achievement identity and secure attachment style have a negative and significant relationship and diffused identity has a positive and significant relationship with substance abuse.

Key words: Parent’s attachment styles, Identity, Substance abuse, Male high-school students.

Introduction

Substance abuse among teenagers is considered as one of the social, psychological and physiological problems that cause different social, educational, physical and family concerns. Due to delay in appearance of its effects, studying the effects of substance abuse in different societies is very difficult.

World Health Organization [1] states the issue of drug production, transfer and distribution, among three other major concerns, i.e. production and saving terrorist weapons, environmental pollution, poverty and social class gap, which threaten human being in social, economic and cultural contexts worldwide.

In a research comprising 30 European countries, about 50 percent of students had experience of drinking alcohol for more than 40 times and marijuana was recognized the most common one after alcohol [2]. In another research on 12-17 years old Australian teens it was shown that marijuana was the common drug used among them and 25 percent of students had experienced it at least once [3]. In Iran, due to religious and law limits and secret behaviors of teenagers, it is difficult to collect exact and comprehensive information about the issue.

However, some studies have done in this regard. For instance, Ayatollahi et al., [4] state that 32 percent of Shirazian students have experienced alcohol drinking and 2.2 percent used ecstasy drugs. In some studies, there are considerable evidences about relationship between the beginning of Substance abuse and beginning of adolescence. For example Zimmerman et al., [5] states that learned compatibility pattern have a key role in Substance abuse. One of the important characteristics of adolescence is trying to find a clear meaning of identity. Forming a fundamental and consistent identity is considered as one of the growth duties of teenagers and one of the most important challenges in this period is identity vs. Role Confusion [6]. Based on Marcia [7,8] practically expanded Ego Identity idea by extensive interviewing with people and relating them to one of the four identity styles based on their commitment degree and their exploration in job, religion and politics. Based on purpose of every extent, the four identity styles are implicated based on presence or absence of crisis, decision and commitment period and private investment limit. Those who have identity achievement style are those who have experienced crisis, solve it successfully and follow self-chosen purposes. Foreclosed identity owners also have identity. Although they have not passed the...
criterion but they follow what is chosen by their parents or society. Identity diffused people may not experience any crisis or may have experienced it, but they don’t follow any purposes. The fourth style, moratorium identity is those who experience actively a crisis at the time but follow unclear purposes [8].

Various researches have studied the effect of identity styles on substance abuse. In an investigation, Bishop et al., [9] have studied relationship between different identity styles and alcohol drinking among college freshmen. Researchers reported an opposite and durable linear relation for complexity of identity status and students’ scores in alcohol questionnaire. Students with lower identity complexity showed higher level of alcohol drinking, qualitatively and quantitatively. There was also an opposite linear relation between identity complexity and annual alcohol drinking. In another study, Astin and Salem [10] in a survey study investigated the relationship between cigarette and religious identity status among students of Beirut University, Lebanon. Results of study showed that after control of demographic factors and risky behavioral, personal and environmental factors, there is an opposite relation between religious identity and regular cigarette usage among male and female students.

Jones and Hartmann [11] have also studied relationship between identity styles and fancy drug use among grade 7-12 students of Arizona, USA. Researchers found that unlike teenagers with foreclosed identity, teenagers with diffused identity use twice more cigarette and alcohol, triple more inhalation drugs and five-fold more marijuana. Researchers reported the frequency of the use among achievement identity and moratorium identity in between the limit of foreclosed and diffused identity. In general, these findings support the idea that the more complex and well-shaped the identity style of person, the less drug use behavioral pattern. Results of the researches are mostly supportive of achievement and foreclosed identity as predictor variables of Substance abuse. On the other hand, adolescence is full of considerable changes in attachment relations. In revolutionary psychology, relation between mother and her infant is called attachment. Attachment begins from infant and is constant during the times [12]. Following Bowlby’s investigation [12], Ainsworth et al.,[13] considers three different attachment styles in his research including secure attachment, ambivalent attachment and avoidant attachment. Secure attachment to parents and peers in adolescence and adulthood has positive effect on future life of the people in so far as it increases life satisfaction, social support from peers and psychological health. Problematic attachments (ambivalent and avoidant attachments) basically increase vulnerability of future problems and disorder in attachment relations of childhood predicts future problems in adolescence.

Various researches show that attachment styles are considered revolutionary and important factors in personality attitudes and formation. Parallel to conducted researches about relationship between identity styles and substance abuse, a huge amount of researches consider the relationship between attachment styles and substance abuse. For instance, Walant[14] believes that those who are vulnerable of substance abuse and alcohol drinking suffer from attachment needs and try to satisfy their needs by drug and alcohol. Kohut [15] supposes that drug addiction occurs when people fail from giving attention to attachment symbols. Some of researches in this regard related substance abuse with emotional distress, incomplete socialization and avoidance of the peers [16,17].

Brennan and Shaver [18] reported that insecure attachment styles of students relates to massive alcohol drinking and drinking alcohol to overcome stress. Other researchers found similar relation between insecure attachment and drinking alcoholic drinks [19, 20, 21]. In this regard, Casper et al., [22] found in a research that illegitimate drug use is increasing among those who have insecure attachment. Based on investigations and existing theoretical principles, in this research we try to discuss identity styles and parental attachment among male students, at the same time relation between the styles and substance abuse. In general the significant question of this research is whether there is any significant relation between identity style and parental attachment of male high-school students and their substance abuse? Based on this question, the main purpose of the research is to investigate the relationship between identity styles and parental attachment and Substance abuse among students; and includes the following subsidiary purposes:

- Investigating relation between identity styles and substance abuse tendency among students
- Investigating relation between attachment styles and substance abuse tendency among students.

**Material and Methods**

Research plan is correlation and the information is collected in a survey. Statistical society of the research includes all male students of daily high-schools of Bandar-Abbas in 2010-2011. For selecting the sample we used Morgan Table. 361 participants were the exact amount of sample, for avoiding subject downfall we used about 390 participants.

For sampling in high-schools, multi-level random sampling method was used. For this purpose we randomly selected 7 students from 4 classes among 8 high-schools from area 1 and 6 high-schools from area 2 of Bandar Abbas educational system, total of selected students from area 1 was 224 and 168 from area 2 and sum of them was 392 students. After filling questionnaire we analyzed 380 questionnaires. 12 questionnaires were ignored due...
to incompatible given responds. Attachment style questionnaire of Feeney and Noller [23] was used to assess Attachment styles of participants. The questionnaire included 15 questions about participants’ believe about secure attachment, ambivalent attachment and avoidant attachment, every subscale included five items. Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranged from completely agree to completely disagree. Higher score in each subscale represent dominant attachment style. Researchers reported reliability coefficient of secure attachment style subscale as 0.50, avoidant attachment style subscale as 0.65 and ambivalent attachment style subscale as 0.75. In this study we calculated reliability of secure attachment style subscale as 0.59, avoidant attachment style subscale as 0.63 and ambivalent attachment style subscale as 0.78. For assessing participant’s identity style, we used extended objective measure of ego identity status [24]. This questionnaire has 24 items including four subscales of achievement, foreclosed, diffused and moratorium identity. Each item is rated on a 3-point Likert scale ranged from completely agree to completely disagree. Higher score in each subscale represent the dominant identity style. Benion and Adams [24] reported the range of Krunbakhalpha coefficient of the questionnaire in cosmology as 0.53 - 0.73 (average 0.61) and in inter-personal relations as 0.53-0.80 (average 0.64). For measuring Substance abuse variant we used Persian version of alcohol and drug Abuse Survey questionnaire [25]. Method of responding was objective; it was offered as yes-no questions or multiple choices. The questionnaire was designed in USA and is conducted in two million teenage and includes questions about different kinds of addictive and ecstasy drugs, the age of beginning the use, place of use and so on. Krunbakhreliability coefficient of subscales varied from 0.74 to 0.83. For analyzing collected information we used mean index, standard deviation and correlation matrix. For measuring tools reliability we also used Krunbakh Alpha reliability coefficient. Multiple regression analyses were used to explain and predict criterion variable by the use of predictor variables. For assessing significance of model in regression model we used F test and statistical T test was used to determine significance of Beta coefficient. It must be noted that in this research identity and attachment styles are regarded as predictor variables and substance abuse as criterion variable. All of the statistical calculations were done by the use of SPSS statistical software version 16.

Results and Discussion

As it was mentioned, for explaining substance abuse variable as criterion variable, we assessed secure attachment, ambivalent attachment and avoidant attachment styles and foreclosed, moratorium, diffused and achievement identity styles as predictor variables. Mean descriptive index and standard deviation of every variable is presented in table 1.

As it is shown in table 1, average substance abuse among under study students in recent month was 2.21 times. Average scores of students in subscales of attachment style questionnaire are also given in table 1. The highest score, 3.35, belong to secure attachment style. Highest average score of identity style in the questionnaire, 3.65, belong to moratorium identity. Furthermore, for deductive analyzing of research data, we should calculate correlation matrix of predictor variables and criterion variable. Correlation matrix of under study variables are presented in table 2.

Based on it, achievement identity variable has the highest negative correlation coefficient and moratorium identity style has the lowest positive correlation coefficient with drug abuse. Correlation of other variables is between these two. Among attachment styles, secure attachment style and ambivalent attachment style have significantly negative and positive correlation, respectively with substance abuse variable.

The research aims is to show a significant relation between attachment and identity styles and substance abuse tendency. Hence, in under study model we used attachment and identity styles as predictor variables and substance abuse as criterion variable. After analyzing regression on research data, we observed the model under study explains about 73 percent of criterion variable variance. We used statistical test of variance analysis to determine significance of $R^2$, in which $F$=144.41 is statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). Detailed results are presented in table 3.

As it is shown in table 3, we used statistical T test to calculate significance of calculated Beta coefficient of every predictor variables of the model. The results show that achievement identity style with beta -0.79 and secure attachment style with beta -0.32 are negative predictors and diffused identity style with beta 0.26 is positive predictor of substance abuse. However, other variables of the model not predict drug abuse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAS</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AvAS</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmAS</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIS</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main hypothesis of this research is about relationship between parental attachment style and identity styles and substance abuse tendency among students. As it was mentioned in finding section, statistical analysis showed achievement identity and secure attachment style were negative predictors and diffused identity was positive predictor of substance abuse. In other word, Substance abuse is less among those with secure attachment and achievement identity style. While those with diffused identity use more drugs. Finding of the research is similar to researches that report less substance abuse among those with secure attachment style. In this research those with secure attachment style are led to flexible personality. These people have non-verbal behaviors and positive orientation to their peers, they are talented in symbolic games, can accept their deficiencies, are tolerant about criticize and stress, they are sincere people and rely on their emotion and accept values [26]. Researches of Cook [27] and Kohut [15] also support the findings of this research. It seems what enables secure attachment owners to withstand environmental demands for using drugs is their trust and reliance to great people of their life. These people can negatively respond to these requests and are not easily affected by these demands. In the other hand, similar to previous research, diffused identity is suggested as positive and significant predictor and achievement identity as negative and significant predictor of drug abuse. As it was mentioned in Jones and Hartman [28] studies, diffused identity is discussed as a drug use predictor. Structural mechanism of drug use among those with diffused identity is not such complex. They are easily affected by drugs because of not relying on positive purposes and participation in anti-social groups, their pessimism, rage, unprotected feelings, hopelessness and lack of clear meaning about identity [29]. According to results of researches, diffused identity adolescents have no commitment and do not participate in exploration [30]. These people are not Attachment in achieving identity [31]. Their most emphasis is on present and they never ignore personal enjoyment.

In general, as recognized by Marcia [8] and others [29, 31] although identity styles are not always constant, but have almost important role in determining behaviors. As achieved identity lack exploration and assurance factors on life’s important purposes, it seems to increase offensive actions like drug use. According to last studies, the kind of identity is not determiner of drug use, but what determines it is the quality and complexity of identity [9] and comprehensiveness of achieved identity [10]. We can conclude that secure attachment style can be regarded as a significant barrier for drug use among teenagers because it equips people with strong basic emotional powers. Lack of sentimental power in individuals within secure attachment leads to substance abuse in adolescence. Insecure attachment styles can be regarded as context to substance abuse because it makes negative emotions.

Using self-reported questionnaires and probable deficiencies of the tools and limiting statistic society of the research to male high-school students of Bandar Abbas, can be regarded as limits of this research. On the other hand, because of law and social limits of the research about substance abuse,
collected information may be in risk of participant’s biases. So in generalizing the results of the research these limits must be considered. Furthermore, it’s suggested to study relation between attachment styles and other cognitive and emotional variable such as motivation, self-esteem, self-efficacy and psychological and emotional well-being and relation between identity styles and other cognitive and emotional variables such as psychological health, educational success and self-efficacy in future researches.

References


