

The Relationship Between Attachment Styles and Parental Attitudes in High School Students

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of the parents of the students studying in various high schools and the relationships between attachment styles. The study sample consisted of 206 students. The data was collected through the *Parental Attitudes Scale* (PAS) and *Relationship Scales Questionnaire* (RSQ). Test data was analyzed by correlation analysis. As a result of the study, fearful binding affinities were found to be lessened with the increasing trends of secure attachment. Among the students who were included in the study, those who were not shown any interest by their families can be interpreted as those who go through the perception of pressure. As the reduction of the democratic attitude observed, the authoritarian attitude and protective attitude had increased among the participants.

INTRODUCTION

Sensitive attitudes of parents like sensitivity and protective-demanding in accordance with the early and middle childhood into adolescence leads to psychological and social benefits (Steinberg and Morris 2001). According to the Erkan's (2002) research, sensitivity of the protective-demanding and authoritarian attitudes of students with parents, high levels of negative evaluation and social anxiety scored a democratic attitude of the parents of students who have received the lowest score. A lot of work for the adolescent role in the family relations was observed (Berger 2005; Keskin and Çam 2008; Ünüvar 2007; Yavuzer 2005; Gencoglu et al. 2016; Yilmaz 1999). According to Örgün's (2000) research, students who grew up with democratic parental attitudes had more self-perception than students who think that they grew up in an oppressive, authoritarian and overly protective family. In the survey, which was conducted by Akbag (1994), the girls stated that their mothers are more helpful on the other hand the boys reported that their mothers were implementing more and more pressure.

Research on families' with authoritarian attitude determined that children with low self-authoritarian family have difficulty in socializing (Goodman and Gurian 1999). Starting from Bowlby's work, unsafe attachment type is considered as the determining factor of psychopathology in the later periods of life, while safe attachment is considered as in relation with healthy processes (Kesebir et al. 2011). Insecure attachment styles

are seen as determiners of having psychological problems at later periods in life whereas secure attachment styles are associated with healthy processes (Nakash et al. 2002). An authoritarian parent, without accepting the child's wishes, establishes the rules and applies them in a very strict manner. This attitude, reduces the child's self-esteem, and also can lead the child to be unhappy and introverted (Eksi 1990). Researches show that authoritarian families who do not pay attention to their families, did not see enough attention from their own families in their own childhood. (Berk 2000; Huxley 2001).

Bowlby (1969) young children's inner lives are rich and complex, organized around their primary emotional relationships, and governed by logic only dimly accessible to adults. Attachment theory is today considered an integral part of contemporary psychoanalytic theory and practice, and yet the theoretical and clinical implications of Bowlby's emphasis on fear and the search for safety have been largely overlooked (Slade 2014). Bowlby's (1988) attachment theory provides an explanation for the function of the mother-child relationship and how a disruption in that relationship could affect the child. Attachment theory explains the individual's tendency to form strong emotional bonds with others (Crowell and Lay 1994). Despite the instinctive reaction, involvement makes mother and baby closer (Bretherton 1992). Bowlby (1969) states that each individual has an attachment and they come to the world with this equipment

structure. This link structure of the individual, provide the mother being close to and trust (Bowlby 1982) Studies in early years show that if the children feel that they are loved, they will be more confident and happy in their later years (Lopez and Brennan 2000; Pietromonaco and Barrett 2000; Prior and Glaser 2006). During the adolescence, relations between adolescent mother-father experiences fundamental transformations in terms of attachment patterns. Secure attachment to parents; help the adolescent identity and autonomy derivation (Hortacsu et al. 1993; Dozier 1999; cited by Keskin and Çam 2008).

Young people, who are in a good relation with their families and friends, are more successful, socially more competent and have a higher level of self-esteem (Sümer and Güngör 1999). Therefore, the main objective of any young person is to find their way in the world, independently, without being bound. (Lee 2015). Cömert and Ögel (2014), in their research, the dismissing attachment style was most prevalent, it was displayed by 48 percent of the students. Significant correlations were found between substance use and both the dismissing and preoccupied attachment styles. Continuous use of cannabis was highly correlated with lack of a secure attachment style. Deniz et al. (2005) to investigate the social skills and loneliness levels of university students with respect to their attachment styles, results showed that loneliness was positively correlated with dismissing, fearful and preoccupied attachment style but negatively correlated with secure attachment style. According to Saya's (2006) research, the main purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between attachment styles and perfectionism as a function of gender in Turkish high school students. Factor structure of Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale in Turkish high school was also investigated.

From the relevant literature, studies that have investigated parental attitudes in adolescents have a greater number both in Turkey and abroad, but there are no studies that address the parental attitudes and attachment styles of adolescents living in Northern Cyprus. The purpose of this study, is to investigate the relationship between a safe, obsessed, fearful, indifferent attachment styles and perceived parental attitudes of high school students, studying at various high schools in Northern Cyprus which is under the Ministry of National Education.

Problem statement: What is the relationship between perceived parental attitudes (Authoritarian attitude, protective attitude, indifferent attitude, democratic attitude); and fearful attachment, dismissing attachment, secure attachment, preoccupied attachment of high school students?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

As a relational scanning model, this research model studies the difference in correlation between parental attitudes of high school students and safe, obsessed, fearful, dismissing attachment styles.

Sample

The population of the study consisted of high school students have been studying in the academic year 2011-2012 in North Cyprus from Nicosia, Famagusta and Morphou districts. The sample of the study is randomly determined under the Ministry of National Education, high school, vocational school, fine arts high school, prep, 1, 2, 3 from the randomly selected students who attend classes on a voluntary basis and who participated in the study 87 (%) female and 117 (%) male students.

Research Instruments

Parental Attitudes Scale (PAS): The study to determine the attitudes of parents developed by and Kuzgun (1972) and revised by Eldeleklioglu (1993) the Parent Attitude Inventory. Parental Attitudes Scale consists of three sub-dimensions as Democratic, Protective/Demanding and Authoritarian. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients calculated for sub-dimensions range between 0.78- 0.82 (Kuzgun and Eldeleklioglu 2005).

Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ): This questionnaire is made up of 17 items to measure the dimensions of attachment defined by Bartholomew (1990). The Relationship Scale Questionnaire (RSQ), developed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994a, 1994b), originally consisted of 30 items and is intended to measure four attachment prototypes. This scale has been translated by Sümer and Güngör (1999a) into Turkish and reduced to 17 items. Participants were asked

to what extent each item described themselves and their general attitudes regarding close relationships; answers were given using a 7-point scale (1 = does not describe me at all, 7 = completely describes me) (Sümer 2006).

Data Analyses

The data was analyzed by SPSS 11.5 package program. To assess the relationship between parental attitudes and attachment styles Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were calculated. The students were informed about the purpose of the study prior to data collection; volunteers were included in the study. The scales which are not considered in the evaluation of the data are left blank.

RESULTS

In this part of the study, the relationship between a safe, obsessed, fearful, indifferent attach-

ment styles and perceived parental attitudes of high school students were discussed (Table 1).

According to the results of the analysis, fearful attachment and secure attachment ($r = -.149$, $p < .05$), negative correlations preoccupied attachment and fearful attachment ($r = .269$, $p < .05$), dismissing attachment and secure attachment ($r = .149$, $p < .05$), attachment and preoccupied attachment ($r = .201$, $p < .05$), dismissing attachment and protective bonding ($r = .147$, $p < .05$), ($r = .164$, $p < .05$) low-level relationships were found between the positive direction of styles; dismissing attachment and democratic attitudes. Authoritarian attitude of indifferent attitude ($r = .789$, $p < .05$) between the high level of positive and protective attitudes and democratic attitude ($r = .509$, $p < .05$) indicated a positive and moderately significant relationship; authoritarian attitude and democratic attitude ($r = -.370$, $p < .05$) indifferent attitude of democratic attitudes ($r = .359$, $p < .05$), no significant relationships were found to be moderately negative.

Table 1: Attachment styles and parent attitudes on averages over pearson product moment correlation coefficients analysis results

		FEAR.	DISS.	SECU.	PREO.	AUTH.	PRO	INDF.	DEM.
FEAR.A.		1							
	N	206							
DISS.A.	r	.079	1						
	P	.262							
	N	206	206						
SECU.A.	r	-.149*	.149*	1					
	P	.033	.032	.000					
	N	206	206	206					
PREO.A.	r	.269**	.201**	.068	1				
	P	.000	.004	.331	.000				
	N	206	206	206	206				
AUTH.AT	r	.034	.018	.017	.025	1			
	P	.628	.802	.812	.726	.000			
	N	206	206	206	206	206			
PROT.AT.	r	.088	.147*	.009	.061	.088	1		
	P	.209	.035	.895	.380	.211	.000		
	N	206	206	206	206	206	206		
INDF.AT.	r	.020	.132	.056	.002	.789**	.024	1	
	P	.775	.059	.423	.077	.000	.736	.000	
	N	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	
DEMO.A.T	r	.063	.164*	.019	.069	-.370**	.509**	.359**	1
	P	.372	.019	.788	.328	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2- tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2- tailed)

FEAR.A.=fearful attachment, DISS.A.= dismissing attachment, SECU.A.= secure attachment, PREO.A.= preoccupied attachment; AUTH.AT.= Authoritarian attitude, PROT.AT.= protective attitude, INDIF.AT.= indifferent attitude, DEMO.AT.= democratic attitude

DISCUSSION

As the reduction of the democratic attitude authoritarian attitude, protective attitude increases with increasing democratic attitude, it decreased the increasing the democratic attitude of uninterested attitude. According to the Keskin and Çam's (2008) survey, indifferent and fearful attachment improves family conflict in the lives of adolescents, control and repressive attitude is intense, dominated established by passive and passive appreciation and valuing systems used in problem solving and defence mechanisms. Sümer and Güngör (1999a) revealed that authoritarian and permissive-indulgent parenting styles were the most commonly used parenting attitudes in Turkish parents. This study may show that attachment system should be explained within the context of mother child interaction more than father child interaction.

According to Gezer (2001), adolescents who grew up in families with high cohesion have reached the conclusion they have a secure attachment style more than the adolescents who grew up in a family environment with low levels of compliance fearful, preoccupied, or indifferent attachment styles. Milevsky et al. (2006), 9, and 11 his study of adolescents under the supervision of the mother have higher grades compared to descriptive-authoritarian parents. Some researchers found that individuals, who live with insecure attachment styles, have low self-esteem compared to individuals with secure attachment style (Powers et al. 2006; Lele 2008). Park et al. (2004) examined whether people with different attachment styles derive their self-esteem from different sources of self-worth. Their results also showed that preoccupied participants had low self-esteem and were highly contingent on others' approval.

CONCLUSION

As a result, trends in the secure attachment of high school students are decreased with increasing trends of fearful attachment. It was shown that increase in binding obsessed with fearful attachment, indifferent attachment increases, secure, preoccupied, protective attachment tendencies and democratic attitudes increases as the indifferent attitude of the authoritarian state's attitude tend to increase. This study also has some limitations. This study is

made in three cities with high school students and the high schools, which could have been reached by the researchers, are located in North Cyprus. Therefore, the results can be generalized only with high school students. In similar studies, a larger sample can be used. This is the first study in Northern Cyprus, dealing with parental attitudes and attachment styles with adolescents. In this regard, the findings of this study can be considered to give an important basis for further study, guidance and counselling to be worked on. Finally, guidance sessions, conducted in schools must be organized to include the families of adolescents too.

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