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**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLES AND ALEXITHYmia AND
INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS IN ADOLESCENTS**

GHAMAR FUADIAN¹, HAKIMEH AGHAEI²

Islamic Azad University Shahrood Branch, Department of Psychology

1-MA student of General Psychology

2- Ph.D in General Linguistics/ Faculty member of Shahrood Islamic Azad University

And Analysis on the Relationship between Attachment Styles and Alexithymia Among
Teenagers

ABSTRACT

In this research we investigated the attachment styles and alexithymia in a sample containing students. 150 high school students (75 boys and 75 girls) studying in Damghan schools in majors of human science, empirical science and mathematics participated in the present research. The students were asked to fill out the forms of adults attachment index (AAI) and Toronto Alexithymia scale (FTAS-20). The results of the study showed that there are negative significant relations between secure attachment styles and alexithymia. Also there is a positive and significant relation between avoidant, and ambivalent styles and alexithymia. The subjects having secure attachment style had lower alexithymia compared to the subjects having insecure attachment styles. Also the amount of problems facing by the subjects having avoidant attachment were lower than alexithymia between subjects having ambivalent attachment styles. The results of modulated regression analysis showed that attachment styles can modulate the relation of students' alexithymia. According to the findings of the present research we can conclude that the relation between alexithymia and attachment is not a simple linear relation.

Key words: Attachment, Alexithymia, Emotional Regulation, Data Processing

INTRODUCTION

Attachment style in the internal realization (Besharat, 2013) of the attachment which a person have had with his caretakers. The attachment style of a person in childhood, determines his interaction pattern in life during his adolescence. There is relation between mothers', babies' and the type of love relations in adolescence attachment styles. Hazen and Shiver, presented three attachment styles in adolescence using determined attachment styles by Einsorth et al " secure, avoidance and ambivalence (Besharat, 2013). Hazen and Shiver believed that attachment styles determines the basic differences in mental picturing of romantic love by different persons. Balby (1980), expressed the formation processes of attachment between babies and mothers and showed that how the attachment behaviors and emotion systems determines the nature of images and personal experiences of a person from emotional link and interpersonal relations. Following the researches of Balby et al (1987) three secure, avoidance and ambivalent attachments were recognized. Continuous attachment style in the revolution process was the subject of the new researches in this field. The results obtained, confirmed this continuity(Mein et al, 1985). Normal and abnormal features of interpersonal relations are under the deep

effects of attachment styles of people. So the results of the study, secure attachment, is related to positive relational features such as happiness and closeness and avoidance attachment have a relation with lower levels of commitment and closeness and ambivalent attachment is related to the anxiety and passion about relations with lower happiness (Fienny, Noler, 1990). Avoidance persons are inclined to end the relationships more than ambivalence ones (Fienny, Noler, 1990; Hazen and Shiver, 1987). Following the dissolution of previous relations, restoring the relations, the restoration of new relations are different according to different attachment patterns. Avoiding people show less anxiety in the dissolution of relations compared to the ambivalent ones (Seismon, 1990). The latter group rapidly seek to start a new relationship (Fienny and Noler, 1990).

Alexithymia is one of these problems (Woldinger et al). Disability in cognitive analysis (Yam et al) of emotional data and regulation of the passion is defined as alexithymia. Alexithymia is a multi-dimensional component composing of difficulty in recognizing the emotions (Sonderson and Eions, 2001), difficulty in expressing the emotions for others, difficulty in distinguishing between physical tensions

and emotions (Lipert and Prugger, 2001) related to emotional highness, limited creative abilities which is determined in terms of lacks in imagination and objective recognition style, realistic or pragmatist. People suffering from alexithymia, consider the physical highnesses as abnormal, misinterpret the physical signs of passion, show the emotional failure through physical complaints and seek to treat physical signal in treatment processes.

Along with these crucial characteristics, other characteristics such as difficulties in emotional data processing, difficulty in expressing facial expressions and lower capacity for sympathy has been observed in people suffering from alexithymia. Because of their indifference and unwillingness toward others, so many interpersonal problems have been observed among them. Such people have cannot easily express their problems and do not have the ability to face interpersonal challenges in social situations. From cognitive sciences point of view, emotions are a group of mental components based on data processing which contain processes and symbolic and non-symbolic portrayals. The symbolic pictures include images and words and non-symbolic images include physical and internal tensions which are experienced while they're physically tensed. Symbolic systems such as language enables people to

ponder about and regulate his emotions and other experiences. The ability of alexithymia is lower out symbolic presentation of our emotions and as a result the relation between out symbolic portrayal of emotions and words seems to be weak. So it is not under the control of cognition (Eminet et al).

One of the problems facing by the researchers is the effective subject of modulator variables in relation to two or more psychological variables (criteria and predictive variables). So, the purpose of the present research is to investigate on the roles of attachment style in relation to alexithymia. Investigating such subjects is important because investigations have shown that attachment styles among the adults has relation with alexithymia (Besharat, Goli nejad, 2003). The researches on attachment styles in childhood (Balby, 1969; Douit, Hovver, 2011, Karokiwi, Jamaka and et al, 2011) have also shown that the sensitivity and responsibility of the early caretaker to the emotional statuses of the baby is the main determinant of learning the way to regulate the failing emotions and interpersonal reactions. According to these evidences, the possibility is raised that alexithymia is going to be modulated under the effect of secure and unsecure attachment styles.

Childhood experiences with caretakers who don't show their emotions, or people who do not believe in the forming emotions of the baby and do not act properly, can have a deep effect on the regulation of emotions in the next levels of life (Beggi and Taylor, 1997; Douit and et al, 2010; Rock and Verisimo, 2011, Gersham and Gulam, 2012). What we know about our emotions and the ability of recognizing ,describing and regulating out emotions is largely under the effect of the earlier interactions with the caretaker. So we can imagine that alexithymia is possibly related to attachment style. Attachment styles are defined as internal certain models of attachments which determine the form of behavior response in reaction to separation from attachments and rejoining to them. This style is generally formed by the experiences of baby and mother (caretaker), is rather static in different levels of life and affects social interactions (Balby ,1988; walvers et al, 2000). Regarding the theory by Balby, Einsorth and et al (1978) there are three attachment styles namely: secure, avoidance and ambivalence among the babies. These styles, were later confirmed about adults (Hazen and Shiver, 1987). Researchers who has investigated the attachment,have confirmed the effects of early experiences and internal models of attachment on the future

relationships and approaches on regulating the emotions among the adults (Einsorth et al, 1978; Balby, 1988,1980,1973,1969; Routbar and Shiver, 1994; Hindio and Schuarts, 1994). The researches have shown that people having secure attachment styles report lower degrees of negative emotions and stronger relationships. People having insecure attachment style, experience lower levels of positive emotions and are unable to self-regulate the stress, depression and other negative emotions. The researches carried out on the types of relations between attachment styles and alexithymia have shown that there are more evidences of alexithymia between unsecure attachments. Besharat, 2009, Tervisi et al, 2001, Turberg et al, 2010 , Fenagi, et al, 2002 , Queeman et al, 2004 and Montba Ruchi et al, 2004 investigated the family factors related to alexithymia. The results showed that grown children in inconvenient and unsecure environment, do not learn how to express their emotions and they become upset in experiencing their emotions. Such difficulties and lacks of appropriate patterns for emotions can end in anxiety and ambivalent expression of the emotions. Fukinishi et al (1997) reported that in researches on the students having weak caretakers, the subjects showed features of alexithymia specifically in difficulty of

expression emotions. Crammer and Loader (1995) believe that unsecure attachments can face the expansion of feeling with problems and prepare the ground for suffering from alexithymia. Besharat (2009) showed that unsecure emotions in attachment relations, predicts deficiencies in recognition and expression of emotions. The main purpose of the research is to investigate the relation between attachment styles and alexithymia.

METHODOLOGY

In this section we first introduce the design of the study and then explain about population, sampling method and features of samples. In the continue the execution method, instrumentation and approaches in statistical analysis are introduced.

3.2 the design of the study

The present research is descriptive and correlative (non-experimental). In this research we investigate the relation between attachment styles, alexithymia and interpersonal problems.

3.3 population of the study

The statistical population of the study includes the teenagers of Damghan City (n=150) which are selected voluntarily.

4.3 sampling

3.4.1 the sample volume

According to the view points of some experts (Lindman, Miranda and Gold, 1980 cited in

Human, 2011) the sample volume in regression and correlation studies, according to the design, should be at least 100. So for the present study, we have provided 150 questionnaires. (75)girls and (75) boys in the age of 13-19 conform the sample.

3.4.2 sampling method

In the present research we used simple random sampling method in order to collect the research data and after identification of the number of boy and girl high school students, we tried to give an equal proportion to the number of samples.

5.3 instrumentation

We used questionnaires below in order to collect the required data for the present research.

The questionnaire of attachment styles by Hazan and Shiver. The attachment scale of Hazan and Shiver includes 21 items which are provided in 1987 and is implemented on the students. This scale has been administered on the students of Tehran University by Besharat (2000) and has investigated three secure, avoidance and ambivalent attachments in a 5-degree scale of Likret (1-very low, 2- low, 3- average, 4- high, 5- very high).

The questions related to avoidance attachment are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; the questions related to secure attachment are 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; and the questions related to ambivalent

attachment are 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. The minimum and maximum of marks in sub scales of the test are 5 and 25.

Nurbakhsh and Mirnadri (2010) using Cronbach alpha coefficient obtained the reliability of the questionnaires with a sample of 127 students in Ahvaz City equal to 0.88. the reliability of the questionnaire in the research by Ebrahimi (2014) have been calculated as below:

The reliability of attachment style questionnaire and its dimensions according to Cronbach alpha

variable	No of items	reliability
Avoidance style	7	0.78
Secure style	7	0.80
Ambivalent style	7	0.82
Attachment style	21	0.80

20-item alexithymia Toronto questionnaire

During the recent years, Alexithymia is accepted as a characteristic factor which has an important role in psychosomatic diseases, but the related researches have always been faced with problems because of a lack which can be accurately measured by a strong criterion. Due to gross shortages in measuring this factor (Taylor and Biagby, 1993) they tried to design a self-report questionnaire according to scientific and empirical methods. During their studies they designed the 26-item questionnaire of alexithymia Toronto which had an approving internal constant and

validity. This questionnaire measured alexithymia from 4 dimensions. These dimensions were:

- 1- Problem in identification and distinguishing between emotions and physical sensations.
- 2- Problems is describing emotions
- 3- Decreasing imagination
- 4- Extrovert thoughts

In continue they tried to reexamine the combined structure of it. In this examination they found out that despite their expectations based on the fact that all questions must be correlated positively in some way, the questions related to decreasing factor of imagination showed a very weak correlation with the final results of the study. Even Hoviland et al, 1994, found a negative correlation between this factor and other factors in a way that a problematic factor in imagination showed a weak correlation with other dimensions of alexithymia structure. This was against the structure of alexithymia because it was expected people having extrovert thinking structure should decrease their imagination. But the results of other researches confirmed this fact in a way that finally Taylor and Balby assumed that may be in their researches the self-reporting of imagination activities have been limited because of inclination to acceptable

responses. On the other hand investigating imagination cannot solely measure mental activities sufficiently. According to the imbalance between these factors and other factors (Taylor and Biagby, 1994) tried to republish the questionnaire and finally provided a 22-item alexithymia Toronto questionnaire based on one other factor. An index in the questionnaire is :

1- Problem in identifying emotions

This part of the questionnaire includes 7 questions and measure the ability of the subjects in identifying emotions from physical sensations. This index includes questions: 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 31, 34.

2- Problem in expressing the emotions

This part includes 5 questions and measure the ability of the subjects on expressing the emotions or if they are able to express their emotions in terms of letters or not. This part includes questions 2, 4, 33, 32, 37.

1- Extrovert thinking

This part investigates the amount of introversion and stepping people in their emotions of themselves or others and includes questions 13, 39, 22, 5, 32, 35, 36. This questionnaire has an acceptable validity and reliability. The content validity of it is reported as the total mark and its reliability is calculated equal to 2.132, using tests EOT= 2.66, COM= 2.75, DIF= 2.71,(Taylor, 1994).

In the Persian form, the validity of the test was calculated equal to 77 with content validity method. The mentioned test was presented to two experts and they were asked to express their views on relation between the questions and alexithymia with the scales of absolutely unrelated to completely related. Then the correlation between the views of the experts were measured by Spearman formula and the results showed the correlation degree of 15. The validity of the test was obtained using a 20-member group and the latter version (half dividing and reexamination.

Reliability and validity

In the thesis by Monajemi Zadeh (2012) the simultaneous validity of the questionnaire was calculated and a strong correlation with the questionnaire of interpersonal problems were obtained ($r= 0.698$). hence the simultaneous validity was confirmed. Also the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach alpha. Generally the domain of Cronbach alpha is from 0 (no constancy) to +1 (complete reliability) and whatever it is closer to +1 the reliability of the questionnaire increases. The Cronbach alpha for this questionnaire is equal to 0.73 which is an acceptable reliability.

5- Implementing the research

After determining the sample volume and sampling method, the implementation of the

research began. At the beginning and after administering each three questionnaires to the selected students, verbal and written explanations were given at the beginning of the questionnaires about the purposes of the research and the questionnaires were given to 150 samples (75 boys and 75 girls) for 2 weeks. The time specified for answering all questionnaires was 20 minutes. The samples were reminded that their personal information will be preserved.

6- Data analysis

After administering the test and collecting data obtained from each questionnaire, they were investigated regarding the keys of each questionnaire and after entering the data to SPSS software, the stages of data analysis were implemented complying with the research hypotheses. The results are as below:

- 1- We used descriptive statistics tests in order to gain information and descriptive characteristics of the data such as mean value, standard deviation and frequency.
- 2- Pearson's correlation was used to obtain the results related to the research hypotheses and investigating the existing factors between variables of the research. In order to obtain the

results related to the main purpose of the research and also according to the fact that research variables are distance type, (criterion and predictive variables) the multi variable regression test was used by 'Inter' method.

Reliability of the questionnaire

The reliability of the instrument which is defined as credit and ability to trust, is that an instrument which is built for measuring a variable or a value will yield similar results if it is $r_a = \frac{j}{j-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum S_j^2}{S^2}\right)$ ation but in different time \dots of the calculation methods of reliability coefficient, is using Cronbach alpha which is used by SPSS software. The formula is:

In which:

J= the number of questions in the questionnaire or test

Sj²= variance of ith item

S²= the total variance

It is worth mentioning that Cronbach coefficient being lower than 60% is usually weak, about 70% is acceptable and higher than 80% is considered a good value. The more it is close to 100% the better it is.

questionnaire	item	No of items	No of samples for reliability analysis	Cronbachs alpha
Attachment styles	Avoidance style	7	25	0.73

questionnaire by Hazan and Schiver	Secure style	7	25	0.76
	Ambivalent style	7	25	0.84
	Attachment style	21	25	0.77
Alexithymia questionnaire	Identification of emotions	7	25	0.79
	Difficulty in expression of emotions	5	25	0.76
	Objective thinking	8	25	0.83
	alexithymia	20	25	0.82

Regarding the Cronbach alpha coefficient, it is resulted that the items of questionnaire, have an acceptable reliability.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section, according to the research subject we first used the descriptive indices table to do an analytic description of the related and peripheral variables. In the indices, the central attitudes , correlation indices and distribution coefficients are

mentioned. Histogram diagram is used to show the variables better.

In relation to the interpretive analyzes after investigation on reliability with Cronbach alpha, we used Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to investigate the normal status of data and examine the hypotheses. Then they have been investigated in two independent groups using Pearson and Spearman tests.

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of variable age in research samples

Central inclination indices			Dispersion indices			Distribution indices		
item	median	mean	Domain of change	variance	Standard deviation	Error of standard	Skewness	Kurtosis
17	17	16.36	6	1.61	1.27	0.19	-0.24	0.02

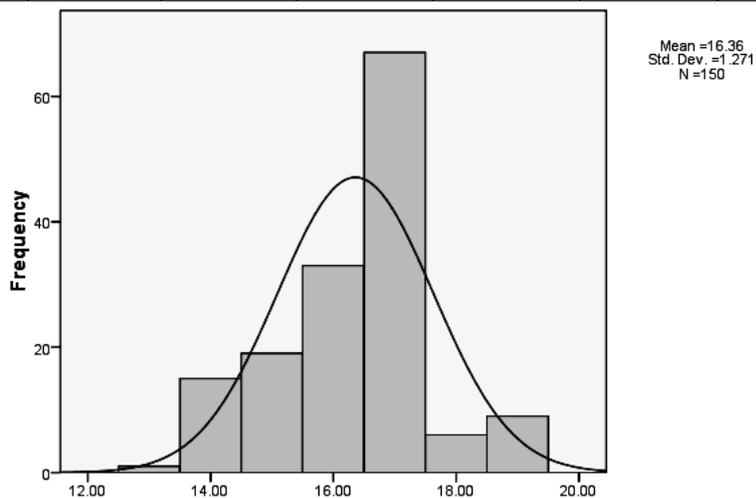


Diagram 4.3 histogram of variable age

Table 4.4 descriptive statistics of variable avoidance style in research samples

Central inclination indices			Dispersion indices			Distribution indices		
item	median	mean	Domain of change	variance	Standard deviation	Error of standard	Skewness	Kurtosis
20	19	18.74	20	11.46	3.38	0.19	0.22	0.73

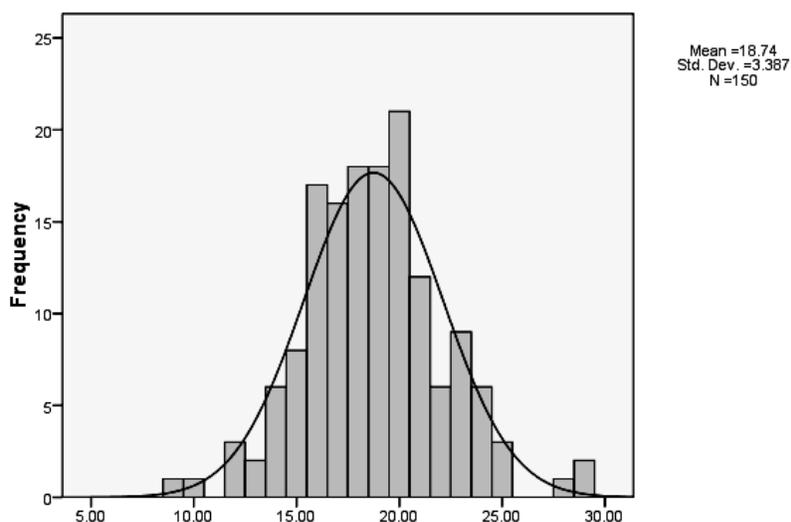


Diagram 4.4 histogram of variable avoidance style

Table 4.5 descriptive statistics of variable secure style in research samples

Central inclination indices			Dispersion indices			Distribution indices		
item	median	mean	Domain of change	variance	Standard deviation	Error of standard	Skewness	Kurtosis
22	20	20.30	23	16.9	4.01	0.19	0.18	0.28

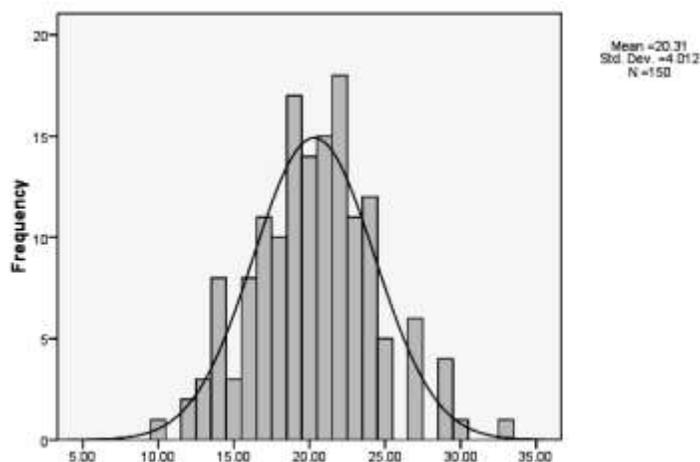


Diagram 4.5 histogram of variable secure style

Table 4.6 descriptive statistics of variable ambivalent style in research samples

Central inclination indices			Dispersion indices			Distribution indices		
item	median	mean	Domain of change	variance	Standard deviation	Error of standard	Skewness	Kurtosis
19	19	19.77	16	10.67	3.26	0.19	-0.19	-0.53

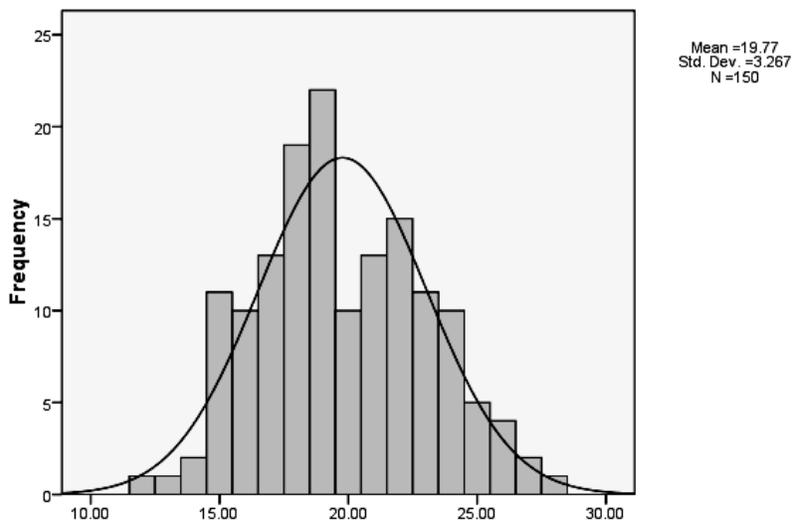


Diagram 4.6 histogram of variable ambivalent style

Table 4.7 descriptive statistics of variable difficulty in identification of emotions in research samples

Central inclination indices			Dispersion indices			Distribution indices		
item	median	mean	Domain of change	variance	Standard deviation	Error of standard	Skewness	Kurtosis

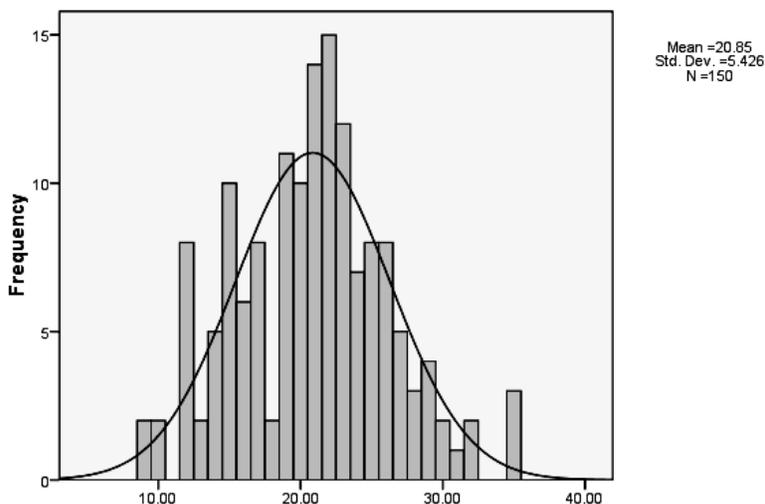


Diagram 4.7 histogram of variable difficulty in identification of emotions

Table 4.8 descriptive statistics of variable difficulty in expression of emotions in research samples

Central inclination indices			Dispersion indices			Distribution indices		
item	median	mean	Domain of change	variance	Standard deviation	Error of standard	Skewness	Kurtosis
15	15	15.33	15	13.53	3.67	0.19	0.03	-0.70

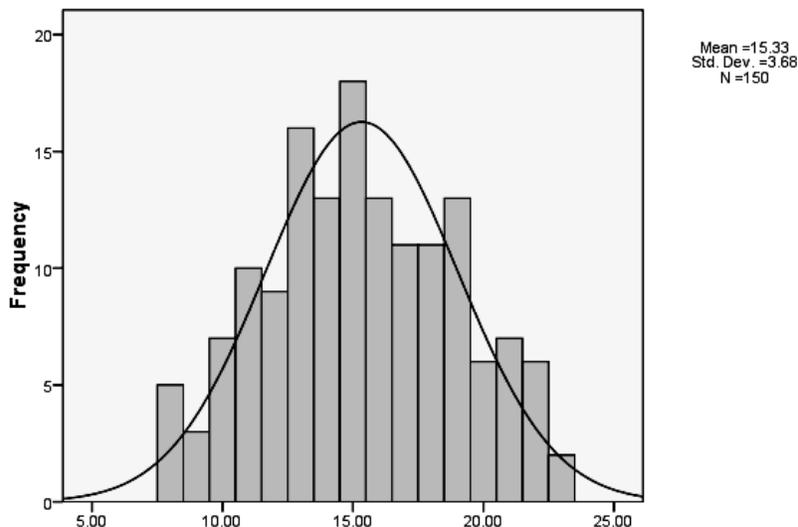


Diagram 4.8 histogram of variable difficulty in expression of emotions

Table 4.9 descriptive statistics of variable objective thinking in research samples

Central inclination indices			Dispersion indices			Distribution indices		
item	median	mean	Domain of change	variance	Standard deviation	Error of standard	Skewness	Kurtosis
61	60	59.81	60	67.01	8.18	0.19	0.06	1.79

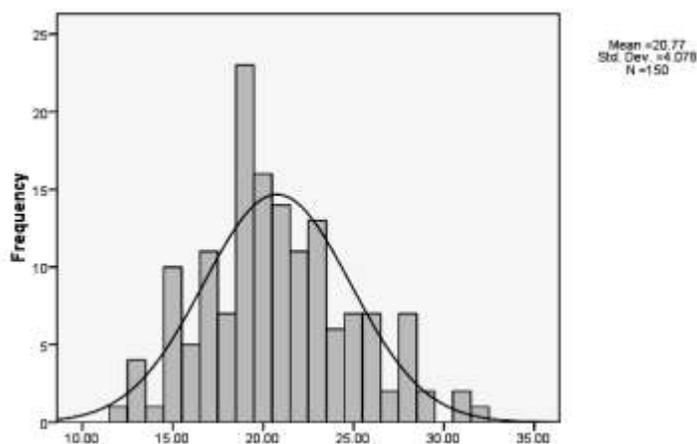


Diagram 4.9 histogram of variable objective thinking of emotions

Examination of the hypotheses Before we Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to analyze normal investigate the hypotheses we used status of data.

Table4-11 Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests for investigating the normal situation

questionnaire	item	Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Significance level
Hazan and Schiver attachment style questionnaire	Avoidance style	1.16	0.13
	Secure style	0.85	0.45
	Ambivalent style	1.47	0.02
	Attachment style	0.56	0.9
Alexithymia questionnaire	Identification of emotions	0.86	0.44
	Difficulty in expression of emotions	0.93	0.35
	Objective thinking	1.16	0.13
	alexithymia	1.08	0.19

P<0.05

In table 4.11 according to the Kolmogorov–Smirnov item and comparing the significance level of the variables with 0.05, it is concluded that all variables except for ambivalent style are normal. So in order to investigate the related hypotheses with this variable we cannot use parametric tests and we should use non-parametric tests parallel with them. But about other variables we have permission to use parametric tests.

H1: there are relations between attachment styles and alexithymia among teenagers

We used correlation coefficient of Pearson and Spearman to investigate this hypothesis

X: Alexithymia

Y: attachment styles

The assumptions are as below:

ρ : the real Pearson attachment coefficient between two variables of X and Y.

H0 means the two variables are dependent and there are no relation between two variables of X and Y and **H1** shows that there is a significant relation between two variables. The basis of the testing **H0** against **H1** is as below:

If the significance level of the test is lower than 0.05, **H0** is voided and **H1** is confirmed.

Table 4.13. correlation test between attachment styles and alexithymia

variable	Test items	value
Avoidance style	Correlation coefficient	0.06
	Significance level	0.44
Secure style	Correlation coefficient	0.287
	Significance level	0.00
Ambivalent syle	Correlation coefficient	0.337
	Significance level	0.00

P<0.05

$$\begin{cases} H_0 : \rho = 0 \\ H_1 : \rho \neq 0 \end{cases}$$

In table 4.13 we compare significance levels with numbers 0.05 and 0.01 and we have:

- A) There is no relation between avoidance attachment style and alexithymia among teenagers
- B) The correlation coefficient between secure attachment style and alexithymia 0.287 and its significance level is equal to 0.00 which is lower than 0.01. so according to the principles of correlation tests, H0 is voided and H1 is confirmed. This

means that there is a significant relation between two variables. This means that there is a relation between secure attachment style and alexithymia among the teenagers. Correlation coefficient shows that the relation is negative. This means that increasing one variable, will decrease the other variable and vice versa.

- C) The correlation coefficient between ambivalent attachment style and alexithymia is 0.337 and its

significance level is equal to 0.00, which is lower than 0.01. So according to the principles of correlation tests, H0 is voided and H1 is confirmed. This means that there is a significant relation between two variables. This means that there is a relation between ambivalent attachment style and alexithymia among the teenagers. Correlation coefficient shows that the relation is positive. This means that increasing one variable, will increase the other variable and vice versa.

Investigating the regression relation between attachment styles and alexithymia

In order to investigate the regression relation we use step wise method . the results are presented below:

Dependent variable: alexithymia

Independent variables: attachment styles (avoidance, secure, ambivalence)

The results showed that only ambivalence attachment style is inserted to the model and two other variables are omitted from the model. So the regression analysis is not valid because only one variable has inserted to the model.

H2: there is a significant difference between attachment styles between boys and girls.

In order to investigate the hypothesis we used two variable t-tests and two independent variable Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests.

$\mu1, \mu2$: the average of attachment style between the boys and girls in the statistical population

$\mu1 = \mu2$: H0

$\mu1 \neq \mu2$: H1

H0 shows that two average amounts are equal in two groups (no significant difference). The principle of the testing H0 against H1 is that if the significance level of test is lower than 0.05, H0 is voided and H1 is confirmed.

Table4.14 t-test table of two independent groups

levels		mean	Standard deviation	T value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
Avoidance attachment style	Boys	19.2800	3.09559	1.97	148	0.15
	Girls	18.2000	3.59429			
Secure attachment style	Boys	20.0133	4.10831	-0.89	148	0.37
	Girls	20.6000	3.91808			

P<0.05

Comparative analysis of avoidance attachment between boys and girls

According to the table 4.14 and emphasizing on the t value obtained and comparing the significance level to 0.05 we conclude:

There is no significant difference between avoidance attachment style between teenage boys and girls.

$$\mu_1 = \mu_2 : H_0$$

$$\mu_1 \neq \mu_2 : H_1$$

There is no significant difference between secure attachment style between teenage boys and girls.

H0 shows that two average amounts are equal in two groups (no significant difference). The principle of the testing H0 against H1 is that if the significance level of test is lower than 0.05, H0 is voided and H1 is confirmed.

μ_1, μ_2 : the average of secure attachment style between boys and girls in the population of the study.

Table 4.15 two independent variable Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests

item	Group	Values
Secure attachment style	Positive	0.175
	Negative	0.175
	Item	0.65
	Significance level	0.78

In table 4.15, comparing the significance levels with 0.05, we conclude that because the significance level is higher than 0.05, so there is no significant difference between secure attachment style between boys and girls.

$$\mu_1 = \mu_2 : H_0$$

$$\mu_1 \neq \mu_2 : H_1$$

H3: there is a significant difference between alexithymia between boys and girls.

H0 shows that two average amounts are equal in two groups (no significant difference). The principle of the testing H0 against H1 is that if the significance level of test is lower than 0.05, H0 is voided and H1 is confirmed.

μ_1, μ_2 : the average of alexithymia between the boys and girls in the statistical population

Table 4.16 t-test table of two independent groups Comparative analysis of alexithymia between boys and girls

levels		mean	Standard deviation	T value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
Difficulty in identification of emotions	Girls	19.6800	3.73925	-2.95	148	0.00
	Boys	22.0267	3.42881			
Difficulty in describing emotions	Girls	14.4667	4.27972	0.12	148	0.90
	Boys	16.2000	3.89502			

According to the table 4.16 and emphasizing on the t value obtained and comparing the significance level to 0.05 we conclude:

There is a significant difference in difficulty of identification of emotions between teenage boys and girls. The average values shows that girls' marks are higher.

There is a significant difference on difficulty of expressing emotions between teenage boys and girls. The average values shows that girls' marks are higher.

There is no significant difference on objective thinking between boys and girls.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the present research we investigated the relation between alexithymia and attachment style . then the role of modulator of attachment styles in relation with alexithymia was analyzed. The results showed that attachment styles can modulate the relation between alexithymias. Attachment styles affect emotional regulation methods used by people (Taylor et al , 2000)

People having secure attachment, because of having responsible parents who have been sensitive to the emotional situation of babies, have learnt how to regulate their emotions and make connections with others (Karokiwi et al ,2000).

The opposite of such situation can be imagined for insecure attachment styles. If the level of insecure attachment style is higher, the formation process of emotional regulation in interpersonal relations will face more problems. On the other hand, disability to regulate emotions is one of the main features of alexithymia. Emotional growth and cognitive skills on regulating emotions is

impaired in people who suffer from alexithymia (Taylor, 2000).

So according to the effect of attachment on emotional regulation, if the amount of insecure attachment is high among people suffering from alexithymia, the ability of them will be lower in regulating their emotions.

People having avoidance attachment, because of not having trust to others, usually take aloof of people and have no good interaction with other people (Heroits, 1991). People who suffer from alexithymia also have a weak social communication (Montba Rochi et al , 2004). Distrust and distance with others, is an important factor in creating communicational relations. So the more distrustful is a person to the alexithymia, his inclination for creating relationships with others will became lower and hence social attachment can increase the negative effects of alexithymia.

People having avoidance attachment style, take aloof of others. They ask for little help when they are upset and react less against other's nonplus. On the other words, understanding emotions of others have lower importance to them. The amount of sympathy is low among such people. On the other hand, one of the important faces of alexithymia is difficulty in identification of other's emotions and sympathy. The investigations show that

sympathy is one of the important and effective factors in interpersonal relations (Farri and Rotclif, 1998).

One of the important factors causing amicable relationships is self-disclosure. This means expressing emotions and thoughts for others (Sunderson and Younes, 2001). Difficulty in expressing emotions and understanding of other's emotions is among the features of alexithymia. So accordingly, the possibility is that insecurity of attachment can aggravate the difficulty of a person in expressing his emotions, inclinations and personal abilities in interpersonal relations.

The consequences of research results can be presented in theory and practice as below:

In the theory level they can create a better understanding of the factors and contribute to the attachment interpersonal relations and its problems.

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In practice and specially in clinical issues, providing training programs on emotional and interaction skills can educate people on functional and operational approaches. Such programs can be injected to the framework of

the intervening programs existing in treatments based on cognitive analysis of emotional information and regulating the emotions and increase their practicality.

SUGGESTIONS

According to the present research, the hypotheses presented below, can be worked on during the future researches.

- 1- Is the relation between alexithymia and the versatile effectiveness equal among the two genders?
- 2- What else variables can have a modulator or moderator role in the relation of alexithymia?

The answer to each question and hypothesis needs an independent research which is suggested to the interested researchers.

- 3- Also it is suggested that the relation between alexithymia and attachment styles be investigated in the patients suffering from psychological impairments in order to better know the relation and its effects.

Limitations of the study

Every research faces some limitations due to the lack of information or required expertise. The limitations faced with the present research can be named as below:

- * one of the impediments of this research which was emerged at the beginning , was

disagreement of some directors in their field of work.

* not having a positive attitude toward research works due to the inattention of authorities to the results of the studies.

* not having sufficient motivations for answering to the questionnaires of which reason may be distrust over research works.

* the other problems in doing the research was unfamiliarity of population of the study with some of the concepts of the questionnaire. In order to obviate the problem, the author was presented at the time of filling the questionnaires and explained most of the items for the subjects. This was a time consuming task but largely contributed to the process of research.

* time and space limitation due to the individual research.

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