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21. ATTACHMENT STYLES AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH COGNITIVE TRIAD (VIEWS OF THE SELF, OTHERS/WORLD AND FUTURE)

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between attachment styles and cognitive triad (views of the self, others/world and future) among university students. To this end, 403 students were selected from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, using a random clustering procedure. Collins and Read's (1990) Attachment Style Questionnaire ($\alpha = .80$) and the Cognitive Triad Inventory (CTI), developed by Beckham, Leber, Watkins, Boyer & Cook (1986) ($\alpha = .91$ for view of the self, $\alpha = .81$ for view of the world, $\alpha = .93$ for view of the future and $\alpha = .95$ for the total scale), were administered to them. Pearson's Correlation and Homogeneity Analysis showed a positive relationship and homogeneity between insecure attachment style and the negative CTI. Negative relationships were also found between secure attachment styles (the close and depend styles) and the negative CTI. In addition, the results also showed that in attachment styles, cognitive triad in general, and in its view of the self subscale, there was no significant difference between male and female students. But the difference was significant in views of the world/others and the future. There is a positive relationship and homogeneity between insecure-anxious attachment style and negative views of the self, world and future. There is also a negative relationship between secure attachment styles and negative views of the self, world and future. So it is quite likely that positive views and attitudes can have effects on attachment styles, interpersonal interactions, coping anxiety and as a result on academic achievements, mental health and the quality of university students' lives.

Key words: attachment styles; cognitive triad (view to self, world/ others, future).

Attachment theory was first developed by Bowlby as a primary need. He defined it as a "lasting psychological connectedness" between two person (Bowlby, 1988, 1969, 1973, 1980; cited in Rice, 1988). The central theme of attachment theory, which addresses the quality of the relationship between infants and adults, is a concept which is called "internal working models". According to attachment theory, children form their internal working models through interactions with their caregivers, which are internalized cognitive representations of the meaning, function and the value of social relationships (Bowlby, 1988; cited in Dozis, Frewen & Covin, 2006). So, internal working models which are formed by attachment relationships represent the primary cognitive foundation of adult core beliefs related to self and others. In other words, children incorporate later interpersonal events into their main schema or internal working models for relationships, forming a memory structure for relationships that become consolidated and resistant to change over time (Dozis, Frewen & Covin, 2006).

Research findings support this belief that the attachment system continues throughout life, from infancy and childhood to adolescence and adulthood. So, attachment theory is not just the theory of infant evolution, but it is an evolutionary theory in lifespan as well (Weinfield, Sroufe & England, 2000; Weinfield, Whaley & Egeland, 2004). Infant attachment does not appear necessarily determinist of adult attachment, especially when disruptive events or changes occur in attachment relationships (Cozzarelli, Karafa, Collins & Tagler, 2003). But attachment theories have hypothesized that internal working models of self and others are mechanisms by which continuity occurs (Cozzarelli, Karafa, Collins & Tagler, 2003, Hazan & Shaver, 1987). According to Bowlby (1969, 1973), a fundamental tenet of attachment theory is that internal working models are self-perpetuating. That is, internal working models tend to persist because individuals tend to selectively enter relationships or care giving environments that confirm their beliefs about self and

others, and for which their learned attachment strategies are most appropriate (Collins and Feeney, 2004).

So, in the primary stages of childhood, internalized relationship models are organized in what Bowlby calls working models or schemas based on which the child interprets the self, world/others and future (Bowlby, 1988). These working models organize the way an individual views the self, others, interpersonal behaviors, and future using stable schemas. These dynamic, cognitive and mental processes affect people's behavior, emotions and also their views of themselves, world/others and future which is called "cognitive triad". As a result, an individual's views of self as an honorable person, of others as trustworthy and reliable and of future as predictable can affect the development of relationships with others, especially the emotional relationship in adulthood (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Bartholomew et al. (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) proposed a four-category model of adult attachment based on the cognitive system of self and others. In his model, secure attachment style is characterized by a positive view of self and others. This style is against the three other insecure styles which are anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant and fearful-ambivalent. In these insecure styles, views of self or others are negative (Riggs et al., 2007). Negative view of the self is associated with the anxious style of attachment and impulsive strategies in interpersonal interactions, while negative view of the world/others is associated with the avoidant style of attachment and non impulsive interpersonal strategies (Brannan, Klark & Shaver, 1998; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). It seems that negative view of the future is associated with a sense of lack of control (Ward & Kennan, 1999; cited in Wood & Rigges, 2009). So, these strategies may lead to insecure attachment and may increase the danger of cognitive distortions and negative perceptions of the self, others/world and future (Wood & Rigges, 2009).

Wood and Rigges's findings (2008) show that unlike the insecurely attached people, the securely attached people have less negative perceptions of themselves, others and the future. The securely attached people have less cognitive distortions than people with the anxious-preoccupied and fearful style of attachment. People with anxious-preoccupied style of attachment have been compared to people with fearful style of attachment. It is believed that people with anxious-preoccupied style have less negative view of self than people with fearful-ambivalent style of attachment.

Investigations have also proposed that cognitive triad, especially the negative view of self, can be a significant predictor of debilitating anxiety which is a sign of insecure attachment style (Wong, 2008). Secure attachment style is associated with a high sense of tranquility and a low sense of anxiety and abandonment. While, insecure attachment style is associated with a high sense of anxiety and abandonment. These people feel that they are not cared about (Joanna and Deborah, 2009). In addition, secure attachment style is in association with high levels of self-esteem and emotional intelligence. It is also related to integrated cognitive system. On the contrary, anxious attachment style is related to low levels of self-confidence and emotional intelligence and is related to non-integrated cognitive system (Youngmae, 2005). It is also believed that the anxious style of attachment is a significant predictor of child molester (Wood & Rigges, 2009).

Findings, in general, indicate that there are relationships between attachment styles and views of the self, others and future. Insecure attachment style is associated with the negative views of the self, others/world and future, and also with high levels of depression. While, secure attachment style is in association with the positive views of the self, others and future, and also with low levels of depression (Zauszniewski, 2001). The positive view of future is especially related to attachment because the insecurely attached individuals are recognized by high levels of anxiety and low levels of dependence and closeness in their interactions with others (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). To reduce the negative views of the self, others/world and future, we should move towards the secure attachment style (Wood & Rigges, 2009).

Abela and D'Allesandro's (2002) study about the university students suggest that students' negative views about future are strongly related to dysfunctional attitudes and the increase in

depressed mood. This investigation clearly supports Beck's claim that those who are at risk of depression because of dysfunctional attitudes and cannot get into their college of choice, doubt their futures. Then, these thoughts cause depression. Therefore, the students' self-perceptions become negative after failing to get into their college of choice and many of them show signs of depression caused by these thoughts. Another study which was done by Brown et al. (1968) indicated that college students who received poor exam scores, had negative thoughts about future and they could not pass the exams as well as those who had positive thoughts. Students who had negative thoughts about the world, believed that they did not enjoy the class. And those who had negative thoughts about themselves, believed that they did not deserve to be in college. So, the way people view themselves, others and future affect their attachment styles, social and educational functions. The present study is going to answer the following questions:

- Is there a relationship between attachment styles and cognitive triad?
- Is there a difference between male and female students in this regard?
- Is there a difference between these two variables in different academic levels?

Method

Participants and procedures

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between attachment styles and cognitive triad (views of the self, others/world and future). So, the present research is descriptive and correlational. Participants were students of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. They were selected using a random clustering procedure. First, seven faculties (faculty of agriculture, faculty of arts and humanities, faculty of economic and administrative sciences, faculty of engineering, faculty of theology, faculty of basic sciences and faculty of education and psychology) were chosen. Two classes were selected randomly in each faculty and then the questionnaires were administered to students. 412 students filled in the questionnaires. Out of 412 questionnaires, 403 were reliable. Therefore, the data for this study were obtained from 403 university students. The mean age for the population was 21.5 and ranged from 18 to 40.

Measures

The Attachment Style Questionnaire: Adult Attachment Style of Collins & Read (1990) is made up of 18 items that are scored according to the Likert-type scale of five points (ranging from (1) "not at all" to (5) "very"). This questionnaire includes three subscales and each subscale consists of 6 items. Collins & Read designed these items based on the descriptions which Hazan and Shaver had given in their questionnaire about the three main styles of attachment. The anxious attachment subscale accords with the insecure ambivalent attachment style. The close subscale is a bipolar style which compares secure and avoidant descriptions. And the depend subscale can be put against the avoidant attachment style (Feeney & Noller, 1992). Collins and Read (1990; cited in Feeney, Noller & Collan, 1996) showed that the three subscales (the anxious, close and depend) were consistent during 2 months and even 8 months. Considering that Cronbach's alpha is equal to or more than .80, it can be said that this questionnaire has a high reliability. Sedaghati (2006) made this questionnaire reliable using the test-retest reliability. It was obtained through administrating the questionnaire to 100 testees twice and calculating the correlation between the two sets of scores obtained from the two administrations. The results of the two administrations, with an interval of one-month, indicated that the difference between the two administrations of the depend, close and anxious subscales in this questionnaire is correlated ($r=.95$). It was found out that the most reliable subscale was the anxious subscale ($r=.75$). The next subscale which had the most reliability was the close subscale ($r=.57$), and the depend subscale had the least reliability ($r=.47$). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also used and calculated which demonstrated that the anxious subscale had the most validity reliability ($\alpha=.74$), and the depend subscale had the least reliability ($\alpha=.28$). The alpha for the close subscale was .52. The results obtained from Cronbach's alpha correspond to the results obtained from the test-retest method (Hamidi, 2007).

The Cognitive Triad Inventory: The Cognitive Triad Inventory (Beckham, Leber, Watkins, Boyer & Cook, 1986) is a 30-item self-report measure originally designed to measure the cognitive triad of negative perception about self, world (including others), and the future, which were

hypothesized to be present in depressed individuals (Beck, Rush, Shaw & Emery, 1979). However, none of the items specifically mention depression, and it appears the CTI is useful in assessing individual perception of self, world/others, and the future (Fischer & Corcoran, 2007).

This inventory is scored according to a 7-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1= totally agree to 7= totally disagree) and the participants indicate their level of agreement to each item on this 7-point Likert-type scale. Each of the three subscale (self, world/others, future) has 10 questions (6 questions are not scored). High scores represent negative views of the self, others/world and future and low scores represent positive views. The maximum score in this inventory is 210 and in each subscale is 70. The CTI has excellent internal consistency, with alpha of 0.94 for view of self, .81 for view of others/world, and .93 for view of future. The alpha for the total scale was 0.95. The scale also has good concurrent validity with a correlation of 0.90 with the measures of both self-esteem and measures of depression (Wood & Riggs, 2009). It is also significantly correlated with The Beck Depression Inventory ($r=0.77$) (Beck, et al., 1986; cited in Wong, 2008). The last revision of this inventory (Anderson & Skidmore, 1995) showed a significant internal consistency between the subscales (the self and the world: $r=.71$, the self and the future: $r=.70$, the world and the future: $r=.66$).

CTI has also been made reliable by the present researcher on students of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad who ranged in age from 18 to 40 years and the average age was 21.5 ($SD=2.8$); 255 of college students were female (%69.1) and 157 were male (% 38.1). The results indicated an excellent internal consistency ($\alpha=.85$) for the total scale. Moreover, The cronbach's Alpha for subscales obtained: for view of self: ($\alpha=.80$), for view of world/ others: ($\alpha=.73$) and for view of future: ($\alpha=.81$).

Results

Descriptive findings suggested that out of 403 college students, 157 students were male (% 38.1) and 255 were female (% 69.1) with the mean age of 21.5, ranging from 18 to 40 years ($\bar{x}=21.5$, $SD=2.89$). Out of 403 college students, % 75.7 were bachelor students, % 19.4 were master students and % 2.7 were PhD students. To determine whether there are relationships between attachment styles and cognitive triad, the results were obtained using Pearson correlation coefficient and then, Bonferroni Correction was used to ensure that the probability of one or more type I errors is controlled. It was indicated that there is a positive relationship between the anxious style of attachment and the negative cognitive triad (all 3 subscales) and there is a negative relationship between the depend and close styles of attachment and the negative view of the self, others/world and future. The relationships were all significant ($p<.01$).

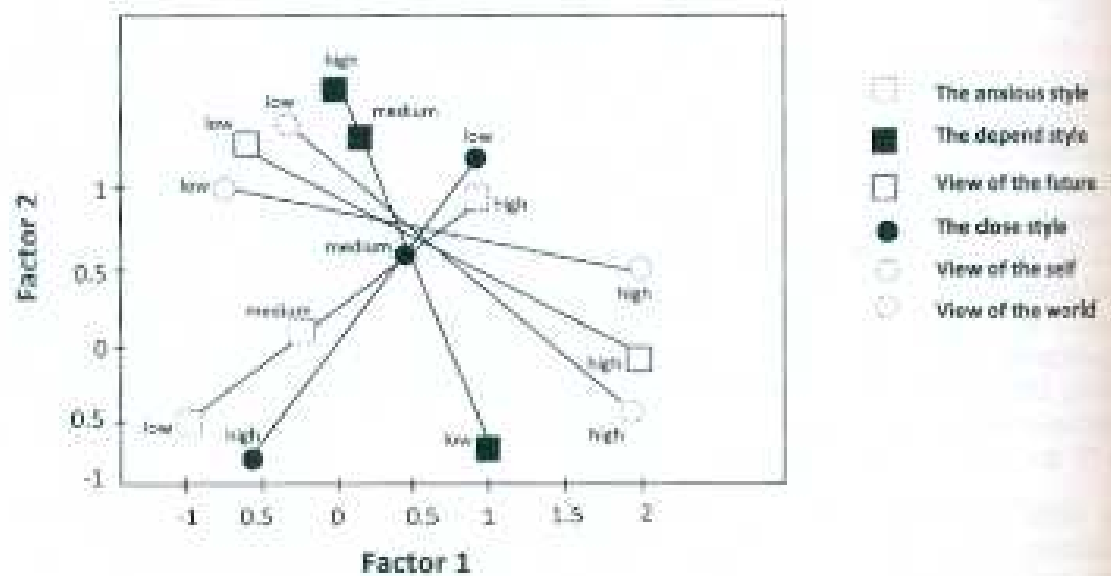
**Table 1: The correlation of attachment styles with cognitive triad
(Pearson Correlation)**

	View of self	View of world	View of future
The close subscale	-.327**	-.332**	-.295**
The depend subscale	-.193**	-.304**	-.231**
The anxious subscale	.497**	.345**	.390**

** ($p<.01$)

High scores in cognitive triad inventory indicate negative views, and they are positively correlated with the anxious style. Low scores in cognitive triad show positive views and they are correlated with the close and depend styles. The same results were obtained when the gender variable was controlled. Considering these facts, Homogeneity Analysis was used to discover the structure of this model. Homogeneity Analysis is a graphical method in which the variables are changed into categorical and qualitative variables. The results of this analysis suggested two different groups. The Cronbach's alpha for this model was equal to .86.

Figure 1. Joint description of the attachment styles and the cognitive triad Homogeneity Analysis



In the first group, high scores in views of the self, world and future (negative cognitive triad) are associated with high scores in the anxious style and low scores in the depend and close styles. This group shows insecure attachment style (Fig. 1). In the second group, low scores in views of the self, world and future (positive cognitive triad) are in association with low scores in the anxious style and high scores in the depend and close styles. This group shows secure attachment styles (Fig. 1). It should also be mentioned that there is a positive relationship between the close and the depend subscales ($r = .185$) which is a significant relationship. A negative relationship can be seen between the close and the anxious subscales ($r = -.280$). In addition, there is also a negative relationship between the depend and the anxious subscales ($r = -.150$). The relationships were all significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$).

The t-test was also used to compare the attachment styles in male and female university students. Before this, equal variances were assumed for all three subscales and for both genders. ($p > .05$ in all three subscales).

Table 2: T-test results related to attachment styles in male and female university students

Subscales	Gender	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
The close subscale	male	3.11	.71	-1.272	410	$p > .05$
	female	3.20	.67			
The depend subscale	male	3.55	.60	1.331	407	$p > .05$
	female	3.47	.59			
The anxious subscale	male	2.31	.70	-.31	409	$p > .05$
	female	2.32	.76			

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference between males' and females' attachment styles.

To compare cognitive triad in both male and female university students, t-test for independent samples was used. Before this, equal variances were assumed for all three subscales (views of the self, world and future) and for both genders ($p > .05$).

Table 3: T-test results related to cognitive triad in male and female university students

Subscales	Gender	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
View of others/world	male	30.14	9.13	3.53	371	p<.01
	female	26.75	8.93			
View of future	male	24.99	10.15	2.33	373	p<.05
	female	22.58	9.43			
View of self	male	27.23	10.34	1.68	384	p>.05
	female	25.50	9.42			
Total	male	80.4	25.88	1.94	333	p>.01
	female	74.82	25.38			

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference between male and female students in total cognitive triad and in its view of the self subscale. But the difference is significant in views of the world and future. The observation of this sample in both genders indicates that the mean is higher in males than females.

Variance analysis was also used to find out the differences between attachment styles in students of different academic levels. The results proposed that there is no difference between bachelor, master and PhD students in the close and anxious styles, while there is a difference in the depend style. Table 4 shows that the mean of the depend subscale in master students is lower than the mean of this subscale in bachelor and PhD students. It should be mentioned that before this analysis, homogeneity of variances was used and it was assumed that the variances in the different groups are identical ($p<.05$).

Table 4: Analysis of variance between attachment styles and academic levels

Subscales	Academic level	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig
The close subscale	Bachelor	3.50	.61	.055	2.398	p>.05
	Master	3.52	.58			
	PhD	3.47	.56			
The depend subscale	Bachelor	3.21	.69	4.195	2.400	P<.05
	Master	2.97	.64			
	PhD	3.29	.87			
The anxious subscale	Bachelor	2.35	.77	1.976	2.399	p>.05
	Master	2.18	.59			
	PhD	2.17	.62			

In addition, the results suggested that cognitive triad subscales have significant positive relationships with each other and with the total cognitive triad (views of the self and world: $r = .697$, views of the self and future: $r = .752$, views of the self and total cognitive triad: $r = .90$, views of the world and future: $r = .744$, view of the world and total cognitive triad: $r = .893$, view of the future and total cognitive triad: $r = .919$; $p<.01$). The results also showed that there was no significant difference between bachelor, master and PhD students' cognitive triad.

Discussion

The findings of this investigation indicated that there is a significant positive relationship and homogeneity between insecure attachment style (specified by high anxious style and low close and depend styles) and the negative cognitive triad (negative view of the self, others/world and future). It was also found out that there is a negative relationship and homogeneity between secure attachment style (high close and depend styles and low anxious styles) and the positive cognitive triad. In other words, insecure attachment is related to and homogenized with negative cognitive triad and secure attachment is related to and homogenized with positive cognitive triad.

Other findings (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) also revealed that secure attachment style indicates adjusted positive views of the self, world/others and future. On the contrary, three insecure styles are anxious-preoccupied,

dismissive- avoidant and fearful-ambivalent which are characterized by negative view of the self, world/others and future (Rigges et al., 2007). Besides, individuals with a secure attachment style have less negative perception of the self, others and future than those with insecure attachment styles. The securely attached individuals have also less cognitive distortions than insecurely attached individuals (Wood & Rigges, 2008).

In addition, individuals with insecure attachment styles are indicated by high levels of anxious style and low levels of the depend and close styles (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). The closer we get to secure attachment, which is associated with high close and depend styles and low anxious style, the less negative view we have of ourselves, others and the future (Wood & Rigges, 2009).

On the whole, negative cognitive triad is a significant predictor in debilitating anxiety which suggests insecure attachment (Wong, 2008). Secure attachment style is associated with a high sense of tranquility and a low sense of anxiety and abandonment. While, insecure attachment style is associated with a high sense of anxiety and abandonment. These people feel that they are not cared about (Joanne & Debora, 2009). In addition, secure attachment style is in association with high levels of self-reliance and emotional intelligence. It is also related to integrated cognitive system. On the contrary, anxious attachment style is related to low levels of self-reliance and emotional intelligence and is related to non-integrated cognitive system (Youngmee, 2005). It is also believed that the anxious style of attachment is a significant predictor of child molester (Wood & Rigges, 2009).

Although this investigation revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the depend and close styles and there is a negative relationship between these two subscales (the depend and close styles) and the anxious subscale, there is no significant difference between male and female students in these subscales. Other studies have not suggested any gender differences in attachment styles either (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Carnelly & Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Mikulincer & Erev, 1991; cited in Shi, 2003). Attachment styles are influenced by internal working models and the memory structures which are internalized in childhood (Dozois, Frewen & Civin, 2006). Besides, destructive changes or events in attached relationships (Cozzarelli, Karafa, Collins & Tagler, 2003), dynamic cognitive and mental processes (cognitive triad) based on which an individual can view oneself as honorable, others as reliable and trustworthy, and future as predictable, can affect the development of relationships with others, especially the emotional relationship in adulthood (Hazan & shaver, 1987).

When university student's attachment styles and their academic levels were examined, the previously mentioned results about the close and anxious styles were confirmed. But it was cleared that there were only master students who had less depend style than bachelor and PhD students. This shows the students' personal-emotional and academic adjustment (Fanti, 2005), their increased self-esteem (Moayyedfar, et al., 2007), increased positive self-concept, social adjustment and accomplishment (Cohn, 1990), which are all related to secure attachment.

Finally, the results of this study revealed that cognitive triad subscales are significantly related with each other and with the total inventory. Furthermore, there is no significant difference between male and female students in cognitive triad in general and in view of the self, but the difference is significant in views of the world and future in both of which the mean of males was higher than the mean of females. Abela and D'Allesandro's (2002) studies about the university students suggest that students' negative views about future are strongly related to dysfunctional attitudes and the increase in depressed mood. This investigation clearly supports Beck's claim that those who are at risk of depression because of dysfunctional attitudes and cannot get into their college of choice, doubt their futures. Then, these thoughts cause depression. Therefore, the students' self-perceptions become negative after failing to get into their college of choice and many of them show signs of depression caused by these thoughts. Another study which was done by Brown et al. (1995) indicated that college students who receive poor exam scores, had negative thoughts about future and they could not pass the exams as well as those who had positive thoughts. In fact, in our country females students' mean score is higher than male students', especially in humanity sciences.

In conclusion, this study, theoretically, confirmed Bowlby's theory (1988) that interactional models, which are internalized in childhood, are dynamic, mental and cognitive processes which influence the behavior, emotions, cognitive triad (views of the self, others/world and future), and also the emotional relationships. By presenting a theoretical relationship, this research can take an important step towards studying the quality of individuals' lives and its results on Iranian university students. Considering that there was no investigation in Iran about the relationship between these two variables, this study can be a trivial effort in promoting science.

Practically, the findings of this study can give important information to the ministry of science and Iranian students. Considering that university students, at this age, have to make important decisions about their lives (decisions related to their jobs, marriage, and education), and considering that having positive and optimistic views of the self, others' world and future have an important role in psychological health, marriage satisfaction and secure attachment, we can prevent job, marriage and educational dissatisfaction by teaching interactional skills and changing the negative views. One of the most important responsibilities of universities is educating citizens with healthy and logical attitudes, healthy, secure and constant interpersonal relationships and finally improving the quality of life. The results of this study can also be applied in university counseling centers to solve students' problems and their intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts.

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