



Schema Therapy Training in Attachment Type Related To the Mothers of Preschool Children

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A B S T R A C T

The present research aimed at examination of efficacy of schema therapy training on maternal attachment styles. In doing so, a quasi-experimental method, together with pretest & posttest & control group, was adopted. Using stratified random sampling method, a number of 100 individuals were randomly selected from one of the districts of education organization in Isfahan, Iran in 2012-2013. After implementation of attachment styles questionnaire, a number of 30 subjects, who managed to obtain the highest scores in anxiety & avoidance criteria, were selected & divided into two 15- person groups of experiment & control. The research tool was Reed's Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) developed by Collins-Reed, which consists of 18 questions; by use of which attachment styles were measured in both groups. To perform data analysis, SPSS-19 software & Multi-variety Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) were utilized. Results showed that schema therapy training exerted a meaningful influence on an increase in secure attachment style ($p < 0.001$). Moreover, it had meaningful effect on decreasing ambivalent attachment style ($p < 0.001$) & on increasing avoidant attachment style ($p < 0.001$). Eventually, the research assumptions confirmed the efficacy of schema therapy training on attachment styles.

Keywords: Schema Therapy, Attachment Styles, Mothers of Preschool Children.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to emotional aspects affecting quality and quantity of interpersonal relationships, in terms of cognitive school, "early maladaptive schema" is stated as the crucial and fundamental issue about us and others and it has effect on a lot of relationships. The schemas are learned at the early children's age and they can be deleterious (Yang et al, 2003, translated by Hamidpour, 2010).

Since beliefs and feelings are very powerful, they can be presumed actual.

Early maladaptive schemas drive from inefficient children's relationships with parents, siblings and their peers at early ages and it will be emerged in the future again. For instance, children does not doing their homework according to their parents' criterions will be faced with their repeated criticism, so they will be induced to create

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"Failure Schema" for themselves. These inefficient schemas are mentioned as "early maladaptive schemas" (Yang et al, 2003, translated by: Hamidpour, 2010).

Problem Statement

If we want to discuss one of the main problems associated with Iranian current society and is the source of vast majority of essential disorders, involvement and challenges, ineffectiveness of human relationships can be that problem; individuals' inability to have relationship to each other and solving their problem after discussion, is a case in point. One of the main roots of this problem is the subject of this study (Besharat, 2001).

Children want being attached to their guardians and interacting and cooperating with them through the secure attachment mode. Children avoid having interactive relationship with their guardian and they seem unpleasant through avoidant attachment mode. Finally, they show contradictory behavior toward their guardians. On the one hand, they have propensity for interacting with guardians, but on the other hand, they tend to avoid their guardians.

Yang and et al were convinced that as a results of lack of meeting main emotional needs of secure attachment to others (such as security needs, love and acceptance), autonomy, competence and identity, freedom in expressing needs and healthy emotion, self-arousal, entertainment, realistic constraints and self-control ,early maladaptive schemas were emerged in childhood (Skeen, M, 2007).

This study tries to achieve scientific results about the effectiveness of therapy schema in attachment type of mothers. It also tries to determine the effect of therapy schema training on the level of three types of attachments including secure, avoidant, and anxiety on attachment associated to the mothers of preschool children.

Definition of Attachment

The word "attachment" which is infinitive, means being interested in or loving someone or something and "attached" means who is in love, interested in somebody or something. Therefore, "attachment" means, love and interest.

Emotion affirm commitment to something or something. In other words, there is a link between individuals. According to Schaffer and Emerson (The quote from Atkinson et al, 2000), "attachment" is an emotional close relationship between two persons which is determined by mutual interest and tendency for proximity. "Child's (any animal species) propensity for proximity of other group members", in terms of this definition, couple of attachment main features can be obviously found, first one is proximity and the next feature is the interactive nature of attachment. In other words, in addition to being together, attachment relies on interaction (Etkinson, R. L. Erkinson et al translated by: Baraheni et al, 2000).

However, according to Balbi, attachment refers to the emotional link between children and their guardians who have primary responsibility of maintaining the baby and those who children direct their emotional energy through them (Pourafkari, 1997).

This attachment leads children to search for comfort deriving from their mother specially, when they feel fear and uncertainty (Sharifi, 2000).

Previous studies indicate that attachment includes two main aspects. First one is cognitive-emotional aspect of attachment which is defined as the quality of emotions capered to face. The importance of this aspect can be increased at elderly ages (Fakharinezhad, 2007).

All people are affected by absolute laws used for interpreting the world. New information indicating how someone can be fitted with these laws is schema. This information is used for not only understanding and interpretation but also anticipating the circumstances of our environment. Technically, schemas are cognitive structures organizing the informational processes. Actually they are filters or forms used for receiving, organizing, and processing the information. Each person uses the set of schema for understanding her world.

Theories of schemas actually refer to this idea that in order to interpret the world surrounding them, each person follows from stable patterns and roles and control their behavior through these stable patterns.

Yang (2003) defined the early maladaptive schema that it is a pattern or widespread and pervasive topic comprising dangers, emotions, cognitions and feelings associated to ourselves and environment. Moreover, it grew during the childhood and adolescence and it has been materialized throughout the life and significantly leads to maladaptive behavior.

Khandesi's Findings (2004) related to the study of evaluating the female students' gender roles and cultural stereotype schemas indicated that there is a significant difference between female and male mental schemas.

Hamidpour (2008) carried out the research entitled "Primary evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness of therapy schema in treating the love failures". He also carried out this research purposefully into the triple cases (2 girls and 1 boy) which its results indicated that therapy schemas can cause considerable changes in the level of depression, self-esteem and improving the maladaptive schema (Emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust abuse, self-unchanged and failure / caught) having the highest scores.

Research Hypotheses

Therapy schema training has effect on the level of secure attachment of preschool children's mother.

Therapy schema training has effect on the level of avoidant attachment of preschool children's mother.

Therapy schema training has effect on the level of ambivalent attachment of preschool children's mother.

Instrument

The first comparison of adults' attachment was made.

The scale of adult's attachment evaluating how each person can evaluate his/her communication skills and friendly relationship style including 18 phrases which respondents express their agreement or opposition from each phrase on a 5-point Likert Scale. This questionnaire has three subscale comprising: dependence which indicates the level of having tribal dependence on others, proximity subscale evaluating the level of tribal intimacy and emotional closeness with others, and anxiety subscale evaluating the level of person's worry about rejection. Each subscale has 6 phrases.

Estimation of Cronbach Alpha showed that anxiety subscale (A) has the highest reliability rate (0.74) and dependency (D) with .028 has the lowest reliability rate. Finally, the reliability rate of proximity is at the moderate level of 0.52; these results conformed to evaluating through retest.

METHODOLOGY

This study used quasi-experimental research method with pretest-posttest of experimental and control groups.

Table1. Research Project Diagram

Protest	Control variable	Protest	Random assignment	Group
T2	X1	T1	RE	Therapy Schema Group

The population of this study including mothers of children who are in one of preschool centers subsidiary in 5th Region of Isfahan Education from 2012-2013.

Sampling method of this study is cluster random sampling. Whereby, one region was selected randomly from 5 Isfahan regions during 2012-2013 and then one preschool was selected randomly from all of preschools.

Firstly, attachment-related questionnaire was used for 100 mothers of study population and 30 persons were selected form them who's highest score in anxiety and avoidance. These 30 persons were divided randomly into two groups of control and witness which each one includes 15 members.

RESULT

In order to data analysis and hypothesis testing, indices of descriptive statistics (such as mean, variance, and charts) and inferential statistics methods such as multivariate covariance analysis were used. Moreover they were used for evaluating the level of effect related to pretest and posttest of therapy schema. SPSSI-19 was used for data analysis.

As a result of using parametric tests for checking the scores normality of different attachment styles, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was applied which its results are shown in table2.

Table2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for attachment styles scores

Attachment style	Group	Statistics	DF	Sig.
Secure	Control test	0.131	15	0.200
		0.140	15	0.200
Avoidant	Control test	0.183	15	0.190
		0.199	15	0.064
ambivalent	Control test	0.134	15	0.200
		0.201	15	0.106

Results of Table 2 Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test indicate the scores of attachment styles. The results demonstrate that the scores of attachment styles are normal.

Table3. The Levine test related to the equality of attachment styles scores

Attachment Style	Ratio F	First DF	Second DF	Sig.
Secure	1.196	1	28	0.283
Avoidant	4.494	1	28	0.043
ambivalent	11.92	1	28	0.002

Results of Table 3 Levine test reveals the equality of variance associated with scores of attachment styles. The results demonstrate that there is no variances equality in the scores of avoidant attachment style and ambivalent one.

As a result of the equality of volumes in experimental and control groups, usage of Parametric Tests is possible.

Hypothesis1: If therapy schema training has effect on level of the secure attachment in mother of preschool children.

Table4. Covariance analysis of secure attachment scores in studied groups

Source	Sum of Square	DF	Quadrante of Mean	F	Sig.	Eta	Statistical power
Pretest	67/304	1	67/304	10/094	0/004	0/272	0/865
Group	30/664	1	30/664	4/599	0/041	0/156	0/543

As can be seen from the results of table4, there is significant difference between groups about the scores of secure attachment in level of $P < 0.05$. In other words, there is a significant difference between secure attachment scores associated with mothers of preschool children in both experimental and control groups. According to the fact that mean of secure attachment scores in experimental group is higher than that of control group, therapy schema training can cause the level of secure attachment in mothers of preschool children to be increased.

Hypothesis 2: If therapy schema training has effect on the level of avoidant attachment in mothers of preschool children.

Table5. Covariance analysis of the scores related to avoidant attachment styles in studied groups

Source	Sum of Square	DF	Quadrante of Mean	F	Sig.	Eta	Statistical power
Pretest	327/981	1	327/981	28/177	0/001	0/511	0/999
Group	3/253	1	3/253	0/279	0/601	0/010	0/080

According to the results of table 5, in terms of scores related to the avoidant attachment styles, there is no significant difference between groups in the level of $P < 0.05$. In other words, the difference in scores related to the avoidant attachment styles of preschool children's mother is not significant in both experimental and control groups. Therefore, therapy schema training could not cause the level of avoidant attachment of preschool children's mothers to be decreased.

Hypothesis 3: If therapy schema training has effect on the level of ambivalent attachment in mothers of preschool children.

Table6. Covariance analysis of the scores related to ambivalent attachment styles in studied groups

Source	Sum of Square	DF	Quadrate of Mean	F	Sig.	Eta	Statistical power
Pretest	133/507	1	133/507	9/055	0/006	0/251	0/827
Group	77/118	1	77/188	5/230	0/030	0/162	0/597

According to the results of table 6, there is significant difference between groups about the scores of ambivalent attachment in level of $P < 0.05$. In other words, there is a significant difference between styles of ambivalent attachment scores associated with preschool children's mother in both experimental and control groups. According to the fact that the mean of scores which belong to ambivalent attachment styles in experimental group is lower than that of control group, therapy schema training can cause the level of ambivalent attachment in mothers of preschool children to be decreased.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the fact that the study results indicated that the therapy schema training affects attachment style in mothers of children who are 6 years of age, paying attention to the attachment style can be one of the specialists' dilemmas. The reason is that it can be defined as basic elements of natural human evolution and has effect on each person's social development and emotion throughout life and leads to mental health and self-efficacy. One of the current therapy approaches is therapy schema.

This therapy approach rehabilitates schemas and childhood memories through its medical techniques. This treatment method can help individuals to release their repressed emotions and excitations leading to emotional self-censorship and difficulty in releasing the emotions correctly. As attachment is formed during the childhood and therapy schema emphasizes on memories and childhood-related problems, it can be resulted that this treatment method can affect individual's attachment styles effectively.

Applying this treatment method socially in kindergartens, preschools, and schools through group training can be suggested. Changing the attachment style of parents specially, mothers into secure attachment has considerable impact on children's mental health, social and cognitive skills.

It can be suggested that this treatment method can be used for treating the children of parents with attachment-related problems, changing the parents' attachment style cause the children's treatment to be successful.

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