Study of Relationship between the Self-esteem and Parents and Peers Attachment of High Schools Female Students

Kourosh Mohammadi¹, Eghbal Zarei¹ and Laila Morseli Fardoii²*

1. Hormozgan University, Bandar Abbas, Iran  
2. Department of Clinical Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Hormozgan, Iran  

*Corresponding Author: Morseli.l@yahoo.com

Abstract: Self-esteem is a sense about his or her own abilities, and is the key factor in social and emotional adaption of an individual. The research, considering the items of evidence regarding high level of low self-esteem between adolescents, is trying to evaluate one of the factors that might be associated with the self-esteem. The research was a correlation type, and the sample of research was 325 female students of secondary level education in the city of Tehran that were selected by multi staged cluster method in the year 2012. Collected data were analyzed by SPSS software and correlation coefficient and regression. Results of the research showed that there is a positive and meaningful relation between the self-esteem and the parents and peers attachment. And that parents and peers attachment can meaningfully explain the random variance of self-esteem. In other word, self-esteem increases with the increasing of attachment.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Attachment, Adaption, Students.

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is one of the most important factors of the growth and flourishing of human. Self-esteem refers to a person's attitude and judgment about his or her self-worth. People evaluate the way they cope with standards and their desired values, compare their own performance with the others'. Therefore, self-esteem is the core of the psychological structure of a person who protects them against anxiety and give them comfort. Children with disabilities, due to the negative attitudes of parents, negative experiences dealing with their normal peers and successive failures at school, gradually become disillusioned and despondent and sequences of these failures and problems causes them to feel that they are worthless and this feeling hurts their self-esteem. Smith Harter and Rosenberg
believe self-esteem is a self-judgment element that implies our judgment about potential and actual strength. One who has a high self-esteem is self-absorbed and self-worth. Social psychologists define self-esteem as assessment of an individual about their own positive and negative features. It is generally assumed that the self-esteem is somewhat stable.

Self-esteem is also defined as a general feeling of self-worth, self-sufficiency or an overall sense of self-acceptance and self-respect. Research has shown that children with learning disabilities are likely to experience a negative cycle of low self-esteem. Their motivation and perseverance to perform tasks is reduced and this makes the experience more failure. According to the sociologist Enroner, self-esteem has five components. Beerbow, based on the low and high self-esteem, describes the said components as:

1) **Security**: is a strong feeling of confidence consisting of sense of comfort, sense of awareness where expected, ability of associating with people and occasions, understanding the rules and limitations, having strong sense of security (I can have the support of other people) is a base on which the structures of other components are built.

2) **Self-acceptance**: is a sense of individuality consisting of information about the person themselves and precise and realistic description in accordance with the roles, documents and physical characteristics. Children who have a strong sense of self-acceptance (I've and accept myself) have the feeling of individualism, capability, ability and self-admiring, and children who have a weak self-acceptance (I do not like myself) cannot decide accepting themselves.

3) **Link prospecting**: Is a sense of acceptability, particularly in relationships that are considered important. Is also defined as the sense of being accepted by the others. Children with a strong feeling of link prospecting (sense of belonging); establish a very comfortable and satisfactory relation with the others. Yet weak sense of link prospective in children (no one wants to be with me) causes isolation ambition and sense of alienation.

4) **Merit**: This component refers to feeling of success and excellence in performance, and includes awareness of the strength, capabilities and compliance, weaknesses will also be accepted. These Children are eligible for sense of merit (I feel capable, so I can face every danger).

5) **Commitment**: In this component the person's purpose and motivation for living is concerned, so he or she be entitled to having realistic and achievable objectives in life, and be responsible for the consequence of their decisions.

Related with the theory of James Coopersmith was the one who wrote first about self-esteem. According to him, the human's wishes and values play a great role in determining whether others believe them perfect or not. An individual's feeling, in this world, depends on what he does and what he wants to be. James has expressed this feeling by a the self-esteem formula: Self-esteem= wishes or expectations / situation In accordance with the above formula, if our wishes, by
evaluation of the worth, are close to progress or if we have already achieved the progress, then there exists a high self-esteem. If there is a big gap between the wishes and the progress, then we feel weak. According to Albrecht, self-esteem is generally modified through the responses or more commonly changes or interpretations that one receives from the others. Just as our faces that we see in the mirror, we see our behavior, talks and needs in the mirror of society through the other people's reaction about ourselves. And this is exactly what Charles Cooley calls it «Looking-glass self ».

He believes there are three stages for the growth of looking glass self. The outer image of the person from the others view ( how do I look, fat or thin? ), image of others from others view ( how do you evaluate my appearance, positive or negative? ) and the result he feels in that case ( pride, embarrassment, humiliation ). So, if people feel that others respond them negatively, this can greatly affect their self-concept, unless others respond positively by their approval and acceptance. Pearson says Sullivan believes that the self-esteem is assessed according to an individual's interpersonal security. According to this theory, the self-worth is increased by the person's ability for avoiding the interpersonal insecurity rises. Adler, comparing with the other theorists, emphatically, has expressed that the weakness causes the low self-esteem.

Another feature that affects the growth is the attachment. Attachment is establishing of a deep emotional bonding with a specific person in life so that the interaction with them give a sense of happiness and joy and their presence be soothing.

John Bowlby defines the attachment as « lasting psychological link and relation between two persons ». Modification of attachment is gradual, and infant intends to attach to his or her favorite person who is able to reduce their worry, tensions, pains and problems, and is generally able to resolve their needs. Attachment, apart from its role of facilitating the interactive relation between the mother and the child, also gives a sense of security to the child. After the attachment was modified due to interactive relation of mother and child, then the attachment itself would be a factor for keeping of the close relation of mother and child.

Bowlby's concept of attachment was assessed in terms of change, and built his theory on the base that feelings and attachment behavior such as crying, laughter, sucking and grabbing cause the child feel closer to mother and keeps the child away from dangers, and separation from mother raises the anxiety and distress of the child. Experiences that the child has with the baby care is internalized in models of relations with others, and this model forms the conception of the child from the "self " and the " other ", conception which is extended later with the relations with others. Bowlby agrees with the psychological view that the early experiences of the child have very significant
effect in his or her later behavior in the life. According to Bowlby, the styles of our attachment form in childhood and through the child/care giver relation.\(^9\)

Bowlby believes that the parent and child attachment is transferred to an adulthood romantic relationship, and can affect the behavior, emotions, recognition of an individual in every stage of life from the childhood to the adulthood. Attachment in relationships is not interrupted voluntarily and completely, and any failure in attachment relation is painful and causes mourning in a person. Based on these theories, we can define the security as the core of the attachment system in adulthood's attachment relationships, which is a secure relation with the person whom we feel attachment with, and he or she is the one who responds to us and causes our self-confidence.\(^9\)

Bowlby and Inzwert believe that the quality and model of attachment in adulthood romantic relationships might be as of the model of child's relation with the parent. That is why the attachments of the childhood affect the romantic relation of the adulthood of the person. Therefore, the continuity of the early models are explained in later periods in two ways. First, it is expected a stable relation be established between the child and its care giver that be extended to the adulthood period.\(^10\)

Second, development of mental models or attachment tools that are occurred beyond the person's awareness, can lead his or her thoughts, behavior and emotions in later romantic situations. In fact, a secure relation of attachment can facilitate the performance and merit in person's interactive relations. Accordingly, in the present study, the relation between the attachment to parents and peers and the self-esteem in female students of secondary level education is evaluated.\(^10\)

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was a description-correlation type and was performed in academic year of 2012-2013 in girl's high schools in Tehran, Iran. The society for the study was all high schools for girls of the city of Tehran. 325 female students were selected as statistical sample through the multi-stage cluster method.

Coopersmith's "self-esteem" and Armsden&Greenberg's "parents and peers attachment" questionnaires were used. Coopersmith performed his self-esteem scale as per the revision he had made on Rogers&Diamond's scale. This questionnaire has 58 articles, and the minimum score is zero and the maximum score is 50. If the respondent gets more than 4 out of 8 lie detector articles, it means that the result of the test is not reliable, and the respondent has tried to look better than what he is. Coopersmith has evaluated the admissibility and stability of this scale as acceptable. Stability of scale has been calculated as per Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.86 at present study. Test of parents and peers attachment.\(^11\)
Has been innovated for evaluation of the teens' thought regarding positive and negative dimensions of emotional and actual cognition of their relations with their parents and their close friends based on Bowlby's attachment theory. The test has 3 levels: confidence level, quality of relation level and hostility and sense of alienation level.

The original test had two parts, attachment to parents (father and mother) and attachment to friends. The revised questionnaire has three parts. The first and second part study attachment to father and mother (separately) and the third part is about attachment to friends. In revised test each part consists of 25 phrases. The

Builders of justifiability and stability have evaluated this as appropriate scale. At present study, the stability has been calculated as per Cronbach' alpha equal to 0.89.

RESULTS

In response to the question of the study about self-esteem level of the female students of high schools in Tehran, the frequency and percentage of the low, average and high self-esteem is shown at the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>high</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
<td>29.27</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In accordance with the results of data, 29.27 % of female students have low self-esteem, 56.1% have medium self-esteem and 14.63% have high self-esteem. Correlation multi variable regression analysis has been applied for the test.

First hypotheses, self-esteem of the students can be anticipated by their attachment to their parents and peers.

Table 2. Summary of regression model, one way variance analysis of the self-esteem according to the attachment of high schools female students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Meaningful level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment To father</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>8.352</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment To mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>9.040</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment To peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.742</td>
<td>8.122</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to table 2, the results of regression analysis of parents and peers attachment on self-esteem show that variable of attachment has a strong meaningful anticipation power. The regression analysis in this table shows that the multi correlation coefficient between the variables of attachment and the self-esteem in total sample is 86, and also the coefficient of anticipation variable is over 0.75. This means that 75% of the variable variance of self-esteem is anticipated by the variable of attachment.

Table 3. Model testing results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variance Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>13709.803</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4569.934</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining</td>
<td>4557.225</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>14.197</td>
<td>321.895</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18267.028</td>
<td>324</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to above table $F=123.415$ and the statistic level ($P<0.001$), the theory is accepted.

Hypotheses 2: there is a relation between the attachment to father and the self-esteem in high schools female students.

Hypotheses 3: there is a relation between the attachment to mother and the self-esteem in female students of high schools level.

Hypotheses 4: there is a relation between the attachment to peers and the self-esteem in high schools female students.

Table 4. Correlation coefficient between self-esteem and attachment, Average and standard deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>quantity</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. self-esteem</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.70</td>
<td>4.749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. attachment to father</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>0.852</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>10.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. attachment to mother</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77.28</td>
<td>10.313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. attachment to peers</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72.32</td>
<td>9.641</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to address hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 of the study, correlation matrix, average, standard deviation between the study variables are shown at table 4. As correlation level indicates, there is a positive meaningful relation between the attachment to father and self-esteem, attachment to mother and self-esteem, and attachment to friends and self-esteem. And among the variables, attachment to mother is a stronger anticipator for self-esteem of the students, and has the
most share and relation with the level of self-stem in female students. So, hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 can be confirmed.

**DISCUSSION**

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between the attachment and the self-esteem in high schools female students in Tehran in 2012. Regression statistics method was used to investigate the theories. Findings indicated that there was a positive meaningful relationship between the level of attachment and self-esteem in female students of high schools in Tehran. These findings comply with theory of social relationships which is agreeable with the Bowlby's attachment Theory. According to this theory a child, who finds the parents as good, lovely, in access and respectable people at very early years of his or her life, feels the same for himself or herself too. The findings also comply with the studies of Moayyedfar 11.

Therefore, to avoid the trouble making problems that the children may face with, We need to give them the necessary trainings and advises about child breeding and its relationship with methods of attachment, adaptive and offensive behavior prior to their marriage. Since the low self-esteem is defined as a risk factor for aggression, offensive, depression, drug addicting etc., poor academic performance, wife abuse child abuse and so on, it is suggested that the school officials and other social institutes try to design special programs to improve the self-esteem of individuals and students particularly.

**REFERENCES**