

Relationship between God Attachment with Marital Satisfaction and Mental Health in Parents of Exceptional Children

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Abstract: In the current study, that sought to determine the relationship between God attachment with marital satisfaction and mental health in parents of exceptional children, a total of 372 parents (186 fathers, 186 mothers) of blind, deaf and educable mentally retarded children are selected through stratify random sampling with proportional allocation method. The assigned group was evaluated according to Morgan table. This survey uses three types of questionnaires for data collection to evaluate their attachment to God, marital satisfaction, and behavioral symptom checklist (scl 90). The results have significant positive implication for the relationship between secure God attachment and marital satisfaction, yet significant negative implication for the relationship between anxious-avoidant attachment to God and marital satisfaction. Further findings generally indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between mental health and marital satisfaction. Assigning independent variables of marital satisfaction and mental health as criterion variable and secure, avoidant and anxious attachment to God as predictor variable for step by step regression model, in the first place secure attachment to God entered into the equation. This variable alone determined around 51% of marital satisfaction and 47% of mental health. Other variables (avoidant and anxious attachment to God) were excluded from the equation. Secure attachment to God has implication for meaningful positive relationship with mental health and marital satisfaction while avoidant-anxious attachment to God has implication for negative meaningful relationship with mental health and marital satisfaction. Therefore, it is possible to improve marital satisfaction and mental health of different people, particularly parents of exceptional children, with changing the nature of their attachment to God.

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1. Introduction

Marital satisfaction is defined as the rate of desire and need fulfillment in couples by each other (1). This concept is result of nirvana and adjustment between couples in different life dimensions which can improve mental health in parents and is an effective factor in control of stressors and having proper family function. Although dissatisfaction among couple relations leads to stress, anxiety and even family disruption, several studies supported this hypothesis that satisfied couples relations can improve their mental and physical health (2-5). Nowadays, couples have some problems in maintaining friendly and intimate relations and satisfactory marriage life (6-11).

Birth of exceptional children in family might induce couple relations and decrease their satisfaction from marriage life. Nowadays children have main role in marriage impairment between their parents. There is one of the most challengeable topics in birth of exceptional children and their specific needs. Several

families who are suffering from exceptional children or those who have handicapped children might accompany with different problems for family members. Birth of exceptional children has several impacts on quality and quantity of marriage relations and can dissimilar relation of family members and induces stress in parents and lead to impairment of family function and satisfaction (12, 13).

Birth of handicapped children is accompanied with some feelings that are similar with post bereavement experiences. Exceptional children spend most of their times at home and with their mothers and this situation can increase the unsuitability of family functions and dissatisfaction of parents, especially mothers (14, 15).

Different pressures due to the handicapped children, as an intervention variable, have harmful impacts on decision making for sociomental life of family members and change quality of life in parents of exceptional children and decrease their satisfaction (16). Marital conflicts, divorce, depression,

hopelessness, anxiety, suicide attempts are among the negative outcomes of having exceptional children which can impair mental health and marital adjustment in families. Parents of exceptional children experience physical, social and economic actions (13, 17, 18). There is a hypothesis that claims that the problems of training exceptional children in home can dispose parents and specially mothers into the mental health impairment (18).

Two fundamentally steps must be performed for decreasing problems of physical and mental problem and handicap incidence between societies: the first step is to try to make a handicap prevention and avoidance of mental defects. The Second step is to study, probe, recognizing and preparing strategies for solving problems of exceptional children (19). In the previous studies, it has been shown that some factors such as God attachment has had some impacts on mental health (3, 4, 20-23) and marital satisfaction (23, 24). Moreover, some studies have shown that religious besiegement has positive relation with marital satisfaction (25).

There are few studies about the role of God attachment in mental health and marital satisfaction and these studies have various results. More than this fact, relationship between God attachment and mental health and marital satisfaction in Iranian exceptional students has not been done yet. The aim of the present study was to assess the relationship between God attachment with marital satisfaction and mental health.

2. Material and method

The Present descriptive correlation study was performed on parents of blind, deaf or educable mentally retarded children in exceptional children schools. Target population was all of parents with at least one exceptional child in their family. Totally 612 exceptional children were educated in six special schools.

Study population according stratified random sampling and Morgan table, 372 parents (62 parents of blind, 70 parents of deaf and 240 parents of mentally retarded children) were randomly selected among 1224 parents and included into the study. Study population was selected among students of all special schools according their number of students. Researchers went to children's home and completed the study questionnaire. Mean of included parents was 39.21 ± 7.16 years.

3. Study questionnaires

3.1. God attachment questionnaire

This questionnaire that was developed by Mayner and his colleges had 52 questions and three subscales: secure, preoccupied and fearful

attachments. Study populations answered the questions according likert scale from one (completely disagree) to seven (completely agree). In study of Ghobary and Mayner on Australian Muslims at 2008, this questionnaire had 95% as chronbach alpha. In the present study chronbach alpha was 97% and in three subscales were 81%, 87% and 73% respectively in secure, preoccupied and fearful attachments.

3.2. Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire

The present questionnaire was developed by Elson and his colleagues for assessing the weak and strong points of marital relations. The Questionnaire has two 115 and 125 question forms and each question has five answers from very high to very low. The researcher has used 115 questions form in the present study and this form has 12 subscales. First subscale (Idealistic Distortion) has five questions and other subscales include: Marital Satisfaction, Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management, Leisure Activities, Sexual Relationship; Children and Parenting; Family and Friends; Equalitarian Roles; Religious Orientation; Marital Cohesion and Marital Change).

Enrich questionnaire had high validity and reliability. Several chronbach alpha (between 92% and 95%) were reported in Naderi F study (26). Correlation coefficient of this questionnaire was fluctuating from 0.41 to 0.60 with other scales and all of the subscales had sufficient power for distinction between satisfied and unsatisfied couples (27).

3.3. The Symptom Checklist-90-TR

The first form of questionnaire was developed by Dragoitis, lipman and Koi (26) for presenting psychological aspects of physical and mental disorders. Dragoitis et al. revised first version and prepared final form. Their validity and reliability of that in Rezapour study was between 62% and 91% and its Cronbach's alpha were between 61% and 88%.

4. Results

The study data were analyzed by SPSS Ver 15.0 and with Pearson correlation and regression statistical methods. According to the descriptive data, shown in table 1, the highest and the lowest frequency of study population were belonged to parents of mentally retarded and blind students (64.5% and 16.7%). The Highest and lowest frequency of parents were belonged to student of primary and high special schools (83.3% and 7%).

Uneducated, lower and higher diploma educational levels consisted of 9.1%, 54% and 36.9% of parents respectively.

4.1. God attachment and marital satisfaction in study parents

There was positive and significant association between God attachment and marital satisfaction ($\rho=0.73$, $P<0.001$). Preoccupied and fearful subscales of God attachment had negative and significant relation with marital satisfaction ($\rho=0.63, 68$ $P<0.001$) (Table 2).

In regression analysis with marital satisfaction and God attachment as constant and predicted variables with stepwise method, secure subscale of God attachment alone can predict 67% of marital satisfaction (Table 3).

4.2. God attachment and mental health in study parents

God attachment and mental health had positive and significant association ($\rho=0.51$, $P<0.001$). Preoccupied and fearful subscales of God attachments had negative and significant relation with marital satisfaction ($\rho=-0.63$, -0.68 ; $P<0.001$). Mental health had positive and significant association with marital satisfaction. Preoccupied and fearful subscales of God attachments had negative and significant relation with marital satisfaction ($\rho=0.76$, 0.63 ; $P<0.001$).

Table 1. descriptive and demographic variables among study samples

Variables	Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Handicap type	Deaf	70	18.8
	Blind	62	16.7
	Mental retard	240	64.5
Gender of parents	Male	186	50
	Female	186	50
	Total	372	100
Education of parents	Non educated	34	9.1
	Primary school	102	27.4
	diploma	99	26.6
	Higher than diploma	65	17.5
	Bachelor and higher	72	19.4

Table 2. Association of god attachment scale with marital satisfaction and mental health

Variable	Marital satisfaction	Mental health
Mental health	-0.74(0.001)	-
secure	0.73 (0.001)	-0.66 (0.001)
preoccupied	-0.63 (0.001)	0.63 (0.001)
fearful	-0.68 (0.001)	0.66 (0.001)

Table 3. stepwise regression analysis between god attachment and mental health and marital satisfaction

Source of changes		Total squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	Coefficient determination	F	P-value
Mental health	Regression	1390122.7	1	1390122.71	0.54	389.54	0.001
	Residual value	1320390.2	370	3568.62			
	Total	270512.9	371				
Marital satisfaction	Regression	1328238.6	1	1328338.64	0.67	326.61	0.001
	Residual value	1506555.6	370	4071.77			
	Total						

Table 4. association of secure god attachment with marital satisfaction and mental health among study samples

Variables	Correlation coefficient	Coefficient determination	Adjusted Coefficient determination	Standard deviation
Marital satisfaction	0.74	0.51	0.51	59.74
Mental health	-0.63	0.47	0.47	63.81

Table 5. comparison of god attachment, mental health and marital satisfaction among parents according their genders

Source of changes		Total squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	F	P-value
God attachment	group	338717.05	2	169358.52	50.77	0.001
	gender	265925.64	1	265925.64	79.71	0.001
	Group-gender	302040.38	2	151020.19	45.27	0.001
Mental health	group	151592.63	2	75796.32	12.92	0.001
	gender	370678.40	1	370678.41	63.16	0.001
	Group-gender	239395.56	2	119697.78	20.40	0.001
Marital satisfaction	group	804240.02	2	40212.01	7.21	0.001
	gender	371722.07	1	371722.07	66.62	0.001
	Group-gender	346716.82	2	173358.41	31.07	0.001

Multiple regression analysis with entering mental health as dependent and God attachment as the predicted factor, showed that God attachment alone can be responsible for 47% of changes in mental health of study parents (Table 4).

Secure God attachment, marital satisfaction and mental health between fathers were significantly higher than mothers ($P < 0.001$) (Table 5).

5. Discussion

Findings of the present study showed that secure God attachment had positive and significant relation and preoccupied and fearful subscales of God attachment had negative and significant relation with marital satisfaction. Stepwise regression analysis showed that God attachment can only be responsible for 51% of changes in marital satisfaction. Study results were similar with Atari (11, 22, 28) which reports that the person who has secure God attachment has positive relation with emotional adjustment. These persons have more satisfaction from their life and more psychological adjustment than people without secure God attachment (29). Secure God attachment causes meaningful attitude into the world. People who lack God belief do not have solidarity and relaxation in difficult life situation and such lack causes several diverges in marital life. God situations and specifications can help people to consider the God as a source of attachment and support in their life. God is confident and disposal support that people can refer to that in life stymies. Although he has never had physical presence, the human being can feel his presence in his/her life and people who have God believment, find God as the base of secure life due to the fact that he is able to do all work and is aware of all things. Self and other esteems are two main characters of people with God believment (30). These persons due to God attachment are trustful to others and cause helping and aids toward the others in their life problems. They have special self-esteem and can be known as the supporter of others and search for strategies for solving the others' problems. This specification can increase wife satisfaction from their life (31).

Secure God attachment has positive and significant association and preoccupied and fearful subscales of God attachments have negative and significant relation with mental health. Overallly mental health and marital satisfaction have positive and significant relations. Stepwise multivariate regression analysis showed that secure God attachment alone was responsible only for 47% of mental health changes. Study findings are in line with (22) in association between adjustment and secure God attachment (30) in association between

attachment anxiety and mental and physical disorders, (32) in association with secure attachment styles with mental health, Shakerinia et al. and Lazarous et al. studies. Attachment and God believment cause meaningfully attitude to the life and preoccupied and fearful God attachments can cause unsoldarity in people and lead to several difficulties in personal and familiar life.

Secure God attachment induce tolerance of people in face with problems and increase their mental health and improve their possible psychiatric disorders. Parents of special children (such as mentally retarded children) although encounter with chronic stress and difficulties, with problem tolerance, adverse impacts of problems were decreased and they can maintain their mental health. God attachment is one of the main factors in decreasing risk of problems and increasing mental health. As the result of this fact, marital satisfaction in stressful and problematic life situations with handicapped children was increased.

Study findings showed that fathers in compare with mothers have significantly higher secure God attachment and better mental health and marital satisfaction than mothers. These findings were in line with Favarez study. Mothers in families with special children have more stressful situation and most time of these children were spent in home with their mothers, and these situation can decrease mental health and marital satisfaction in noted mothers. Although women in compare with men have lower tolerance to life problems, in some cases, environmental and social divergences might be responsible for higher marital satisfaction in men.

In the world, against scientific and industrial improvement in several fields and especially in medical and psychological fields, human could not solve their mental problems such as anxiety, depression, psychological pressure and disorders, nihilism, hopelessness and tendency to loneliness and decrease in marital satisfaction. Nowadays humans are losing their actual identity and study results show that God attachment is one of the main pathways for mental problem prevention. God mention has both the preventive and therapeutic impacts. According to holly Quran, human had welfare with god mention.

In the present study, positive and significant associations were seen between God attachment with mental health and marital satisfaction in parents of special children. God attachment can cause valid and stable frame for human mental health. In situation that people internalize God and religious into their emotional and cognitive frames and transformed their believment into the religious trust, their mental health was prepared. According to the results of present study and other similar studies, God

attachment was one of the main factors in decreasing risks and improving human mental health. This situation can induce marital satisfaction in stressful and problematic life situations.

The researcher recommends to the all parents, especially whom with special children to try to improve their God attachment and religious ideas and according that, increase their mental health. Health care workers can use religious strategies in mental health programing in the societies. Psychiatrist can get help for people from their believment and induce their trust.

Present study had some limitations; firstly questionnaires had long and many questions and accuracy of study participant might decrease due to fatigue. Secondly; study was performed only between parents of special children and interpretation of result to other parents might be discreet. Thirdly, mental health in study population was assessed only by questionnaire, using other methods such as interview or observation might have different results.

6. Conclusion

God attachment, mental health and marital satisfaction were correlated in parents of special children and this relation in secure subscale was positive and in preoccupied and fearful subscales was negative significant. Parents of special children can improve their mental health and marital satisfaction with change quality of their god attachment.

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