

The Study of Emotional Intelligence, Attachment Styles, and Self-Esteem of First and Second Children

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ABSTRACT: Emotional intelligence, attachment style, and self-esteem are important concepts in social interactions that can affect social relationships. This study aims to investigate the differences between emotional intelligence, attachment style, and self-esteem of the first and second children during their adolescence. Employing a quantitative method of survey, three questionnaires are used to collect data; IPPA for attachment, TEIQue for emotional intelligence, and TSI for self-esteem. Also, the socio-demographic questions are developed by the researcher. 261 male and female adolescents participated in this survey study. The results show that there is no statistically significant difference in attachment, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem between the first and second children. However, considering the variable of gender, the results indicate a significant difference between male and female participants in their emotional intelligence and self-esteem; the mean of emotional intelligence in female adolescents is lower than male ones. Also, the mean of self-esteem in males is higher than females. In conclusion, there is no statistically significant difference between the first and the second children. Regarding the issue of gender, female adolescents have a lower rate in both variables of emotional intelligence and self-esteem. This result can be considered that parents should be aware and pay more attention to their emotional intelligence and self-esteem of their female children during their adolescence.

KEYWORDS: Emotional intelligence, Attachment style, Self-esteem, first and second children, adolescence

Introduction

In recent studies by Sun, Liu & Yu (2019) and Arrivillaga, Rey & Extremera (2020), it showed that emotional intelligence has a significant role in an adolescent's life. Emotional intelligence can be a protective factor and helping adolescents to reduce their problematic behavior. Also, adolescents with a high level of emotional intelligence showed more copying styles with their problems. Another variable that can be important during adolescence is attachment, some studies by Marino, Marci, Ferrante, Altoè, Vieno, Simonelli & Spada (2019), and Lee & Park (2020), mentioned that attachment style has an important role in adolescents. Also, the effect of attachment can be seen in interpersonal problems in adolescents. The last variable that in this study the researcher talk about it is self-esteem, the recent studies by Ngo, Vander Laan & Aitken (2020), and Bang, Won & Park (2020), showed that self-esteem is one of the important variables during the adolescence which it means adolescents with a low level of self-esteem have a more internalizing problem. Also, self-esteem has an effect on adolescence during their lifetime which means adolescents with a low level of self-esteem have a low level of social interaction.

First and second child

Some studies in the comparison of a first and second child by Warriar & Venkateshwar (2020), and Ali & Mohammed (2020), mentioned that emotional intelligence and birth order hasn't any significant relationship. It means there are no differences between the first child and the second child in emotional intelligence. For attachment also the old study by Buunk (1997), mentioned that there was no significant relationship between attachment style and birth order for first and second children. Also, the same result can be seen in a recent study by Levy-Wasser & Katz (2004), that the result confirmed there was no significant between attachment style and birth order. This means there are no differences between the first child and the second child in attachment styles. Regarding the concept of the first and second child, in self-esteem, most of the studies mentioned that there was a significant relationship between birth order and self-esteem. In another study in the concept of self-esteem, the outcomes showed that the second children have a low level of self-esteem than the first children (Kidwell 1982). But in the recent study in 2018, the result showed that there are no significant differences between birth order and self-esteem (Sasi & Mathew 2018).

Gender

In the concept of gender in emotional intelligence, there is a study by Chohan & Habib (2020), the outcomes showed that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females in their emotional intelligence score. But in another study by Singh (2019), the result showed that there was a significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence. This means that the mean of emotional intelligence in females was higher than males. Also, in differences of gender in attachment styles, there is a study by Song, Thompson & Ferrer (2009), that the result showed there was a statistically significant difference between males and females. This means the score of attachment in females was higher than males. But, in another study, the researcher mentioned that there were no significant differences between gender and attachment styles (Feeney, Peterson, Gallois & Terry, 2000). For gender differences in self-esteem, there is a study by Bang, Won & Park (2020), That showed self-esteem in females is lower than males. This means self-esteem in gender has significant differences. In these studies, as we can see the concept of gender is important for these three variables in adolescents.

Problem statement

In the subject of first and second children in families these days, we can see parents think about the harms for their children. In some studies, the result showed that birth order has a significant relationship with social interactions and personality (Steelman & Powell, 1985). Some of the parents ask about the harms for the first child that could the birth of the second child make any harm for the first child? Or even vice versa. In the birth order theory of Adler (2002) the study talks about the effect of birth order in children's personality and their development. Also, in the concept of gender as we can see some studies mentioned there is a relationship between gender and emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and attachment. In this respect, the present research, conducted in the Tehran (Iran) province of 261 adolescents who live in Tehran. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the differences between the first and second child in emotional intelligence, attachment styles, and self-esteem. Also, the researcher tries to find the differences between gender in these three variables.

Methodology

Design

The current study used a survey study, quantitative it is an investigation which is systematic for phenomena by gathering measurable data and performing mathematical, statistical, or computational techniques and the result is will be shown in numerical (Consolvo & Walker, 2003).

Participants

For this research, the study group or sample is from Tehran (Iran) and participants are from 4 private high schools of adolescents. The sample size is 261 adolescents 127 females and 134 male or 149 first child and 112 second child.

Materials

In this study, the researcher uses the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) for attachment, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) for emotional intelligence and, the self-esteem inventory (TSI) for self-esteem and the last one is socio-demographic which here describes it one by one:

Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) is measurements developed by Armsden & Greenberg (1987) that comprise three forms for mother, father, and peer, each part has 25 items which the aim is to find out the score of attachment for parents and peers. For attachment, if adolescents get a score between 75-150 it means attachment to the parents and peers is low, while if the score is between 150-225 attachment to the parents and peers is in middle and if the score is higher than 225 it means attachment to the parents and peers is high (Pace, San Martini & Zavattini, 2011).

The reliability of the three-week test-retest reliability was 0.93 for parents and 0.86 for peers. Internal consistency reliability for mother attachment was 0.87 and 0.89 for father attachment and peer attachment 0.92, respectively. The reliability of this questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha and split test, ranging from 73% to 94%. Also, the validity of the questionnaire in a re-test method within a three-week interval on a sample of 27 subjects aged 20-18 years was reported to be 86% (Khojasteh, Mombeini, & Aslani, 2013).

Inventory of Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) is the measurements developed by Petrides (2009) which use to conceptualizes emotional intelligence as a personality trait, located at the lower level of personality hierarchies. In this test there are 30 item participant should choose the answer from the seven-point Likert scale. For emotional intelligence, if the participant gets a score between 33-66 means the emotional intelligence is in a low score. If it is between 66-100 it shows that emotional intelligence is in the middle and if the score is higher than 100 it means emotional intelligence is at the highest level (Petrides, 2009). Overall reliability was 0.84 (Narimani, Mahmoudi & Malekshahifar, 2009).

Inventory of The self-esteem inventory (TSI) developed by Coopersmith (1987) it is the measurements of self-esteem which measure the level of believing in self and self-respect, the questioner has 58 questions which the participant should choose one of the two answers for each question (like me or unlike me). For self-esteem, the criterion of good self-esteem is getting a

higher score than 25.4, and adolescents with lower than 25.4 scores have low self-esteem (Francis, 1997).

The reliability of a tool is its degree of consistency in measuring everything it measures, to what extent the same measure of results is obtained under the same conditions when the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of self-esteem is 0.88 (Tamanaifar, Sedighi Arfai & Salami Mohammad Abadi, 2011).

Data collection procedure

The researcher chooses random students from 4 high schools. After getting informed consent from parents and adolescents and describe the aim of study for them, the adolescents fill the questionnaire one by one for 30 minutes.

Data analysis procedure

For this study, the researcher uses SPSS for analyzing the data. The researcher uses the t-test to evaluate the mean and variance of two groups of students (the first and second child) and gender (female and boy) and compare them and find what is the relationships between emotional intelligence, attachment styles, and self-esteem and group of adolescents.

Result

In the concept of the first and second child the outcomes of this study shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Comparison of emotional intelligence, attachment, and self-esteem in two groups of a first and second child*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	P
Of children						
Emotional	First child	149	109.37	21.856	-1.848	.066
Intelligence	Second child	112	114.29	20.902		
Attachment	First child	149	244.86	30.345	-.369	.712
	Second child	112	246.14	25.712		
Self-esteem	First child	149	30.05	7.670	-.542	.588
	Second child	112	30.57	7.620		

As can be seen, the result shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the first and second child in emotional intelligence ($p > 0.05$). Also, we can see the same result for attachment style in two groups of the first and second child that there are no significant differences between them ($p > 0.05$). As well as the result show for self-esteem is the same

outcome which shows that there are no significant differences in the first and second child in self-esteem ($p > 0.05$).

In the concept of gender, we can see the result in Table 2.

Table 2. *Comparison of emotional intelligence, attachment, and self-esteem according to gender*

Variable	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	P
Emotional Intelligence	Female	127	29.11	7.292	-2.423	.016*
	Boy	134	31.38	31.38		
Attachment	Female	127	248.86	32.328	1.919	.056
	Boy	134	242.14	23.769		
Self-esteem	Female	127	108.25	21.708	-2.379	.018*
	Boy	134	114.54	21.024		

* $p \leq 0.05$

The outcomes for the comparison of gender and emotional intelligence shows that there is a significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence ($p \leq 0.05$). The mean in females is lower (29.11) than male (31.38). Also, there is a significant relationship between gender and self-esteem which the result shows that the mean in females is lower (108.25) than males (114.54). So there is a significant relationship between gender and self-esteem ($p \leq 0.05$). But in the concept of attachment styles, there is no significant relationship between gender and attachment styles ($p > 0.05$). The mean in females is 248.86 and for the male is 242.14.

Discussion

The recent study talks about the differences between the birth order and gender in the concept of emotional intelligence, attachment styles, and self-esteem. As we know some of the previous studies in the concept of birth order (the first and second child) mentioned that there are significant differences between the first and second child (Steelman & Powell, 1985). But in other studies regarding this subject, they found that the first and second children have no significant differences in emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and attachment styles (Levy-Wasser & Katz, 2004; Sasi & Mathew, 2018; Warriar & Venkateshwar, 2020). The outcomes of this study confirm the previous study that there are no significant differences between the first and second children in families in emotional intelligence, attachment styles, and self-esteem. Most of the previous studies were from European countries and in this study, we try to find out its outcomes as the same as European countries or not. In the concept of birth order and gender the outcomes confirm the previous studies but in the concept of emotional intelligence and gender as the result showed, it is different from the result in European country's study.

Regarding the gender in this study, the outcomes show that there is a significant difference between male and females in emotional intelligence and self-esteem. The previous research mentioned that consequences too which emotional intelligence and self-esteem have significant differences between males and females (Singh, 2019; Bang, Won & Park, 2020). But in a study by Singh, (2019), about gender and emotional intelligence, the mean of females was higher than males while the outcomes of this study mentioned that females have a lower score in

emotional intelligence than males. Contrary to research the outcomes of most of them showed that emotional intelligence in females was higher than males, in which these researches belong to the European countries (Petrides & Furnham, 2000; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). But in the midlist country such as Pakistan, we can see the same result as Iran in which the score of emotional intelligence in females is lower than males (Ahmad, Bangash & Khan, 2009). In the concept of attachment, the outcome of this study had the same with the study by Feeney, Peterson, Gallois & Terry (2000), that mentioned there is no significant relationship between gender and attachment styles.

Conclusion

In this study, the result shows that there isn't any significant relationship between birth order (first and second child) in emotional intelligence, attachment style, and self-esteem. Also, there isn't any relationship between gender and attachment. But there is a significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- The importance of gender during adolescence can affect the pattern of parenting. It means parents should be aware of the differences between their adolescent's gender they should be taught not to raise differently, especially in the concept of emotional intelligence and self-esteem.
- For the concept of Birth order, parents shouldn't feel guilty. And they should be educated about this. Also, they shouldn't be forced to make the second child or not.
- The study should be expanded to other cities in Iran for generalizing in a different culture.
- The study should be replicated with a large sample in which the researcher can generalize the result.

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