

Assessment of Adolescent Attachment Styles via Narrative Responses to the Thematic Stimulus



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SUMMARY

Objective: The aim of this research was to develop a new protocol with a projective test and qualitative assessment approach for investigating mental representations effective for the formation of attachment styles and to examine its psychometric properties.

Method: Thirty-three adolescents that were admitted to the Division of Adolescent Medicine of Hacettepe University participated in the study. The Adolescent Attachment Protocol (AAP) and Relationship Styles Questionnaire (RSQ) were used.

Results: The ICC scores among judges for the Adolescent Attachment Protocol (between 0.78 and 0.87) were found statistically significant. Principle component analysis revealed that four main dimensions (Self, Other, Avoidance, and Dependency) are gathered under one factor that predicted 63% of the main change. It has been determined that similarity of the attachment classifications done by Adolescent Attachment Protocol and Relationship Styles Questionnaire were 58%. Qualitative evaluations pointed out a considerable differentiation between secure and insecure attachment styles in terms of themes.

Conclusion: The psychometric properties of newly developed Adolescent Attachment Protocol according to the self-report scale, and its strength and weakness to assess mental representations is discussed in the light of the relevant literature.

Keywords: Adolescent, attachment, projective technique, qualitative evaluation

INTRODUCTION

For the past two decades, new studies ranging from attachment styles in infancy-adolescence-adulthood to therapeutic effects of attachment in psychotherapy processes emphasized the importance of attachment theory. According to the theory, infant's emotional bond established with the person providing primary care, constitutes one of the most important parts of personality development (Bowlby 1988). Attachment relationship represents the process developing between the infant and its caregiver starting before birth, continuing particularly into infancy. As a result of repeatedly occurring experiences, the infant starts to develop "Internal Working Models" including "self", "other", and mental representations

of the attachment relationship (Bowlby 1988). According to Bowlby, there are two dimensions underlying internal working models. The first one is related to "self" representation of the infant/child, and involves assessments regarding being loveable and precious. The second one, "other", is related to the representation of the caregiver, and involves expectations and assessments regarding being reliable and reachable. Bowlby (1988) and Ainsworth (1989) emphasized that the attachment relationship established with the parents extended beyond childhood, and that the mentioned representations of self and other is a process affecting the individual and relationships they establish both in adolescence and adulthood on the level of expectations, beliefs, and needs.

*This study is the part of the doctoral dissertation conducted by the first author in consultation with the second author.

Received: 10.02.2016 - Accepted: 14.03.2016

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doi: 10.5080/u17110

In the following period, it has been observed that approach and definitions by Ainsworth and Bowlby were examined in order to see the compliance of various attachment classifications in infancy and childhood to adolescence and adulthood. Due to this growing interest, measurement tools regarding the adolescent and adult attachment styles were developed (George et al. 1984, Hazan and Shaver 1987, Bartholomew 1990, Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991). The first of these methods measures the styles or dimensions of attachment towards peers or frequently people with whom they are romantically involved/have close relations, on the basis of participant's self-ratings by using self-rating scales (Hazan and Shaver 1987, Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991). Theorists and researchers in the field suggest that these scales used in assessing adult attachment styles concentrate on attachment in a romantic relationship. In addition, they criticized their use in research, which examined attachment relationships outside of romantic relations (de Haas et al 1994, Allen and Land 1999, Crowell et al 2008). Since the assessment based on an individual's report is open to defensive attitudes, and due to problems regarding power of measurement of such scales, it is also conveyed that attachment styles cannot be represented objectively (Fraley and Shaver 2000; Mikulincer and Shaver 2007). Nonetheless, based on Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth's (1964) assumptions, some researchers emphasize that "attachment in action" has a significant importance in attachment assessments, and they criticize the fact that in self-report scales, individual states only their emotions and thoughts about self and attachment figure, and that attachment is not monitored in active state (George and West 2001, Solomon and George 2011). Within the scope of the second method used in attachment assessment, the interview format, measurement tools assessing real life experiences from childhood, and attachment relationship through open-ended questions reflect early attachment relationships effectively and accurately (Hesse 1999). Adult Attachment Assessment-AAI (Adult Attachment Interview; George et al 1984, 1985, 1996), which examines the relationship with the primary caregiver in this manner, is the most commonly used measurement tool in assessing adult attachment styles. However, it has also been stated that examining attachment experiences with open-ended questions in the interview structure might cause individuals to defend these experiences with a conscious awareness. These individuals shall not convey themes they do not articulate. and one of the key concepts in attachment assessment is assessing defense processes (George et al 1999, George and West 2011). In other words, using the interview format, the quality and assessment of attachment relationship is questioned indirectly within the scope of this method involving narrative technique. Thus, in measurement tools using a narrative technique, children are told narratives containing basic assumptions of attachment theory (generalized event representations regarding attachment experiences)

and asked how they would finish these narratives (Bretherton 1992, Bretherton et al 1990, Granot and Mayseless 2001). This approach, conveyed as Secure Base Scripts, assumes that in their narratives, children reflect their emotions and thoughts towards themselves as part of attachment object and the relationship with it. Similarly, based on the assumption that processes underlying defensive attitude can be reached through projective methods, it has been observed that assessment tools whereby attachment experience is activated by pictorial stimuli, and mental representations of attachment are assessed, were also used in adolescent and adult samples (Magai, 1999, George and West 1999, 2001, George et al 1999). In recent years, studies using secure base scripts and narrative technique are also used more commonly in Turkey (Uluç 2006, 2009, Anafarta 2007, Çalışır 2008).

Parallel to the above mentioned studies, based on a projective and qualitative assessment approach, this study also aims to develop a protocol to examine attachment styles of adolescents. With this protocol, it is aimed to determine attachment styles using Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), which is a projective tool, by investigating narratives conveyed by adolescents in a semi-structured interview. Based on Bowlby's assumption, it has been conceived that since participants use internal working models when setting up narratives about attachment. Therefore through the structure of conveyed narratives and assessment of questions regarding the narrative, self-worth and beliefs toward attachment figures can be reached.

When considered within this frame, projective techniques allows participant to generate reactions with limitless variations. Thus, it is expected that participants can reflect their own typical thought processes, needs, concerns, and conflicts. Researchers using projective techniques assert that such techniques are effective in revealing particularly undisclosed, implicit, and unconscious components of personality. Besides, projective techniques might be used outside of the theoretical frame depending on the purpose of the research, which they were based. Namely, it is assumed that the use of TAT might provide valuable information in attachment assessment. Also, another reason for preferring TAT is that this tool questions a set of interpersonal relationships and social situations. It has been suggested that reactions by the individual reflect important information regarding themselves and their relationships (Abt and Bellak 1959). It is assumed that the participant reflects their own thoughts and emotions on the character told in the narrative. Therefore, it is presumed that a projective method gives narratives allowing to assess defensive processes and to see the reflection of attachment relationship on relational themes.

In recent years, although foreign literature contains many research examining childhood, adolescence and adulthood attachment styles and relations between various variables, such research in our country is limited mostly to adult attachment

styles. It has also been shown that relationships established with people other than parents gain importance in adolescence, yet emotional ties and support received from parents in case of need maintain their importance in the psychosocial development of the adolescent (Cicchetti and Rogosch 2002).

Thus, this research aims to assess attachment styles on a sample in adolescence. It is expected that with the qualitative nature of assessment procedure and its focus on mental representations of attachment, this might be a preliminary contribution to attachment research in Turkey.

METHOD

Sample

The research sample was comprised of a total of 33 adolescents, 24 girls (72.9%) and 9 boys (27.3%), meeting the suitable conditions among those that applied to Hacettepe University, İhsan Doğramacı Children's Hospital, Division of Adolescent Medicine within a six-month time frame and consented to participate. Ages of participants varied between 14 and 17 years plus 3 months ($X = 16.03$, $SD = 0.91$). Parents of 27 adolescents in the sample lived together, and parents of the remaining six were separated. Ages of mothers range between 36 and 54 ($X = 44.06$, $SD = 4.96$) and of fathers between 36 and 59 ($X = 46.84$, $SD = 9.91$). Three percent of mothers had no education, but were literate, 15.2% were primary school, 3% were middle school, 30.3% were high school, and 48.5% were university graduates, respectively. Three percent of fathers were primary school, 12.1% were middle school, 12.1% were high school, and 7.7% were university graduates. The reason for participants to apply in the study was classified as "General Adaptation Problems in Adolescence". Titles such as problems in family and/or friendship relationships, adaptation problems regarding school and courses, and self-confidence problems, which are observed on a sub-clinical level were included in this classification.

Data Gathering Instruments

For gathering quantitative data, a Demographical Information Form, Relationship Scales Questionnaire. Qualitative data consisted of an Adolescent Attachment Protocol.

Demographical Information Form: The information form started with information about the purpose of the research, and continued with certain demographical information, which were considered important for the research.

Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ): Developed by Griffin and Bartholomew, the RSQ is composed of 30 items. It aimed to measure four attachment styles (secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissive) by adding up different items. The participants rated each item on a 7-point (1 = Very

untrue of me, 7 = Very true of me) Likert-type scale considering how the item identified them and their attitude in close relationships. The validity and reliability study for the RSQ on a Turkish sample was conducted by Sümer and Güngör (1999). The scale has been shown to have acceptable validity and reliability.

Adolescent Attachment Protocol (AAP): This protocol consists of 4 TAT cards and 7 questions asked after each card. Since the plan was to assess attachment style with a projective test, TAT cards with relationship theme were preferred. Two cards with equivalent themes were applied separately according to gender (for girls 1, 2, 7GF, and 10; for boys 1, 2, 6BM, and 7BM). These numbers and letters are standard indicators specifying the sequence number and gender of the cards (GF: girl/female, BM: boy/male). Cards were chosen by a team of 3 along with the researcher, an associate professor and a clinical psychologist. Attachment theory suggests that in situations like loneliness, separation, and loss, the attachment system activates, and that internal working models affect the experience (Bowlby 1969/1988, Ainsworth 1964). Therefore, while choosing cards, the potentials of i) to activate attachment system of the participants (event representations regarding attachment experiences), ii) to give narratives regarding themselves and their relationships with others were considered (Henry 1956). The 1st card can activate attachment representations to internalized mother father (authority) figures in a situation where the individual is lonely. The 2nd card can bring out narratives relating to the individual's point of view on relationships with the family, and their perception of relationships with others in general. The 6BM card can bring out narratives on separation from parents, attitudes towards mother figure (dependency versus independency, attention and/or negligence), and attachment relationship. The 7BM card can bring out narratives on attitudes toward father figure (dependency versus independency, adaptation, defence) and attachment relationship. The 7GF card can activate mother's attitude towards children and mother-daughter relationship, and the 10th card reaction to separation from parents, and narratives suitable for assessing dependency towards parents (Henry, 1956). During implementation, the standard instructions for TAT is given, and the participant was asked to tell a story for each card respectively.

Prior to the main study for assessing adolescent attachment styles through narratives given for thematic stimuli, preliminary implementations were carried out in order to observe the use of cards in assessing attachment styles. In pilot implementations conducted with thirty participants (other than the participants of the main study), we attempted to assess attachment styles with certain questions right after implementing the standard TAT protocol. As a result of this preliminary study, questions and ratings were finalized, and the "Adolescent Attachment Protocol" and the coding form were

prepared for the main study. Questions in this form included concepts that are specified to be prominent in attachment assessment in terms of both theory and measurement tools. In order for understanding the structure of internal working models, the questions assess perception of the individual regarding self, how they feel in relationships with the others, expectations from others, avoiding building close relationships and their anxiety level, and are asked through the character in the narrative. The questions were carefully asked after the participant's narrative ends completely, and any questions other than relevant questions, which could spoil the flow, content, and construct of the narrative were not asked.

The coding form consists of 3 major dimensions in order of narrative quality, assessment of characters in the narrative, and self-other relation. In the coding of narrative quality dimension 3 criteria are considered: (1) the definition level of characters, (2) flow of the narrative (more than one, incomplete, ambiguous and/or inconsistent narrative), (3) competence level of information regarding relationship theme and structures. These items are assessed with a 7-point (1=none, 7=many) Likert type scale. The judges completed this assessment, and implementations below 4 points were excluded from the study due to bad narrative quality. In the assessment of characters in the narrative dimension there are two sub-dimensions, namely self and other. The coding of self sub-dimension involves two questions: (1) considering/not considering self worthless, worthy of being loved, approved, liked, and appreciated; and (2) not being able to generate internal resources against problems, thinking they will not be able to use what they generate/generating and thinking they will be able to use them. There were two questions in other sub-dimension: (1) seeing others as unreliable/reliable, and (2) others are denying and unreachable, will not respond to their needs and requests / others are accepting and reachable, will respond to their needs and requests. Questions were asked in question format by the implementer after the narrative ends (For example "what do you think..... (name or definition given to the character in the narrative by the participant) would think about seeing him/herself). The answers were assessed on a 7-point (1=none, 7=many) Likert-type scale. High scores mean that mental representations of self and other are positive, and low scores mean they are negative. In the self-other relation dimension, there were avoidance and dependency sub-dimensions. The coding of avoidance sub-dimension involves two questions: (1) low / high level of willingness to build close relationships; and (2) not building / building relations. The coding of dependency sub-dimension involves one question: (1) self-worth depending on other's approval and appreciation; and (2) self-worth independent from others' approval. Similarly, these questions were also asked in question format by the implementer after the narrative ends (For example "What do you think

would think about building relationships?"). The answers were assessed by the judges on a 7-point (1=none, 7=many) Likert-type scale. High scores indicated that there was no avoidance regarding getting closer in interpersonal relationships and that self-worth does not depend on the relationship with others; low scores indicated avoidance in building relationships and self-worth depends on others. Classification of attachment style and dimensions were specified by calculating scores given in dimension coding. Narrative quality dimension was only used to determine if gathered data would be sufficient for assessment, and general classification was made by the answers given to assessment of characters in the narrative and self-other relationship sub-dimensions. Dividing the sum of scores from each sub-dimension to the number of questions gives the scores of attachment dimensions. 4 and higher scores indicate positive self and other representation, lower scores indicate negative self and other representation. Four and higher scores show low avoidance and low dependency, and higher scores show high avoidance and high dependency levels. Each category can be formulized as follows: Secure attachment: positive self + positive other + low avoidance + low dependency. Dismissive attachment: positive self + positive other + high avoidance + low dependency. Preoccupied attachment: positive self + positive other + low avoidance + high dependency. Fearful attachment: negative self + negative other + high avoidance + high dependency.

Procedure

General physical and mental examinations of participants were performed by department physicians. Possibility of mental retardation reported prior to or detected in the examination, psychiatric disorders, and chronic or acute physical problems, which might affect the research, were used as exclusion criteria. Those deemed suitable were directed to the researcher. An assessment interview was conducted with the adolescents and their families by the researcher. For those adolescents who met the desired conditions, more detailed information about the study was given and written informed consents from adolescents willing to participate and their families were taken. Implementations were performed by the researcher. Following the assessment interview, those deemed suitable of participation were first given the AAP and were asked to complete the scales after the interview. The implementation lasted about 30 minutes. TAT card implementations, which were recorded with permission from participants, were deciphered by the researcher. Transcripts and coding form thoroughly discussed in the method section were sent to 2 independent judges for coding. Judges have the research experience for theoretical background on the issue and assessment. Additionally, they were trained in coding with sample narratives regarding the mentioned protocol and became reliable raters.

RESULTS

Interjudge Reliability Findings of Adolescent Attachment Protocol

Dimensions of self, other, and self-other relationship of attachment were evaluated with 7 questions. Interjudge reliability coefficients for those questions were calculated with intra-class correlation (ICC) coefficients. The ICC values of the questions, which were used to determine attachment style, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Interjudge reliability coefficients of attachment dimensions

	Interjudge ICC
SELF	
1) Feeling worthy	0.87**
2) Attitude toward problems	0.78**
OTHER	
1) Seeing other reliable	0.84**
2) Belief about getting help	0.83**
SELF-OTHER RELATION	
1) Avoidance	
Willingness for relationship	0.85**
Building relation	0.80**
2) Dependency	
Self-worth	0.84**
ICC: intra-class correlation coefficients	
** p<0.001	

Beside the significance of the correlation among judges' ICC values, the coefficient of 0.70 was considered acceptable (Wuensch 2003). As illustrated in Table 1, interjudge reliability scores for grading the questions were at an acceptable level. Those questions were used to determine attachment style. After the evaluation of the responses, participants were grouped as secure (N=15), preoccupied (N=7), fearful (N=7), and dismissing (N=3). The interjudge reliability of attachment classification was calculated with Cohen's kappa (κ). The classification agreement for four attachment style of the participants was 83% ($\kappa = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$) from two judges. So, interjudge reliability to determine attachment styles was considered at an acceptable level.

Comparative Evaluation of Adolescent Attachment Protocol Classifications and Relationship Scale Questionnaire Classifications

According to the RSQ the participants were classified as secure (N=7), preoccupied (N=17), fearful (N=4), and dismissing (N=4). One of the participants had the same score from two attachment styles so the style could not be determined. Results revealed that 58% of the participants that classified into the four attachment styles according to the AAP were of the same attachment style.

Three participants were assigned to dismissing attachment styles by both instruments. All the participants that had

Table 2. Participants' attachment category distribution according to RSQ and AAP

		AAP				TOTAL
		Secure	Fearful	Preoccupied	Dismissing	
RSQ	Secure	6	1	0	0	7
	Fearful	2	2	0	0	4
	Preoccupied	7	3	7	0	17
	Dismissing	0	0	0	3	3
	TOTAL	15	6	7	3	31

AAP: The Adolescent Attachment Protocol, RSQ: Relationship Styles Questionnaire

Table 3. Relationships among dimensions

	Self	Other	Avoidance
Other	0.74**		
Avoidance	0.48**	0.59**	
Dependency	0.43*	0.28	0.48**

**p<0.01; *<0.05

preoccupied style according to the AAP (N=7) were also in the same style according to the RSQ. Only two of the six participants that had fearful style according to the AAP were in fearful style according to the RSQ. The other three participants were assigned as preoccupied and one placed into secure style. Six of the fifteen participants that had secure style according to the AAP were in the same style according to the RSQ, and the other seven were assigned as preoccupied and two were placed into fearful style.

Construct Validity of Adolescent Attachment Protocol

Analyses were based on arithmetical mean of judges' grading. Pearson coefficients were calculated to determine the relationships between the sub-test total scores and have been reported below. Results indicated several significant relationships among sub dimensions.

The strongest relationship was found between Self and Other dimensions ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.000$). It can be said that, when participants consider the other as secure, their perception of self worth is increased. A significant relationships was observed among Avoidance and Self ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.000$) and Avoidance and Other ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.000$) dimensions. When participants perceive themselves worthy and other secure, they did not avoid to form relationships. There was a significant relationship between Self and Dependency dimensions ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, when participants perceive their self as worthy, the dependency of self worth to the relationship with other decrease. There was also a significant relationship between Avoidance and Dependency dimensions ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.000$). When the participants self worth was not dependent on others they did not avoid relation. There was no relationship between Other and Dependency dimensions ($r = 0.28$).

Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was used to determine whether subtests formed one or more significant factor. In

Table 4. Factor Structure of AAP

	Factor
Self	0.854
Other	0.849
Avoidance	0.805
Dependency	0.652

AAP: The Adolescent Attachment Protocol

order to evaluate the suitability of the data set, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) ratio was taken into account. Bartlett's Test was used for testing the statistical probability that the correlation matrix had significant correlations among at least some of the variables. If this score was above 0.10 it can be said that the factor analysis was suitable for the data. KMO measure of sampling adequacy was used to compare the magnitude of the observed correlation coefficients to the magnitude of the partial correlation coefficients, and it should be greater than 0.50 (Field 2000). Higher values for the KMO measure indicate that the data set is suitable to proceed a PCA. Based on the analysis it was found that KMO=0.625 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = Chi Square = 48.427 (SS = 6, $p < 0.000$). Both values showed that the data set was suitable to perform a factor analysis. Results showed that there was a principal component (eigen value=2.523) which has an eigen value greater than 1. That component explained 63.09% of the variance, which was measured by this scale. The distribution of dimensions to the attachment factor is presented in Table 4.

The significant result of construct validity indicated that the AAP evaluates one construct.

Qualitative Evaluation of the Stories

While forming the AAP the aim was that each card projects certain situations that activate the attachment system. The response diversity of the participants can be observed as a sign that this purpose has been reached. For this purpose, stories of the participants, who were classified according to judge scores, was reevaluated by the first author in terms of themes. Mainly, two themes were observed when we examine the narratives of insecure participants for the situation that activate the system like loneliness, separation and having arguments. The first group was about ignorance of the importance or effect of the attachment figure, defenses appeared in the form of devaluation, limited and stereotyped information for relationships, preoccupation with the attachment figure, unresolved issues, and polarized emotions. The second group was about negative evaluations for the people and relationships, punishments, rejection from others, distancing during relations, anger, withdrawal, helplessness, loss of control, intensity of harming situation, being unprotected, and high perception of danger. In the responses of those participants, insecure attachment dimensions were observed. In the narratives of secure

participants' two themes were observed. The first group was about the effort of the character to produce internal source, to cope with the situation that activates attachment system, and resolved issues. The second group was about the physical or representational help from the others. In the responses of those participants secure attachment dimensions were observed.

DISCUSSION

This study indicates that the AAP interjudge reliability values of response grading for attachment dimensions were statistically significant. After the classifications based on the grading, most of the participants were grouped in the same attachment style by both judges. This result demonstrates that the AAP fulfills the necessity of interjudge reliability. Additionally, it is important to note that the ICC method is not only sensitive to the direction of changes for the grades, but it is also sensitive to the quantity. In other words, the evaluation of the judges is increasing and decreasing in coordination for different participants and also their grades are equivalent.

On the other hand, 58% of the participants that were classified into four attachment styles according to the RSQ and the AAP were in the same style. The significance was low on account of percentage and value. Similarly, the percentage of attachment classification rate of two other studies (Sümer and Güngör 1999, Çuhadaroğlu et al 2010) conducted in Turkey, which used two different attachment scales with the same theoretical background, reported results that were similar to this study. As the rate of quantitative studies given above is similar, when the projective and quantitative structural differences are taken into account, our finding can be interpreted as significant. As it is intended, projective measurement may indicate its sensitivity of distinctiveness. When we looked at the distribution of attachment classification of the RSQ and the AAP, the most remarkable finding was that participants with dismissing and preoccupied styles in projective evaluation were in the same styles according to the RSQ. However, half of the participants defined themselves as secure according to the AAP, and were grouped into preoccupied according to the RSQ. This result is consistent with the finding that the RSQ like other attachment self-report scales is less sensitive to measure secure attachment compared to insecure attachment (Fraley and Shaver 2000). This preoccupied attachment situation can be considered as the new instrument's sensitivity to distinctiveness. From this respect, it is recommended that further studies should address this point. The theoretical background of the RSQ has emerged from assessing two working models in positive and negative poles and dichotomizing the results to determine four attachment styles (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991, Griffin and Bartholomew 1994). The scale classifies mathematically according to the highest attachment

score. Furthermore, the RSQ continues the tradition of classifying attachment over four dimensions based on a romantic relationship experience after Hazan and Shaver (1987) conceptualization of addressing romantic love as an attachment process. So, the questions of the RSQ brings into account participants who have the experience of romantic relationships. The sample has been formed with adolescents who have limited romantic relationship experience, which could be another reason for the difference in the classification. However, the AAP assesses the attachment dimensions and classifications with some questions relating to mental representations of self and other relations asked after the narratives activated by attachment system like the theoreticians recommended. This new assessment tool is trying to expand the tradition to determine the attachment classification with projective tests used on children to the adolescence period. The new method can be considered more appropriate to classify attachment styles as it conceptualizes Bowlby's theoretical concepts within a developmental manner.

In terms of construct validity, there was a significant relationship among sub-dimensions (self, other, avoidance and dependency) of the assessment tool just as the attachment theory proposed. Participants think that they are worthy as long as they perceive other reachable and trustable. A secure attachment relationship with a reachable and consistent caregiver provide the internalization of security feeling and affect positive self-worth, and also reflects self and other mental representations for relationships later in life. The dependency dimension shows how much self-worth depends on the relationships and how much it is autonomous. The aim of this study was to investigate relational themes, from this point of view it is found that as long as the self representation is perceived worthy, it doesn't depend on relations with other. Moreover, worthy and autonomous self representation as well as perceiving others as trustable decreases the anxiety and avoidance related to attachment in interpersonal relations. The dimension of other, assess anxiety towards the other person, so it assess the sensitivity of not getting care and rejection in relations. Research showed that inconsistent, insufficient, and/or uninterested care from the primary care giver when help is needed caused to perceive the other as unreliable. Therefore, the feeling of anxiety in attachment to others comes in the foreground (Mikulincer and Florian 2001). This state can reveal avoidance during relationships or on the contrary lead to clinging to other people.

In terms of factor analysis, it was observed that Self, Other, Avoidance, and Dependency dimensions clustered together and formed only one construct. As mentioned above, participants' self-worth increases as long as they perceive the significant other as reachable and trustable. Therefore, it is quite natural that expectations for self and other emerge together and complement each other. The coordinated increase of

positive representation of Self and Other dimensions decrease Avoidance at the same time. The Dependency dimension is loaded in the lowest level to the relevant factor. The relation among self-other and dependency is more complicated than with avoidance. As was observed there was no significant relationship between Dependency and Other dimensions.

In terms of qualitative assessments, it was observed that secure and insecure participants' narratives and answers differ in terms of processing experiences after the activation of attachment system. As it is well known, when the attachment system is activated and the attachment figure becomes physically or symbolic attainable, "security based strategies" emerge in order to regulate mood and support the coping with constructive and flexible mechanisms (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007). Those strategies are the main components of the secure attachment feeling. It is believed that this is the result of positive interaction with attachment figure. During those interactions, one learns to cope with life difficulties and that other people's support helps to control over process and result of threatening events (Mikulincer et al 2003). It is believed that, the content of narratives and attachment classifications are related with the processes mentioned above.

The limitations of this study are small sample size, imbalance of sex ratio, and subclinical structure of the sample. This protocol is thought to be more appropriate for clinical practice and the study was primarily intended to be performed with a subclinical sample and specifically to be tested in a clinical setting. Girls are more frequently admitted to the clinic so this ratio is reflected to the sample. The reason for parents' having a higher education is that patients are referred to the Division of Adolescent Medicine for an assessment of normal developmental characteristics without any physical or psychological problems. Consequently, parents who have this sensitivity bring a higher educational level. These results must keep in mind in terms of generalization. We assume that the significant results can be obtained for attachment assessment through an increase of judge trainings in order the research team to be expanded, and through a continuation of the studies with normal and clinical samples. In general, this study can be considered a preliminary study in terms of developing a new tool to assess attachment representations with a projective manner. Significant results for interjudge reliability analysis showed that the judge trainings and the theoretical background of the newly developed assessment tool are strong. When the qualitative assessment is considered the AAP gives important information about self and other working models and activated attachment system other than participants' attachment classifications. Those results show the impact of projective technique and semi-structured interview over self-report scales. Consistent with the aim of this study, it was observed that the AAP gave rich data for qualitative assessments. Therefore, it will have implications to clinical practice.

We considered the clinical usage of the tool, because it is not an autobiographical interview format it lends itself well to the cases who present a defensive approach. Additionally, the tool is appropriate for repeated administration so it can be used as a supportive assessment tool for therapy process and result studies. Finally, it is thought that because of the critics of defining attachment classifications related to the assessment problems of attachment scales, this preliminary work to develop a new tool could have an important impact. Further studies should be pursued with clinical samples of different diagnosis, normal samples with a variety of age range and in psychotherapy process and result studies, which will be important for Turkey's attachment research.

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