

Examining the Relationship between Attachment styles and Personality characteristics with Death Anxiety among students of Islamic Azad University, Hamadan

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Abstract

The present research aimed to identify the relationship between attachment styles and personality characteristics with death anxiety among students of Hamadan Islamic Azad University. The research method was descriptive- survey, The population of the research is all students of Hamadan Islamic Azad University that their number is 15000. The sample that were selected using cluster random method. Data gathering tools were three templer Death Anxiety, Hazan and Sharer attachment styles and NEO PI-R personality test questionnaires. Data was analyzed using Pearson correlation test and stepwise regression. The results showed that there is relationship between personality characteristics and attachment styles with death anxiety among students. Also, the attachment styles and personality can predict death anxiety.

Keywords: Death anxiety, attachment styles, personality factors

Introduction

Undoubtedly, the most painful unknown that man is faced with it in the history is the death phenomenon. Death is an inevitable fact that everybody may have unique perception and reaction to it. No human is thought at least for a moment to death. He basically has the desire to prolong life due to having the instinct of life. And, he always tries to somehow overcome the violence of nature and obscurantism of death instinct (Azar, Nouhi & Shafi'ikondjani, 2006).

Since the death is never experienced and nobody touched it clearly, all are anxious about it. But, everybody experiences different degrees of the death anxiety due to certain factors (Singh, Singht & Nizami 2003). Although preoccupation with death is desirable to provide meaningful life in all religions and religious people, but researches showed that preoccupation with death can cause anxiety in some people (Maltby and Danny, 2000).

Death is associated with psychological development and formation of personality. That is to say, a lot of human behaviors is the result of his reaction to the death. Relationship and recognition of the individual to the death phenomenon, fear and anxiety from it and defensive mechanism that applies against the anxiety and symbolic meaning given to the concept of death have effect in forming the deepest layers of personality. However, the fear of death is only because this unknown has converted all to nothing. Our fear of death is because death is uncertain powerful visualization that has converted (I) into a mere object. This research tries to find relationship between attachment styles and personality characteristics with death anxiety.

Literature Review

Death is appeared threatening for many people due to its ambiguous nature leading to anxiety. Anxiety is a reaction against unknown, internal, ambiguous risk and its source is

unconsciously and uncontrollable and various factors make it (Stewart and Larya, 2001). Death anxiety is defined as an abnormal- and great fear of the death with feelings for process of dying or what happens after death (Rice 2009). Death anxiety is a complex concept that cannot be explained simply and generally includes fear concepts of his death and others. In other words, death anxiety includes prediction of his death and fear of death process and dying about important people in life (Gyriyeh, 2005).

Belsky (1999) argues that death anxiety is the thoughts, fears and emotions related to the final event of life and beyond formal life. Jones, Simon, Greenberg, Pyzinsky, and Solomon (1997) have known that death anxiety is conscious and unconscious fear of death or dying death anxiety is a typical type of anxiety that is known and named based on its origin. Researchers have distinguished two types of anxiety. Trait anxiety and state anxiety. Trait anxiety is a part of personality that exists in a long period of time and measured by observing the physiological, emotional states and cognitive behaviors in person.

State anxiety- that death anxiety is this kind- is appeared due to a stressful situation in a person whose control of emotions is decreased. In each of these stages, person shows some changes in his cognitive and emotional ability and behavior (Shyves et al, 2007). Rink says that treating anxious mentors is because of inefficient patterns of attachment. He also says that main reason of the growth path of people to the anxiety is the progress of a sense of loss that they have in their attachments related to their parents (Rink et al, 2002).

Attachment is the sleep emotional bond that is established with especial people in the life, so that makes us feel joyful when we interact with them and because they are on our side, we feel comfortable in the time of stress (Burke, Trans: Mohammadi, 2002).

The most fundamental issue of attachment theory is that attachment style is created in early relationships between parent- child and affects future relationships in one's life. Researches carried out to date confirm Bowlby's view on the importance of early experiences in the growth of internal preliminary patterns that have special effect on people relationships with others (Rahimian Bugar, 2006). There are different factors and characteristics related to death phenomenon that can be a ground for accepting this certain reality or conversely be the cause of anxiety and denial of reality. Personality characteristics are among factors that make a difference in experiencing this phenomenon.

Personality characteristics in everybody life return to sustainable attributes during a time that have not changed much from one location to another and refer to the nature of individual (Razavieh et al, 2010). Although there are many personality characteristics but among the most important and influential models in examining personality characteristics in recent decades has been five- factor model that has attracted the research in the personality area (Mack Lycra and Costa 2004, as cited in Zakie et al, 2010). Five-factor personality model is designed for rapid assessment of five main factors of personality (emotional instability, extraversion, openness to experience, agreement and conscientiousness). Neuroticism or nervousness. This dimension is based on adverse emotional experience that includes followings. «nervousness, sadness, confusion, irrational and unrealistic beliefs, much less control of impulse) to the needs, personal insecurity, stress, anxiety depression, hostility and vulnerability». Extroversion: This dimension has measured factors such as «courage, high confidence, full of energy, full of mobility, socialization, being talking, arousal, pluralism, high commitment, aggressive, positive emotions, intimate friends and optimis». Openness to experience: this factor has measured the amount of curiosity, independence, breadth of interest, wisdom (philosophy and intellectual aspects), creativity, openness, logic- oriented, the lack of emphasis on customs and people who obtained high score in this dimension, they are more likely to have success in the individual and social life- Agreement indicates altruism, dedication, cooperation, empathy,

kindness, and affability, flexibility and compatibility, honorable and optimism. People with high score on this criterion in addition to have above features, also have high success in the group activities. Conscientiousness: this dimension includes perseverance, endurance, accuracy, reliability, willingness and discipline. Conscientiousness is characterized by three criteria that include followings: progress navigation (hardworking with perseverance), taking- dependence (responsible and careful), arrangement (program orientation, and organization). So, conscientiousness is related to self- control and discipline and perseverance (Masri et al 2005, as cited in Yassemi Nezhad et al, 2011).

Studies indicate effect of personality characteristics on the anxiety experience. In a study carried out between high school students and USA college students, women showed more death anxiety and religious fanaticism than men (Pierce et al, 2007).

Rasmussen (1996) in a study examined relationship between death anxiety, age and psychosocial maturity. Findings showed that psychosocial maturity is a better predictor for death anxiety than age. However, both variables were significantly negatively correlated with death anxiety. It was found that when psychosocial maturity and age increase, death anxiety decreases.

Custombam (2000) with review on researches carried out in non – clinical population showed that death anxiety is a common phenomenon among the general population. Despite the importance of death anxiety, it is considered as a taboo in our country and faced with resistance. Research in this area has not been done in our country and in European and American. Countries, little research has been done in this area only in one or two recent decades.

Now, given that in review of resources, statistics on this phenomenon was not observed in Iran and also no systematic research on death anxiety and effective factors on it carried out about our target population, that is, students. Therefore, this research seeks to answer the question whether death anxiety is associated with attachment and personality characteristics or not.

Methodology

Present research project is non- experimental (descriptive) and with post- event research method. Present research is applied in terms of aim, is descriptive in terms of gathering data and is multivariate correlation analysis in terms of type. Population of the research is all students of Hamadan Islamic Azad University that number of them is 15000. 240 sample was considered according to Morgan table. Cluster sampling was done in this research. Field method was used for gathering data in the research and three Templer Death Anxiety, Hazan and Shaver attachment style and NEO PI-R personality test questionnaires were used for collecting information in the research. In this research, descriptive statistics of central tendency indicators with emphasis on the mean and dispersion indicators with emphasis on standard deviation and also frequency indicators and percent frequency are used; In inferential part, multivariate regression test and Pearson correlation coefficient were used for examining relationship between variables. It should be noted that SPSS 21 software was used for antialiasing data.

Findings of the study

In first hypothesis, findings showed that there is relationship personality characteristics and death anxiety in students. Correlation test is used in order to examine this hypothesis. Distribution of variables of the research is normal and Pearson correlation is used for examining relationship between variables. Table 1 shows the results of the test.

According to the result of correlation test, the correlation coefficient is calculated negative and significant at 99 % ($P=0/01$) between death anxiety and extroversion ($r= -0/388$). Responsibility ($r= 0/427$) and compatibility ($r= -0/474$).

Table 1: Pearson correlation test between death anxiety and personality characteristics.

Variable resource	neuroticism	Extroversion	Openness	Compatibility	Loyalty
Correlation coefficient	0/236**	-0/388**	% 61	-%0/474	-0/427**
Death statistical anxiety P	0/0001	0/0001	0/347	0/0001	0/0001

** Significant at 99 %

This means that death anxiety decreases as these three variable increase. Also, relationship between neuroticism and death anxiety is positive ($r=0/236$) and significant at 99 % confidence level ($p=0/01$). It means that an increase in neuroticism in a person leads to an increase in death anxiety. Other finding of this hypothesis shows that there is no significant relationship between death anxiety and openness.

Second Research hypothesis: There is relationship between attachment styles and death anxiety in students. Pearson correlation test is also used for examining this hypothesis. Table 2 shows output of this test.

Table 2: Pearson correlation test between death anxiety and personality characteristics

	variable resource		Secure Attachment	Avoidant attachment	Ambivalent Attachment
		Correlation Coefficient	-0/321**	0/437**	0/322**
Death Anxiety		Statistical p	0/0001	0/0001	0/0001

** significant at 99%

According to the table 2, correlation test shows that correlation coefficient is negative and significant 99% confidence level ($p=0/01$) between death anxiety and secure attachment ($r= -0/321$). It means that death anxiety decreases when increasing secure attachment level. Also, relationship between avoidant attachment ($r= 0/437$) and ambivalent attachment and death anxiety ($r= 0/322$) is positive and significant at 99% confidence level. ($P= 0/01$). It means that death anxiety increases when avoidant and ambivalent attachment increase in person.

Third research hypothesis: Attachment styles and personality can predict fear of death.

Stepwise regression is used for examining this hypothesis. Here, the aim is to predict death anxiety based on personality characteristics and attachment styles and which personality factors interacting together predict highest variance rate of death anxiety.

Table 3: Variable in the regression analysis of personality factors and attachment styles on death anxiety

Model	predicted included variables	Criterion variable	Method
1	compatibility	Death Anxiety	stepwise
2	Avoidant attachment		
3	Extroversion		
4	Secured attachment		
5	Openness		
6	Ambivalent attachment		

Table 3 shows that compatibility in the first step and avoidant attachment in the second step are analyzed by stepwise regression than extroversion, secured attachment, openness and ambivalent attachment are entered into the analysis. Avoidant attachment, secured attachment and ambivalent attachment have highest effect in predicting death anxiety, respectively.

Table 4: The regression model summary of personality factors and attachment styles on death anxiety

Model	Variable	R	R2	AR2	Standard deviation
1	Compatibility	0/47	0/22	0/22	0/15
2	Model1 and avoidant	0/56	0/31	0/31	0/14
3	Attachment				
4	model2 and extroversion	0/60	0/36	0/35	0/14
5	model 3 and secured	0/62	0/39	0/38	0/14
6	attachment	0/65	0/42	0/41	0/13
	model 4 and openness	0/66	0/44	0/43	0/13
	model5 and ambivalent				
	attachment				

Based on adjusted squared multiple correlation coefficient, first model, second model, third model, fourth model, fifth model, and finally sixth model have respectively explained 0/22 , 0/31 , 0/35 , 0/38 , 0/41 and 0/43 of variance of death anxiety. So, it can be said that applied regression models have prediction power of death anxiety.

Table 5: Regression analysis of relationship of personality factors and attachment styles with death anxiety

Model	Variation Resource	Freedom degree	Sum of Squares	Mean of squares	F-statistics	Significant level
Model 1	regression	1	1/64	1/64	69/14	0/0001
		238	5/64	0/024		
Model 2	Residue	239	7/27	-	55/39	0/0001
		237	2/31	1/16		
Model 3	Total	2	5/61	0/021	/4743	0/0001
		239	7/27	-		
Model 4	//	3	2/59	0/86	37/19	0/0001
		236	4/59	0/020		
Model 5	//	4	7/28	-	34/26	0/0001
		239	2/82	0/70		
Model 6	//	5	4/45	0/019	30/57	0/0001
		235	7/27	-		
Model 6	//	6	3/07	0/61	0/0001	
		239	4/20	-		
		234	7/27	-		
		239	3/20	0/53		
		6	4/07	0/017		
		233	7/27	0/018		
		239				

Based on the results of Table 5, considered factor in Model 1 ($F(1,238)=69/14$, $p>0/01$) at 99% significant level has predictability of death anxiety. Accordingly , the factors of model 2 ($F(2,236)=55/39$ and $p>0/01$), factors of Model3 ($F(3,236)=43/47$ and $p>0/01$), ($F(4,235)=37/19$ and $p>0/01$), ($F(4,233)=34/26$ and $p>0/01$) and finally Model 6 ($F(6,233)=30/57$ and $p>0/01$) all have predictability of death anxiety at 99% confidence level.

Table 6: Regression coefficients of personality factors and attachment styles on death anxiety

Factor	B	Beta	t	Significant level
Constant	1/887	-	34/594	0/0001
Compatibility				
Constant	-0/180	-0/474	-8/315	0/0001
Compatibility	1/49	-	17/369	0/0001
Avoidant attachment	-0/142	-0/376	-0/666	
Constant				0/0001
Compatibility	0/082	0/321	5/700	
Avoidant attachment	1/724	-	16/509	0/0001
Extroversion		-0/311	-5/408	0/0001
Constant	-0/118	0/291	5/241	0/0001
Compatibility	0/074		-3/700	
Avoidant attachment	-0/110	-0/209	16/063	0/0001
Extroversion		-	-4/532	
Secured attachment	1/956		4/548	0/0001
Constant	-0/100	-0/263	-4/254	0/0001
Compatibility	0/064	0/252		
Avoidant attachment	-0/125	-0/237	-3/490	0/0001
Extroversion	-0/092	-0/190	11/758	0/0001
Secured attachment		-	-4/732	
Openness	1/664			0/001
Constant	-0/101	-0/267	5/053	0/001
Compatibility	0/070		-4/497	
Secured attachment		-0/274		0/0001
Extraversion	-0/128		-4/076	
		-0/244		0/0001

Secured attachment			3/769	
Openness	-0/105	-0/218	9/017	0/0001
Ambivalent attachment	0/102	-	-3/599	0/0001
	1/448	0/192	5/216	0/0001
			-4/114	0/0001
	-0/081	-0/213	-4/296	0/0001
	0/071	0/279		0/0001
	-0/117	-0/223	3/520	0/0001
			2/725	
	-0/110	0/227		0/0001
		0/178		0/0001
	0/095			
	0/050	0/147		0/0001

Based on the information of Table 6, among personality factors, compatibility, extroversion, and openness have respectively highest effect in explaining death anxiety variance. Other personality factors were affectless in regression relationship and eliminated from the model.

Conclusion and Discussion

The results indicated that there is a relationship between personality characteristics and death anxiety. This means there is a negative relationship between death anxiety and extroversion, responsibility and compatibility with death anxiety. That is, death anxiety decreases when increasing score for extroversion, responsibility and compatibility.

On the other hand, there is a positive relationship between neuroticism and death anxiety. This means that with the increase of neuroticism in person, death anxiety is also increased in him. This finding is in accordance with the researches of Mohammad Zadeh and Najafi (2010), Cohen et al (2005). Molabi (2000), Abdolkhalegh and Alsabah (2005), Abdolkhalegh (2005), Francis and Brooke (2003), Moudsley et al (2007). Stevenson (1993) and cooper and Martin (1993) suggest that personality characteristics are powerful predictors for death anxiety. Also, results from data analysis showed that there is a negative relationship between death anxiety and secured attachment. This means that death anxiety decreases with the increase of secured attachment level. Also, there is a significant positive relationship between avoidant attachment and ambivalent attachment and death anxiety. This means that with the increase of avoidant attachment and ambivalent attachment in person, death anxiety is also increased . Findings of this hypothesis are in accordance with the researches of Aliansab (2008), Ghodrati et al (2014). They, in their researches, found avoidant

attachment and ambivalent attachment and negative relationship of death anxiety with secured attachment. Kalisz (1995) and Ayterman (1965) have also obtained the same results in this area. Attachment styles and personality can predict death anxiety. This result is consistent with all research of Naderi (2011), Naderi (2010), Coma et al (2001), Grolgar (2003), Abdolkhalegh and Alsabah (2005), Kazemi (2012) on predicting death anxiety based on personality characteristics and attachment styles. In analysis of personal traits, attachment styles and death anxiety, one can take advantage based on personality and individual differences theory based on Royce and Pavelz information system theory. Based on this theory, personality is considered as an integrated system or Mata system consisting of six systems of sensors, motor, cognitive, emotional, style and values that are interrelated.

It is recommended that in translation of books and articles related to the faith subjects such as death, religious and cultural bases of the country should be considered more.

Design of a questionnaire consistent with national- religious culture of Iran about death and death anxiety.

What is obtained from the resources is that with age, death anxiety increases. With respective the significant relationship between attachment styles and personality factors and death anxiety, it is recommended that in counseling centers for the elderly and home care for the elderly, death anxiety prediction should be more considered. Also, attachment styles play a crucial role in shaping personality of people from early childhood.

Finally, holding educational classes for parents for training this issue can have a significant impact and role in children's mental status.

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