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The relation between attachment and personal and social adjustment mediated by separation-individuation

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Abstract

This study aims at testing whether the mediation of separation-individuation between the relationship of secure parental attachment and personal and social adjustment for a late adolescent is effective or not in Turkish Culture. In this study, the developed model was tested in two stages. That is why; the model was tested using Structural Equation Model. A study group consisting of 642 participants aged between 18-25 studying at university in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years. According the findings of this research; that the relation between parental secure attachment and personal and social adjustment mediated by healthy separation-individuation is not supported.

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Keywords: Separation-individuation; parental secure attachment; personal adjustment; social adjustment; late adolescents.

1. Introduction

The individual has not only to maintain his/her existence such as family, school, friends, but also to solve problems regarding separation- individuation. A young person experiences the dependency need which he had during his earlier puberty period; therefore he keeps struggling between excessive dependency need and independency need and sometimes he/she develops infantile and childish behaviours (Erikson, 1963; Ekşi, 1999). It is very important for an individual to gain his/her personality in adolescence which is one of the periods following each other in a child's life. The adjustment in adolescence period is the adjustment in transitional period (Crow and Graham, 1973). Bearing in mind that the second separation-individuation takes place in this period, it is important for a late adolescent to gain a healthy personality through separation from his/her parents during his/her present and/or future life.

There are two crucial periods in a child's separation-individuation process. The first period is the first three years (Mahler et al., 2003) and the second is the adolescence period in which infantile object ties loosen and family dependency changes (Blos, 1989).

In individualist cultures, individuals are emotionally isolated from inner groups, and thus the need for separation and autonomy is huge. On the other hand in collectivist cultures, aims of a group are more important than

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individualist aims and personal behaviours are determined through the norms and needs of a group (Kağıtçıbaşı and Berry, 1989; Göregenli, 1997; Takano and Osaka, 1999; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2006).

As it is mentioned above, it can be said that separation-individuation process which is a significant concept in an individual's development is a priority in individualist cultures, however, it is not a priority in collectivist cultures. Therefore, this study aims at analyzing the mediation of separation-individuation concept, which is very common in individualist culture, between a late adolescent's attachment to his/her parents and his/her personal and social adjustment in Turkish culture in the frame of the model (see figure 1).

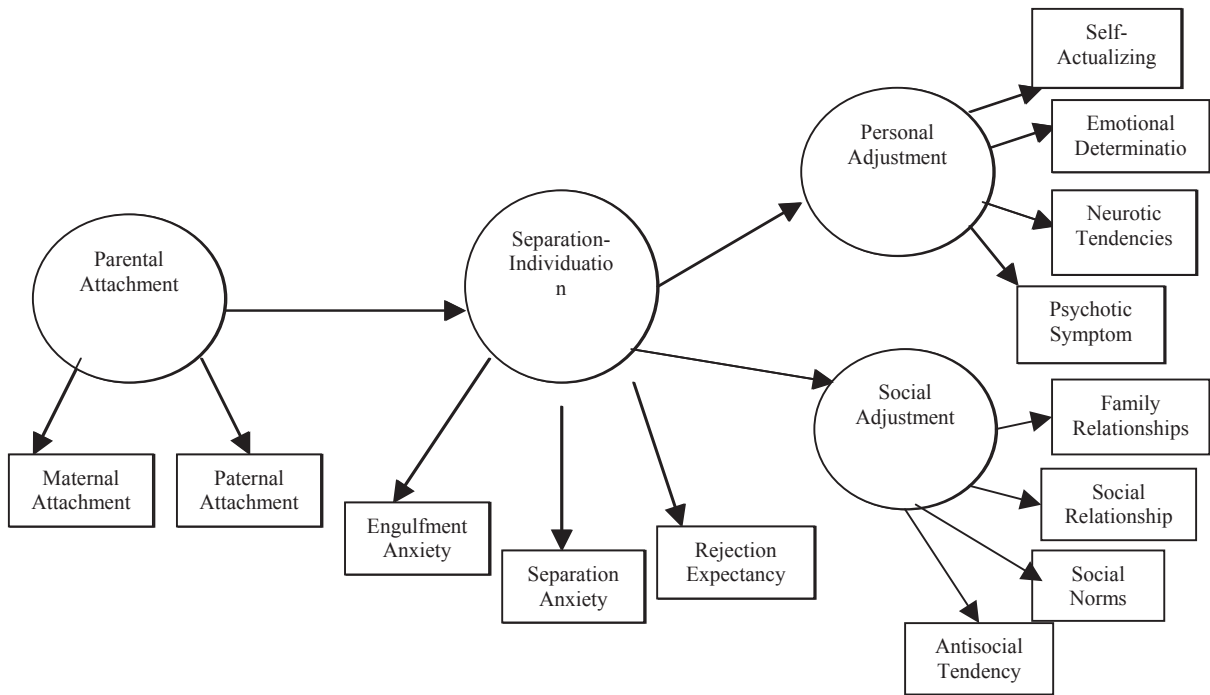


Figure 1. The mediation of separation-individuation between the relationship of attachment and personal adjustment model.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

This study group consists of randomly chosen 642 participants whose ages range between 18-25 (freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors) studying at the Faculty of Education at Ankara University, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Dentistry, School of Nursing at Gazi University, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Food Engineering, Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Economical and Administrative Sciences at Hacettepe University, Faculty of Architecture at Middle East Technical University during the spring semester of 2006-2007. There are 444 females (69%) and 198 males (31%) in the study group.

2.2. Study Model

The analyses of the models regarding the mediation of separation-individuation between parental attachment and personal adjustment were done in two stages. Stage I. The model which was formed theroteciially was tested according to the data gathered from the scales. Therefore, whether or not the relations between the theoretically

mentioned structures fit the observed data gathered from the scales was tested. Stage II. When the model statistically fitted the structural equation model, the model test which was mentioned above was done.

2.3. Research Instrument

Separation Individuation Test of Adolescence (SITA) consists of a total of 103 items and nine subscales (Levine and Saintonge, 1993). Separation Anxiety, Rejection Expectancy and Engulfment Anxiety subscales of SITA were used in this study.

Short Form of Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA). The Short Form of Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (Raja, McGee and Stanton, 1992) is based on psychometric knowledge of the original scale (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987). Each subscale - communication, trust and alienation - of the short form consists of four items. The parent and peer measurement of the original Parent and Peer Inventory was shortened to 12 items.

Hacettepe Personality Inventory (HPI). In this study, Hacettepe Personality Inventory developed by Ozguven (1992) was used in order to determine the levels of personality adjustment of students. The inventory comprised of a total of eight subscales.

3. Results (Findings)

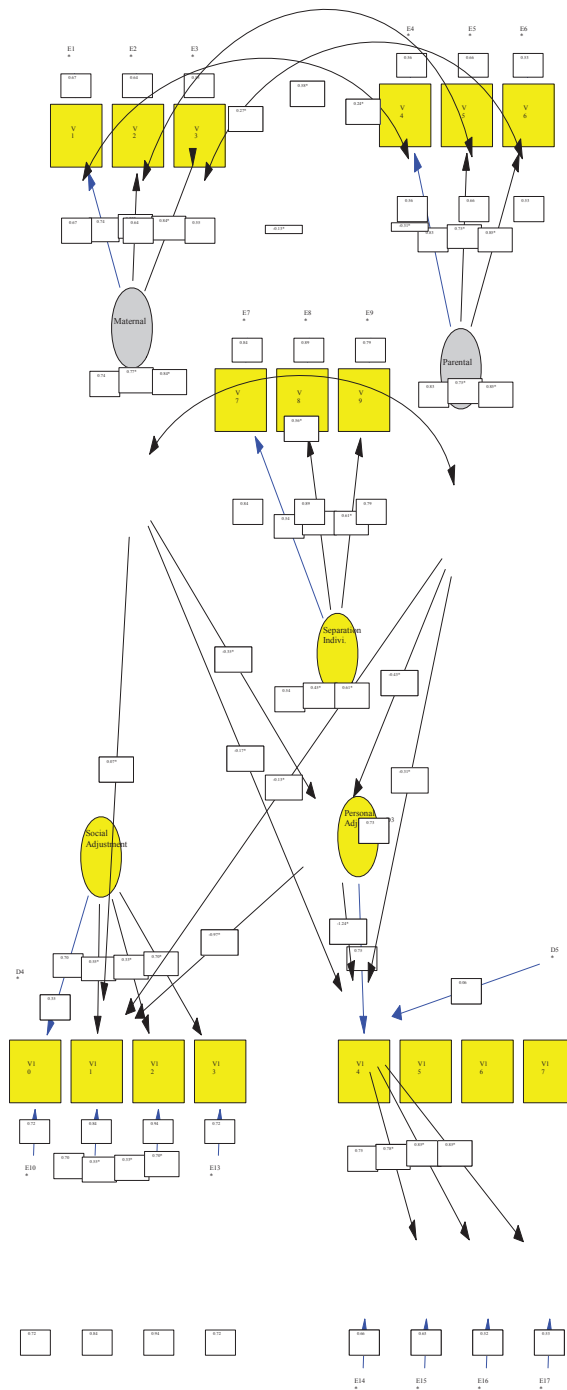


Figure 1. Standardized Parameter Estimates

Table 1. Model 1's The Chi-Square Fit Test

Satorra-Bentler's Chi-Square Value	Normalized Mardia's Coefficient	Degrees of Freedom	Chi-Square's Possibility Value	Critical Value
797.05	14.82	107	.00	p> 0.05 shows that the model passed the fit test.

Table 2. Model 1's Fit Indices

Fit Index	Fit Index Value	Acceptable Fit Limit
Root Mean-Square Error Of Approximation (RMSEA)	.10 %90 Confidence Interval (.09, .11)	< 0.08
Standardized RMR	.079	< 0.08
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.86	> .90
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index	.84	> .90
Bentler-Bonett Non-Normed Fit Index	.82	> .90
Bollen (Incremental Fit Indeks, IFI) Fit Index	.86	> .90

*p<.05

When the fit indices in Table 2 is examined it is observed that the model shows not an acceptable fit. Therefore, it wasn't tested mediation hypothesis.

4. Discussion

The hypothesis of the mediation of separation-individuation between the relationship of secure parental attachment and personal and social adjustment in Model 1, which is a full structural model, was not accepted. The findings of this study not support the findings of Mattanah, Hancock and Brand's study (2004) which tested the mediation of separation-individuation between the relationship of the secure parental attachment and personal-social adjustment. There are some other studies on individuation except this study. In Rice, FitzGerald, Whaley and Gibbs' study (1995), it was found that there is a positive relationship between secure parental attachment and university adjustment indicators.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The relation between parental secure attachment and personal and social adjustment mediated by separation-individuation is not supported. The model can be re-examined by using different variables (classroom level, identity status, intact family, divorced family, depression, desperateness, etc.) to test the relation between attachment and personal and social adjustment mediated by separation-individuation.

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