

Gender Differences in Quality of Attachment to God, Forgiveness, Altruism, and Mental Health in College and Seminary School Students

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The aim of the current study was to investigate gender differences in quality of attachment to God, forgiveness, altruism and mental health in college and seminary school students as well. To fulfil the stated goal 993 individuals were selected by means of stratified sampling procedures and the following measures were distributed among them: Muslim-Spiritual Attachment Scale, Kin Altruism, Reciprocal Altruism Enright Forgiveness Inventory, and Symptom Checklist-90 Revised. Analysis of data using *t* test revealed significant differences between male and female students ($P < 0.01$). Moreover, data indicated that interpersonal sensitivity was higher in male students while somatization complains was higher among female students. Analysis of data showed that quality of secure attachment in female students were higher than male students ($P < 0.01$). Moreover, female students were higher in altruism, especially in domain of compassion ($P < 0.05$). In addition female students were higher in perceiving God as a Safe Haven and providing them with comfort and tranquility. Moreover, females students were higher in altruism ($p < 0.05$), and forgiveness ($p < 0.01$). The analysis of data revealed that female students were higher in the secure attachment to God, sympathy toward others and they scored higher in somatization complain while male students were higher in the interpersonal sensitivity. Theoretical implication and practical application of findings have been discussed in the original paper. Findings in this project were consistent with body of research findings. Theoretical implication and practical usage of the current study was described in the original paper. Data revealed that female student were higher in secure attachment to God, altruism and forgiveness. Showing emotional stability and higher spirituality

Keywords: gender differences, quality of attachment to God, altruism, forgiveness, mental health, college students, seminary students

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Introduction

In psychological research relation between quality of attachment and mental health has been investigated. Lee and Hankin (2009) studied the relation between quality of attachment with depression and anxiety. They concluded that anxious and avoidant attachment significantly predicted depression and anxiety in individuals. Research studies show that quality of attachment is an important factor in tolerance of individuals, coping strategies of people with life hassles and maintaining mental health (Liu, Nagata, Shono, & Kitamura, 2009). The relationship between insecure attachment and mental health in problems including depression has been replicated in other studies (e.g., Takeuchi et al., 2003; Cole-Detke & Koback, 1996; Rosenstein & Horowitz, 1996). In a Meta analysis of literature, Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) found more than 100 studies that indicated negative association between a secure attachment with anxiety and depression.

Critchfield, Levy, Clarkin, and Kernberg (2008) concluded that insecure attachment was associated with irritability, anger, and hostility. Moreover, relationship between anxious attachment with anger and hostility in relationship has been confirmed (Bunnk, 1997; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Attachment avoidance was associated with negative image of others, defensive minimisation of affect, interpersonal hostility, and social withdrawal (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003).

Ivarsson, Granqvist, Gillberg, and Broberg (2010) found that individuals with obsessive compulsive disorders showed more dismissive behaviors than other group. Warren, Huston, Egeland, and Sroufe (1997) discovered a significant association between obsessive-compulsive disorders and an insecure attachment style. Dozier and Lee (1995) also demonstrated that secure attachment style was inversely related to obsessive-compulsive disorders, and psychoticism. Individuals with insecure attachment are prone to having these symptoms.

Myhr, Sookman, and Pinard (2004) found that individuals with OCD and depressive disorders were more insecure than others. Mac Beth, Schwannauer, and Gumley (2008), discovered that insecure attachment could predict interpersonal problems, and paranoid ideation. Pickering, Simpson, and Bentall (2008) discovered that quality of attachment was associated with paranoid ideation in college students, these researchers found that negative self-esteem acted as a mediator between attachment quality and paranoid ideation.

Berry, Wearden, Barrowclough, and Liversidge (2006) also discovered that anxious and avoidant attachment styles are correlated significantly with paranoid ideation. In addition Berry, Barrow, Lough, and Wearden (2008) found that avoidant attachment was associated with paranoid ideation. Individuals who were avoidant in attachment quality, showed more paranoid ideation.

Wayment and Vierthaler (2002) Found that avoidant attachment was associated with higher levels of somatic symptom. Some other studies have found that attachment anxiety is linked with more frequent somatic symptoms, (e.g., Feeney, 1995; Wearden, Cook, & Vaughan-Jones, 2003). Research finding deductively and theoretical views deductively supported relations of attachment quality and mental health. However, Demographic data including research finding in relation to gender differences in attachment as a modifier or mediator variables needed to study.

Some studies indicated that women are higher in religiosity especially in relational spirituality (Ghobari Bonab & Hadadi Kouhsar, 2011). In addition, females are more advanced in establishing an intimate relationship. Theorists have proposed that gender role socialization process lead females to emphasize the importance of relational intimacy, thus deriving a great sense of meaning and fulfilment from relationships and

being more sensitive to negative relational states (Desrosiers & Miler, 2007; Gilligan, 1982). This may increase the impact of attachment quality on female's mental health functioning (Lapsley, Varshney, & Aalsma, 2000). These differences in human attachment may extend to a relationship with God (Burkhardt, 1994; Desrosiers & Miller, 2007). It has been speculated that females may be more strongly affected by their quality of attachment to God given their lower average levels of socioeconomic resources (Simpson, 2002). Theory of resource substitution (Ross & Mirowsky, 2006) claims that with diminishment of one resource in human capacity, another resource can flourish. Since women are lower in socioeconomic status in compare to men (Ross & Mriowsky, 2006). They possible compensate this short coming with cultivation of other resource areas including intimacy and spirituality in relationships. They also inclined to rely of their relationship with God (Simpson, 2002); and increase their sensitivity to the quality of their relationship the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between attachment to God and mental health has not been examined yet. However, some studies have investigated the moderating effect of gender on human attachment and mental health. Some indicated that relationship between human attachment and mental health is moderated by gender (i.e., relationship is stronger among females compared with males) (e.g., Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Kenny & Donaldson, 1991; Riggs & Jacobvitz, 2002).

Some studies have examined gender moderation in the relationship between spirituality and mental health. Some of these studies report a stronger association between spirituality and mental health among female than males (Clark, Friedman & Martin, 1999, Feldman, Fisher, Ransom, & Damiceli, 1995); A meta-analysis of studies examining the relationship between religiousness and depression found no evidence for a moderating impact of gender (Smith, Hardman, Pichards, & Fischer, 2003), and other studies have indicated that the moderating effect may be more complicated (Miller & Stark, 2002) or mixed (Maltby, Lewis, & Day, 1999; Meisenhelder, 2003). Gender differences can affect the relation between mental health and attachment to God. Since there is scarce of research evidence in this area, current investigators decided to fill the existing gap, and clarify the status of research finding in this area.

Attachment and forgiveness have recently been associated in a growing body of research. Attachment security has been found to correlate with increased situational forgiveness and trait forgiveness (e.g., Burnette, Taylor, Worthington, & Forsyth, 2007; Kachadourian, Fincham, & Dvila, 2005, Lawler-Row, Younger, Piferi, & Jones, 2006). Hall, Fujikawa, Harcrow, Hill, and Delaney (2009) found that unforgiving was positively correlated with both avoidant God attachment and anxious God attachment suggesting a link between forgiveness, attachment and relational spirituality. Attachment theories suggest that forgiveness requires empathetic response instead of aggressive, and self-protective responses toward others or mental representation of others (Burnette et al., 2007).

Makinen and Johnson (2006) have shown that persons experiencing insecure attachment can also forgive significant attachment injuries with intervention that generates more empathic working models of self and other. However, this may be particularly true for attachment avoidance.

Analysis of data revealed that female college students were higher in forgiveness as compared with magnitude of forgiveness in males. Study of the literature revealed that results of the current study were supported by previous studies in the field. For instance meta-analysis conducted by Miller, Worthington, and Mcdaniel (2008) showed that females were more forgiving than males. Using 53 articles, and reporting the results of 70 studies that addressed gender differences in forgiveness authors mentioned that mean ES (d) was 0.28 indicating a moderate effect size between male and female differences in regard to forgiveness. In this

study potential methodological modifiers were examined as followings: type of the sample, target of forgiveness, trait/state, familial/marital forgiveness, actual versus hypothetical transgressions type of forgiveness measure, and cultural idiosyncrasies. However, there were larger gender differences on vengeance than any other forgiveness related measures some dispositional qualities, and situational cues were also important. However beyond these factors gender differences were found to be an important factor the reason for this gender differences can be due to several factors including differences in coping, situational differences, religious tendencies of females versus male participants, and other related factors.

Experimental studies demonstrated effects of attachment security on compassionated responses toward other peoples suffering (Mikulincer & Shavor, 2001). Attachment anxiety seems to encourage self-preoccupation and heighten a form of distress that preclude others understating of individual's emotions and care giving needs.

There are some evidence that shows men are more likely to help than are women (Feinman, 1978), and some other studies show that women are more likely to help than men (Bihm, Goudet, & Sale, 1979), and some other studies show that there was no difference between men and women in altruistic behaviors (Boice & Goldman, 1981). Gender is one of the most consistent of prosocial behavior (Hastings, Utendale, & Sullivan, 2007) and cross cultural studies show that girls are more altruistic than boys (Carlo, Roesch, Knight, & Koller, 2001; Russell, Hart, Robinson, & Olsen, 2003). Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) reported a meta-analysis of gender differences in prosocial behaviors yielding a total of 450 effect sizes. The mean unweight effect size was modest (0.18) and favored girls. Studies are continuing to support that females are more altruistic than males (Bosacki, 2003; Caprara, Barbaranerlli, & Pastorelli, 2001) and peers are more likely to nominate girls as being altruistic and prosocial (Keane & Calkins, 2004; Warden et al., 2003; Warderne & Mackinnon, 2003).

Fabes, Carlo, Kupanoff, and Laible (1999) analyzed the effect sizes of gender differences in prosocial behaviors by age groups from the studies used in Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) analysis. Small effect size was found for children (0.19, 0.17 for early childhood, and childhood respectively) but somewhat larger effect size was found for adolescents (0.28), and late adolescents (0.35). The authors concluded that this indicated gender differences are present throughout developmental span, but there differences increases with age increment of participants. Overall literature indicated that women are more selfless, empathetic, and generous than men (Andernoi & Vesterland, 2001; Cox & Deck, 2006; Eagly & Koenig; 2006). In addition studies found significant gender differences in charitable giving behaviors (Bekkers, 2007; Croson et al., 2009; Einolf, 2010). How can we possibly explain higher altruistic behaviors in women show their caring and philanthropy by giving money, and donating possessions? In addition, women experience, emotions more strongly than men. Emotional arousal, social values, and physiological make up than makes them more caring and motivate women to be more altruistic than man. Moreover, research show that women are more egalitarian whereas men are more competitive (Croson & Gneezy, 2009).

Method

Participants

Participant in the current study were drawn from the population of college students in Tehran and Qum. A proportional sampling procedure was utilized in this study and 993 college students between ages 18-25 were selected as a sample. In this study 53% of the participants were female, and 47% of them were male, 89% were single, 64% were Shia Muslim, 56% were residing in Tehran (the capital city), and 34% were from Qum (The

seminary school college studying theology and other branches of Islamic sciences. After preparation of assessment devices, questionnaires were administered on college student by one of the investigators. Permission of instructors was sought to distribute questionnaire at the end of their classes. All instructions that we contacted had a good cooperation. The design of the study was Exposit Factor research (Correlational, and Causal-Comparative).

Measurements

In order to conduct this study the following devices have been used.

1. Attachment to God in Islam (M-SAS).

Scale to measure attachment to God in Islamic spirituality (M-SAS) was developed to measure Muslims' attachment to God (Ghobari Bonab & Miner, 2009). This questionnaire has been revised and its psychometric properties were improved; and its final version was presented in 37 items. This Likert type scale composed of 37 statements. Scoring system ranged from "1", "strongly disagree", to "7", "strongly agree". Factor analysis of the scale revealed that four factors including functions to attachment figures, that are "secure base", safe heaven, and two reactions of individuals to attachment figures: proximity seeking, and protest to separation. These two reactions and two previous attachment functions are subsumed under the major categories of Models of Self and Others. Data show the hierarchical structure of factors in the scale. The explored factors were congruent with the theoretical model of the attachment theory; hence they support the construct validity of the scale.

Moreover, the alpha coefficient of each component, demonstrated a high internal consistency, and coherency of the statements in the scale. The internal consistency of the model of trusting to God (The Other) was estimated around 0.90, the internal consistency of the model of self was 0.85. Internal consistency of the four subsumed components under there models also were much appropriate. The Alpha coefficient of secure base safe heaven, separation protest, and proximity seeking were 0.88, 0.93, 0.86 and 0.90 respectively.

2. The Symptoms Checklist-90-R (SCL-90-R, Derogatis et al., 1973).

This symptom checklist is consisted of 90 items in which each item requires responding in degree of symptom Intensity (from 1-5) in which he/she have experienced during the past week. This scale-consisted of nine subscale (dimensions) including somatization, obsessive-compulsive disorders, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. In order to calculate the internal consistency of the scale Cronbach alpha coefficient has been used, and the results indicated that internal consistency for all subscales were at a satisfactory level. The maximum alpha coefficient was 0.90 for depression, and the minimum value was for psychoticism ($\alpha = 0.77$). Stability coefficient that was computed for test-retest reliability in the interval of one week was between 0.87 and 0.90. In the present study, we obtained Cronbach alphas values for each of the nine dimensions (SCL-90-R) and total of 0.88, 0.87, 0.81, 0.90, 0.90, 0.81, 0.76, 0.77, 0.82, and 97 for somatization, obsessive compulsive disorders, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, psychoticism, and full symptom checklist respectively.

3. Psychometric properties of Altruism Scale.

Kin and, reciprocal altruism scales (Ashton, 1998) was developed by Ashton (1998) to measure altruistic behaviors in individuals. This measure was consisted of several subscales including empathy, affiliation seeking, and forgiveness (Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes, & Jackson, 1998). Two principal dimensions of this scale were kin altruism and reciprocal altruism that consisted of 16 Likert type statements. Internal consistency

for empathy subscale and affiliation seeking were 0.73, and subscale of forgiveness and non-revengefulness were 0.75 (Ashton et al., 1998). Factor analysis of this scale using Varimax rotations indicated that altruism scale was consisted of two factors: half of the statement constituted empathy and affiliation seeking, factor and the remaining were constituted forgiveness and non-revengefulness factor. Respondents were indicated degrees of their agreeableness with each statement (item) by selecting one of the options ranged from “very little” (1) to “a great deal” (5). Some of the items were reversed before computing a total score for each individual. The reversed items are 1, 2, 4, 8, 12, 13, and 16. Other items are totaled as they are rated. After reversing aforementioned items all items should be totaled, and assigned to each individual as a total score. Factor of empathy and affiliation seeking contains all items from 1 to 8. Forgiveness and non-revengefulness items are included items 9 thru 16. Factor loading of all items were higher than 0.3. Internal consistencies of reciprocal and kin altruism were 0.75 and 0.73 respectively. Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised (JPI-R) that was another scale of altruism was correlated with empathy and affiliation dimension of this test ($r = 0.29, p < 0.01$). All these data indicate the concurrent validity of the altruism scale. Moreover, the correlation between donating money for individuals in need and individual’s score in empathy dimension of Jacksons’ scale showed their significant relations ($r = 0.35, p < 0.001$). Correlation between altruism scale and other constructs and measures also indicated to the validity of this scale in measuring altruism. For example, congruency between dimension of agreeableness in big five personality test and dimension of forgiveness/non revengefulness ($r = 0.29, p < 0.01$) indicated to the concurrent validity of the scale. In overall there are sufficient data to Judge about validity and reliability of the scale in measuring altruism.

4. Enright Forgiveness Inventory.

In order to assess forgiveness, Forgiveness Inventory of Enright & the Human Development Study Group (1997) has been used. The primary from of this inventory included 158 items which was shorted to 66 items by Enright and his colleagues because of its lengthiness. After being translated and adapted to Iranian culture, the number of items of this inventory was reduced to 60 items by researcher because of repetitiveness and low correlation between some items and the whole inventory. This inventory consisted of four main sections and one sub-section. The four main parts include: The first part is the person’s feeling and emotion toward the wrongdoer; the second part includes the irritated person’s response to the irritator; the third part includes person’s current interpretation of the wrongdoer; and the fourth part includes six questions; five of which are about the final opinion of the subject and the last question is the criterion question by which the correlation between emotional, cognitive, behavioral areas and forgiveness overall test are assessed. The sub-section questions included the first four questions of the questionnaire which are about the occasion and subject of annoyance. The correlation between the cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions was 80% to 87% of the total scale. The reliability of this test has been evaluated with a Cronbach’s alpha as 98% and for the three domains of Cronbach’s alpha as 97%. The results also showed that the 66-item inventory had a high internal consistency (98%) and adequate validity (correlation with the criterion question is about 62%). After becoming adapted with the Iranian culture, the inventory had adequate validity (Criterion validity is estimated about 62%). And internal consistency (about 96%) (Ghobari Bonab, 2001).

Results

Table 1 shows gender differences in attachment security and its components (i.e., Safe Heaven (SH), Separation Protest (SP), and Somatization Subscale (SO)). In order to examine whether these differences were

due to a pure chance effect to use. Analysis of data revealed that differences in the subscales of differences between male and female students were significant.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics Comparing Male and Female Students in Attachment to God, Altruism, Forgiveness and Mental Health

Variations	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	df	P
Attachment to God (SB)	Female	482	29.91	5.80	0.26	1.12	931	0.26
	Male	451	29.49	5.85	0.28			
Attachment to God (SH)	Female	475	43.37	7.80	0.36	2.21	920	0.03
	Male	447	42.21	8.15	0.39			
Attachment to God (SP)	Female	471	29.62	6.43	0.30	2.22	917	0.03
	Male	448	28.66	6.65	0.31			
Attachment to God (PS)	Female	476	42.27	8.31	0.38	1.49	921	0.14
	Male	447	41.46	8.29	0.39			
Attachment to God (PSS)	Female	477	29.70	6.26	0.29	1.12	922	0.26
	Male	447	29.24	6.26	0.30			
Attachment to God (PSO)	Female	474	47.68	9.39	0.43	0.12	920	0.9
	Male	448	47.60	9.40	0.44			
Total Attachment to God	Female	469	192.70	35.54	1.64	1.13	909.89	0.26
	Male	445	190.04	35.38	1.67			
SCL 90 (SO)	Female	482	8.29	7.50	0.34	4.95	936	0.001
	Male	456	6.06	6.07	0.28			
SCL 90. Total	Female	439	79.41	52.52	2.51	1.58	439	0.12
	Male	425	74.08	46.28	2.24			
Altruism (Empathy)	Female	465	29.31	4.62	0.21	2.85	906	0.004
	Male	443	28.42	4.72	0.22			
Altruism (Forgive)	Female	468	27.57	4.76	0.22	0.63	906	0.26
	Male	440	27.38	4.33	0.21			
Altruism Total	Female	458	56.83	7.10	0.33	2.24	895	0.82
	Male	439	55.79	6.97	0.33			
Forgiveness (Emotion)	Female	468	47.15	22.77	1.05	-0.23	890	0.82
	Male	424	74.50	23.01	1.11			
Forgiveness (Behavior)	Female	465	79.38	20.91	0.97	0.22	881	0.83
	Male	418	79.0742	19.55	0.96			
Forgiveness (Cognition)	Female	459	86.09	17.74	0.83	2.62	853.702	0.01
	Male	418	82.84	18.92	0.93			
Total Forgiveness	Female	458	240.50	55.94	2.61	1.00	873	0.32

Hostility, paranoid ideation, Psychoticism, was significantly different between male and female students. In addition, differences in anxious, and avoidant attachment were significant between males and females.

The following table shows the descriptive information includes the mean, standard deviation and standard error.

As indicated in Table 1, differences between male and female students existed in secure attachment (i.e., SB, SH, SP), and altruism. In order to examine whether these differences are due to the chance or are real differences, means of two groups (males and females) were examined.

The result of this examination revealed that in the area of secure attachment (i.e., SB. SH. SP), difference between male and female students were significantly higher than pure chance effect ($P < 0.05$). Comparing means also showed that in mental health, male students were higher than female. Moreover data revealed that differences between male and female students were significant in altruism.

This indicated that females are more altruists. In addition, differences between male and female students have been demonstrated in forgiveness males were more forgiving those females. In order to examine whether these differences were due to a pure chance effect or used. Analysis of data revealed that differences in the subscales of differences between male and female students were significant.

Conclusion

Quality of attachment to God is associated with mental health. Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992) found that with various factors affecting mental health, attachment to God had the strongest effect on psychological well being. Individuals who described their perceived relations secure, as opposed to avoidant (God as distant and rejecting) or ambivalent (God as inconsistent), scored lower in measures of loneliness, depression, anxiety, and psychological lines scored higher on general life satisfaction. However, current study was interested in moderating effects of gender on attachment on mental health and psychological well beings. The result of the study revealed that women were more secure than men. Some studies showed previous studies support this finding: for example, Krejci (1998) found that women tended to have a more positive image of God, and placed greater emphasis on healing aspect of God's character (Nelsen, Cheek, & Au, 1985). Krejci (1998) employed multidimensional scaling analysis to uncover cognitive schemas individuals possess for their God images. Analysis revealed that both men and women to organize their God images-schema on three dimensions, each existing continuums: judging-nurturing controlling-saving, and control-abstract. What differed between men and women was the salience, of specific dimensions. In addition, that women place greater emphasis on the controlling-saving image than men.

Moreover, current funding indicated gender differences in mental health status in male were lower than female (e.g., Ross & Mirowky, 2006). Cultural due synchronicity in Iran possibly contributed in the related of gender and mental health. When women complain of somatization symptoms, they get attention from their husbands. Therefore, somatization complains becomes attention seeking behavior, and there by increases its probability.

Current study showed more lights on the relations of attachment to God and mental health. Special attention must be paid on the gender differences in different cultures as compared to Iran. However, this hypothesis should be tested again under different conditions. With various measures until justification of the study established. Since the current study is a correlational in nature, casual inferences from the data cannot be established. Experimental design with more rigorous control of extraneous variables is need to establish a causal relationship between gender differences attachment to God, and mental health.

Difference between men and women in respect to religiosity and attachment is one of the ongoing debates between scholars in the field of attachment psychology and biology. Some believes that women and men assumed different roles in raising children, indoor, and outdoor activities. These assumed roles in the history has influence their brains in accordance with their assumed responsibilities. Studies in gender differences advocated from these differences. In the current study investigators found significant differences in some dimensions of attachment to God including, functions of attachment behavior such as being Safe Haven for

individuals. Women perceived God to be safe haven to them, more than men. Women and men were different in lamenting to God when they felt a separation. Therefore, separation protest was higher between them.

In terms of altruism probably became of their empathy and their capacity for caregiving. Previous studies have found that compared with men, women tended to have more positive image of God (Krejci, 1998).

Krejci (1998) employed multidimensional scaling analysis to study the cognitive schemas individuals possess for their God images.

Both men and women tended to organize their God image schema on three dimensions: each one presented in the continuum. These schemas were as followings judging-nurturing, controlling-saving and concrete-abstract. However, emphasis of men and women in boldness of these dimensions were different. Women placed more emphasis on controlling-saving domain of image of God than men. Studies revealed that women due to their lack of social resources, in the face of calamity heavily rely on God to get the calmness and assurance needed for a stable life (Simpson, 2002).

There are some studies show that men are more likely to help than are women (Feinman, 1978), and some other studies show that women are more likely to help than men (Bihm, Goudet, & Sale, 1979), and some other studies show that there was no difference between men and women in altruistic behaviors (Boice & Goldman, 1981). Gender is one of the most consistent of prosocial behavior (Hasting et al., 2007). Cross-cultural studies show that girls are more altruistic than boys (Carlo et al., 2001; Russel et al., 2003). Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) reported a meta-analysis of gender different in prosocial behaviors yielding a total of 450 effect sizes. The men unweight effect size was modest (0.18) and favored girls.

The current study showed that gender difference in attachment to God and altruistic acts are not cultural based, with all cultural and religious differences between Iran and European countries the same gender pattern that was found for European countries and United States revealed to be true for Iranian college students too. This study is a correlational in nature caused relationship cannot be inferred from it. Investigators in the future can replicate this study with more vigorous methods (e.g., interviews) or some behavioral plan.

Current study revealed gender differences in attachment security and its components (i.e., SH, SB, and SP). In addition, differences male and female students have been demonstrated in all subscales of forgiveness. Analysis of data revealed significant differences between male and female students. Forgiveness is associated with positive psychological variables including quality of attachment to God (e.g., Lawler et al., 2003; Witvliet et al., 2004). Studies showed a negative relationship between anxious attachment and forgiveness (Blount-Matthews, 2004; Davidson, 2000; Kachadourian, Fincham, & Davila, 2004), and avoidant attachment (Mikulincer et al., 2006). Forgiveness has found to be higher in females than males (Berk, 2007, 2012; Fabes & Eisenberg, 1996).

Original studies on infant attachment showed no differences in attachment styles of boys and girls (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). In addition to studies on infant, early studies on adult attachment, and majority of current studies failed to find significant differences in attachment styles of males and females (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Carnelly & Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Hazen & Shaver, 1987).

Men and women undergoing the similar physical and emotional availability of their physical and emotional availability and accessibility showed similar attachment styles (Brannan et al., 1991; Feeney & Noller, 1990, 1992; Feeney, Noller, & Patty, 1993; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

However, limited findings from studies using four category model of adult attachment found male to endorse dismissive-avoidant model while females were endorsed to be higher on fearful-avoidant style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Feeney & Noller, 1996; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994).

Furthermore, research findings suggest that males are less likely than females to place a high priority on intimate couple relationships, in contrast to men's greater focus on achievement in jobs, etc. (Feeney & Noller, 1996; Feeney, Noller, & Hanrahan, 1994). This gender differences may account for men's tendency to exhibit more of dismissing and less of the anxious attachment style than do woman (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Feeney & Noller, 1996; Scharfe & Barthaolomew, 1994). The differences in dismissing and fearful form of attachment between males and females seem to fit common knowledge and beliefs about differences in values and motive between men and women, as well as differences in approaches to close relationships.

Men tend to be less emotional in social relationship than women (Bem, 1993; Feeney et al., 1994). Men have been found to be more likely than women to seek emotional distance and less willing to express emotions (Brody & Hall, 1993), Men also found to be less likely than women to seek emotional support when coping with a stressful situation (Tamres, Janicki, & Helgeson, 2002; Taylor et al., 2000). Data in the current studies indicated that women obtained higher scores on depending on God because they found him secure base and safe haven. These means that women not only are emotional but also need to be supported by attachment figure (i.e., God in this case).

In his extensive review Lerner (2003) found that of the 76 articles in gender differences in forgiveness, 209 comparison were made, 97 comparison directly tested whether men or women were more forgiving.

Rye et al. (2005) examined secular and religious forgiveness group interventions for divorced individuals. The participants included 149 individuals from a medium sized Midwestern city of the participant 75% were female and 87% were Caucasian. Analysis of data showed that males reported being more forgiving than did females. Females scored higher in on forgiveness knowledge.

Brown (2003) was interested to examine the gender differences in forgiveness. He conducted four experimental studies. Study (1) included 47 dating couples by using tendency to forgive scale (TTF) in which no gender differences were found. When he used a rating scale women rated their male partners more forgiving than did their male partners. In study (2) male scored higher on the TTF than did women. In study (3) Brown (2003) didn't find differences in forgiveness as measured by TTF. In study (4) no significant differences were found between men and women in tendency to forgive test. In the current study only difference was found in forgiveness was in cognitive domain further studies are needed to see whether significant differences existed between men and women in forgiveness.

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