



## Comparison of the mean of variables of attachment styles and social capital and psychological well-being of infertile women

Masoumeh Salimi<sup>1</sup>, Ali Khanekeshi<sup>\*2</sup>, Seddigheh Ebrahimi<sup>3</sup>

[1] Department of psychology, Ayatollah Amoli Branch, Islamic Azad University, Amol, Iran

[2] Department of psychology, Ayatollah Amoli Branch, Islamic Azad University, Amol, Iran

[3] Department of psychology, Ayatollah Amoli Branch, Islamic Azad University, Amol, Iran

\*Corresponding author's E-mail: [alikh2447@gmail.com](mailto:alikh2447@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to compare the mean of variables of attachment styles and social capital in predicting psychological well-being of infertile women. The method of this study is descriptive correlational. The statistical population includes all infertile women referred to the infertility clinic of Babol clinic from February 2016 to May 2017, numbering approximately 250 people. According to Morgan and Krejcie (1970), the sample size of the study was estimated to be 152 people who were selected by simple random sampling. Findings indicate that the mean scores of participants in the secure attachment style is 8/14 that also was higher than the anxiety and avoidance styles and also the mean of anxiety attachment style is higher than the avoidance style. Also the mean of social capital was 31.48. Also, among the components of psychological well-being, the highest mean was related to the component of mastery of the environment and self-acceptance, and the least was related to the components of autonomy and individual development.

**Keywords:** Attachment style, social capital, psychological well-being, infertile women.

## **1. Introduction**

The need for having a child as an intrinsic need has deep roots in human existence, which lies in the history of his cultural environment. Formation of a family and the birth of a child are one of the most important motivations of the individual's life, which is strongly influenced by the inability to fertility of a person's psychological structure. Infertility has a profound influence on the identity of the woman as wife and mother and in various ways threatens her mental health (Wilson et al., 2014).

In many cases, infertility is defined as a social problem before it is diagnosed as a disease and defects, and its harmful effects do not only affect couples, but the failure to have a child affects other aspects of life. And disrupts their individual, social and professional performance. In addition, long-term and unpredictable diagnostic and therapeutic programs, it occasionally overwhelms the needs and goals of other couples (Besharat, 2001).

The causes of infertility are divided into four categories: male factor, female factor, combination of female and male factors, and infertility with unknown cause, 40% for male is related to 40% for female, 10% for both, and 10% for the remaining is related to unknowns causes (Miles, Catechism, Jackson and Harris, 2009).

Failure to become pregnant and the birth of a healthy child clearly undermines the person's sexual identity and the individual's position and parenthood, and causes the woman and man to evaluate their relationship. Infertile couples are ultimately drawn to a state of imbalance. So coping with these crises requires maximum endurance and tolerance, and if one has the ability to respond appropriately and to adapt to them, then can overcome different stages of emotional and mental development. Many infertile couples find that infertility is the first major crisis in their lives that they face independently in relation to their spouse. Often, they interpret infertility as death or separation from a dear friend. As a result, most of them realize that their tolerance mechanism to overcome the maladaptive effects of infertility are inadequate (Moghadam, Delpisheh, and Sayeh Miri, 2012).

The present article aims to investigate the mean of variables of attachment styles and social capital in psychological well-being of infertile women.

## **2. Literature Review**

There is a lot of research evidence that unpleasant life events can affect and disrupt psychological well-being and lead to psychological problems such as depression and anxiety. Accordingly, infertility is also almost constant and tense, and can lead to reduction of psychological well-being. Research on psychological well-being has shown that infertility has harmful effects on components of self-autonomy, environmental mastery, self-growth and self-acceptance on infertile women (Diner and Thai, 2015).

Abbasi, Shahriari, Mehrabi and Ghasemi (2014) in a study entitled "the role of meta-emotion and tolerance in the psychological well-being of infertile women in Gonabad city" are shown there is a positive and meaningful relation between the tolerance and the meta-emotion with the psychological well-being of infertile women through the implementation of a questionnaire on

psychological well-being among 120 infertile women. In addition, the results of this study confirm that Multivariate regression analysis of meta-emotion and tolerance can significantly predict the psychological well-being of infertile women.

Besharat (2001) showed that infertile couples had a more secure attachment style than those with infertile couples who had unsecure attachment style than mental health indicators and better interpersonal coordination. According to the results of this study, the levels of psychological well-being, consensus, comforting, correlation and affection between infertile couples were more favorable and their level of psychological distress was lower. The findings of this study also showed that mental health indicators and couples' integration in two secure and unsecure groups is related to the attachment style of her husband in addition to the attachment style of the infertile person.

Rockwood and Penderghost (2016) in a study entitled "infertility and psychological well-being of women: the effects of female infertility on anxiety and depression" showed that the level of psychological well-being in infertile women is lower than fertile women. In this regard, the results of this study confirm that infertility is associated with decreasing psychological well-being through increasing the level of anxiety and depression symptoms in infertile women in the long-term.

Rago-Bogdan and Hoffman (2015) in a study entitled "comparative study of the relationship between infertility, self-compassion and psychological well-being in women with primary and secondary infertility," showed that self-compassion and psychological well-being had a meaningful relationship with infertility. According to the results of this study, self-esteem and psychological well-being were lower in women with primary infertility than their counterparts. These results show that infertility has a significant effect on reducing the sense of compassion and psychological well-being of infertile women.

According to the research question, the research hypothesis is: Comparison the mean of variables of attachment styles and social capital in predicting psychological well-being of infertile women is different.

### **3. Methodology**

The research method is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population includes all infertile women referred to the infertility clinic of Babol clinic from February 2016 to May 2017, numbering approximately 250 people. According to Morgan and Krejcie (1970), the sample size of the study was estimated to be 152 people who were selected by simple random sampling.

The questionnaires which were used in this research:

Ryff's scales of psychological well-being (RSPWB-84): The psychological well-being scale was created by Reef in 1989. In the present study, the 84-item version of this scale was used. The highest score on this scale is 504 and the lowest score is 84, and the higher score indicates a higher psychological well-being (Riff and Case, 1995). This scale measures psychological well-being in six dimensions of autonomy, self-control, personal growth, self-acceptance, positive relationship with others, and targeted life. The reliability of this scale in this study was obtained by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for total score and subscales of self-acceptance, positive

relationships with others, autonomy, environmental domination, purposeful life and personal growth were 0.71, 0.69, 0.76, 0.76, 0.69, 0.76, 0.76, 0, 0.74, 0.65, 0.79, and 0.63 respectively.

**Adult Attachment Style (AAS):** This questionnaire was created in 1978 by Hazan & Shaver. The underlying premise in making this questionnaire is that attachment is a lasting personality characteristic that influences the emotional relationships of an individual throughout his life. Therefore, depending on the person's intimate relationships, the attachment style can be determined. The questionnaire consists of three descriptions: The first description related to the secure attachment style, the second description in relation to the avoidance insecure attachment style and the third description also indicate anxiety insecure attachment style (ambivalent). Hazan and Shaver obtained the reliability of this questionnaire 0.81 and reliability with Cronbach's alpha 0.88. Collins and Reed also reported high reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.78 for this tool. The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was 0.79, 0.71 and 0.74, using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for secure attachment, avoidance and anxiety styles respectively.

**Pajak Social Capital Scale (PSCS):** In order to measure social capital was used the social capital questionnaire which was developed by Pajak in 2006. This tool has 12 items. The range of scores is between one and five, and the higher the score, the more social capital. The highest score in this questionnaire is 60 and the lowest score will be 12. Pajak reported the reliability of the tool with Cronbach's alpha of 0.86. Also, the reliability of this scale in this study was 0.79 with Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

#### 4. Finding

In Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of participants' scores of this study on the used variables are: encouraging styles, social investment, and psychological well-being.

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviations of the subjects' scores in the study variables

Variable / index	Dimensions	Mean	The standard deviation
Attachment style	Avoidance attachment	5.62	1.41
	Anxiety attachment	6.93	1.86
	Attachment security	8.14	1.74
Social capital	Social capital	31.48	8.61
Psychological well-being	Self-acceptance	54.73	7.61
	Positive relationships with others	52.83	10.75
	Self-autonomy	47.28	9.51
	Environmental mastery	54.83	9.83
	objective life	50.92	8.74
	Individual growth	47.81	13.92

As shown in Table 1, the mean scores of participants in the secure attachment style, which is 8/14, are also higher than the anxiety and avoidance styles, and the mean of anxiety attachment style is also higher than the avoidance style. The mean of social capital was also 31.48. Also, among the components of psychological well-being, the highest mean is related to the component of the environment mastery and self-acceptance, and the least is related to the components of self-autonomy and individual growth.

## **5. Discussion & Conclusion**

It seems that safe attachment brings a stronger social capital in the long run for infertile women with a secure attachment style through the development of empathic capacities and altruistic behaviors. However people with an insecure attachment style gradually lose the capacity of social capital and appropriate social support by fostering the avoidance of behaviors from others. Individuals with a secure attachment style have a kind of cognitive openness that increases the likelihood of empathetic and altruistic behaviors (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). Findings of the study by Michelinsler and Shaver (2003) also suggest that individuals with a safe attachment style assume relationships with other people as stable, accessible and responding. Therefore, they have a lot of success in establishing and maintaining successful relationships with others and enjoying higher levels of social capital, and somehow believe it to be reliable, and this confidence feeling creates empathic capacity and responds positively to others in future relationships.

Normal exploration action in women with a secure attachment increases their courage and flexibility in testing and experiential learning. Problem solving skills in secure women are a product of normal exploratory action and facilitates person's compatibility with infertility. Proximity behaviors based on the secure attachment, on the one hand, reinforce secure communication skills, and, on the other hand, establish personal and interpersonal relationships with others at relatively benign levels. In the shadow of communication skills and interpersonal relationships, personal ability increases to adapt to the problem of infertility. As a result, the more favorable levels of psychological well-being in secure infertile women, compared to insecure infertile women, are the product of the attributes of self-confidence, trust in others, and the normal action of exploration and proximity. Safe attachment style in infertile women compensates for some of the biological need for reproduction by inducing mechanisms and normal processes (Rabie Kenari, 2014).

In fact, perceived social capital increases mental health and improves their psychological well-being by increasing the sense of solidarity between individuals (Bastani, 2001). This social capital is provided self-confidence to infertile women by providing emotional support, helpful and suitable information and creating an empowerment platform, and reduces the amount of stress and depression associated with infertility by creating good feelings and positive thoughts. Since the infertility crisis itself is a major crisis in marriage, many couples are not prepared to overcome the uncertainties, dangers and loss of infertility. Infertility disrupts the essential and necessary relationships of couples and is always scared of the fact that their marriage cannot persist despite the implementation of medical or psychological and emotional tests. Therefore, in the face of the infertility crisis, infertile couples need emotional support and education.

## References:

1. Abbasi, M.; Dargahi, Sh.; Mehrabi, A.; Ghasemi Jubeneh, R., (2014). The role of meta-emotion and resilience in psychological well-being of infertile women in Gonabad city in 2014-2013. *Society Health*, 8, 47-34.
2. Bastani, S. (2008). Investigating the Network social Capital in 10 Neighborhoods in Tehran: A Survey on the Status of Local Relations in Social Networks. *Journal of Social Studies*, 23, 55-74.
3. Besharat, m. (2001). The role of couples' attachment style on psychological reconciliation with infertility. *Fertility and Infertility Quarterly*, 27, 22-13.
4. Cassidy, J. & Shaver, P. (2008). *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications*. Second edition, The Guilford Press.
5. Diener, E., & Tay, L. (2015). Subjective well-being and human welfare around the world as reflected in the Gallup World Poll. *International Journal of Psychology*, 50(2), 135-149.
6. Mikulincer, M. & Phillip R. S. (2007). *Attachment in adulthood: structure, dynamics, and change*. The Guilford Press, New York London.
7. Miles, L. M., Keitel, M., Jackson, M., & Harris, A. (2009). Licciardi F. Predictors of distress in women being treated for infertility. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 27(3): 238-57.
8. Moghadam, A.; Sayeh Miri, K. (2013). Infertility rate in Iran by systematic review. *Iranian Journal of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Infertility*, 81, 7-1.
9. Rabiee Sharari, F (2014). The role of religiosity and resilience in predicting the psychological well-being of infertile women. *International Congress of Religious Culture and Religion*, Qom, Center for Cultural Engineering, General Culture Council of Bushehr Province.
10. Raque-Bogdan, T. L., & Hoffman, M. A. (2015). The relationship among infertility, self-compassion, and well-being for women with primary or secondary infertility. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*.
11. Rockwood, N. M., & Prendergast, A. (2016). Infertility and women's well-being: The effects of female factor infertility on depression and anxiety. *UBC Medical Journal*, 7(1).
12. Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 69(4), 719.
13. Wilson, A., Weedin, E. A, O'Leary, D. W., Hansen, K. R., Carter, A., & Craig, L. T. (2014). The Effects of Fertility Treatment on Depression, Anxiety, and Marital Satisfaction. *Austin Journal of Women's Health*, 1(1): 4-10.