

Abstract

Attachment theories can provide a framework for clinicians and clients to understand the role that early life relationships play in the adult relationships created later in life. For this reason, an attachment perspective has been employed to look more closely at parenting behaviors within the Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) population with hopes of contributing valuable knowledge to the IPV, attachment, and parenting literature. The current study examines the adult attachment patterns reported by individuals within the intimate partner violence (IPV) population to observe whether a particular attachment style is more commonly reported within that population than in the non-IPV population. The current study utilized quantitative methods for data collection through the use of Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) Participants were 88 mothers from the US, who had and had not experienced an IPV relationship. Results showed that participants from the IPV group reported anxious attachment style at a significantly higher rate than the participants from the non- IPV group. Given that women with an anxious attachment may be more at risk of participating in a relationship in which IPV behaviors are displayed, the results of the current study support past findings on attachment styles within the IPV population.

Introduction

Attachment theories are able to provide a framework for clinicians and clients to understand the role that early life relationships play on the adult relationships created later in life. It allows for better understanding regarding the effects that early life occurrences can have on the relational blueprints we carry throughout our relationships at different stages of life. In a sense, attachment theories have the ability to connect the past to the present. They are valuable in their ability to make sense of patterns of attachment in both childhood and adulthood. Consequently, the study of attachment patterns is indispensable when it comes to exploring everything and anything concerning relationships.

For the reasons previously mentioned, an attachment perspective has been employed to look more closely at parenting behaviors within the Intimae Partner Violence (IPV) population with hopes of contributing valuable knowledge to the IPV, attachment, and parenting literature. The current study examines the adult attachment patterns of individuals within the intimate partner violence (IPV) population and observes whether a particular attachment style is more common within that population than in the non-IPV population.

Further, the current study focuses on whether participants with specific adult attachment styles report specific parenting styles. A dearth of research has focused on the impact of attachment styles on parenting behaviors and also on the impact of IPV on parenting behaviors, but little that has looked at the impact of adult attachment styles on parenting styles within the IPV population. Gathering more information regarding the parenting styles of those within the IPV population may serve as a path for further research on the role of parental attachment style and parenting behaviors within the intimate partner violence population.

Methods and Materials

Methods

- Recruit participants through the use of Amazon’s Mturk, an online crowdsourcing tool
- They were prompted to fill out the Informed Consent, the Background Questionnaire, The Adult Attachment Scale and The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire

Participants

- 86 mothers from Amazon Mturk,
- 18 years of age and older
- Located in the US
- English speaking,
- Past experience of an abusive relationship and no history of being in an abusive relationship,
- Caucasian 80.7%, Asian 5%, Black/African American 3.4%, Native American 2.3%, Hispanic 1.1%, Other 5.7%, Prefer not to answer 1.1%

Measures

- Background Questionnaire
- The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS)
- The Parental Styles Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ)

Results

Research Question #1: Are the rates of each attachment style within the IPV population similar to rates of attachment style in the non-IPV population?

A Pearson Chi-Square was used to compare the rates of attachment style between the IPV and Non-IPV populations. The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference in attachment type between the IPV and Non-IPV groups, $\chi^2(1, N=88) = 20.278, p < .01$.

Question #2: Is there a relationship between specific attachment styles and specific parenting styles within the IPV population? How does it compare to the findings in the non-IPV population?

A Pearson Chi Square was used to look at the relationship between attachment styles and parenting style within and between the IPV and Non-IPV group. When conducting the test, SPSS gave a message that nine cells had a count less than five, thus making it an unequitable statistical comparison. Due to the data being unevenly distributed, a Pearson Chi square was unable to be carried out.

Research Question #3: Is there a difference in parenting style between the IPV group and the non-IPV group?

T-test was used to evaluate the differences in parenting style between the IPV and non-IPV group.

The analysis showed no difference in authoritative ($t(80.85) = .811, p > .05$ or $t(80.85) = .811, p = .420$), authoritarian ($t(86) = -1.58, p > .05$ or $t(86) = -1.58, p = .118$), permissive ($t(86) = -1.95, p > .05$ or $t(86) = -1.95, p = .055$).

Attachment Styles Within Groups Descriptive Data

	Secure	Anxious	Avoidant	Totals
IPV	4% (2)	57% (26)	39% (18)	100% (46)
Non-IPV	38% (16)	19% (8)	43% (18)	100% (42)

Table 3. Attachment Styles Within Groups Descriptive Data

Discussion

Research Question #1: Participants from the IPV group endorsed anxious attachment style at a significantly higher rate than the participants from the non- IPV group. The results showed that within the IPV group, avoidant attachment (39%) was endorsed at a higher rate than secure attachment (4%).

The current study also showed higher rates of avoidant attachment among non-IPV participants.

The results showed that the non-IPV group endorsed secure attachment at a higher rate than the IPV group.

The results revealed no significant differences in endorsement of avoidant attachment style between groups.

Research Question #2: The majority of participants from both groups endorsed authoritative parenting style.

Due to the uneven cell distribution question unable to be answered.

Research Question #3: No significant differences between the two groups

Majority of participants endorsed authoritative parenting style. Similar to previous findings (Levendosky, et al., 2003), (Varela et al., 2004).

Indicative of overall societal trend as opposed to cultural trends (Zervides & Knowles, 2007)

Uneven distribution in cell may be due to social desirability and self-report

Conclusions

Provides a spring-board for further research on the topic

Further Research: Ethnically diverse sample

- In person data collection
- Alternate measures ex. Secure Based Scripts method, observational measures of parenting styles

Findings support the value of implementing attachment perspectives when working within the IPV population

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