

ATTACHMENT STYLES AS THE PREDICTORS OF CONTACT DISTURBANCES

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to determine if there is a significant predictor of contact disturbances and attachment styles of university students. The study group covered 318 students from Faculty of Education of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University. The data were gathered by using the Contact Disturbances Scale and Relationship Scales Questionary. Relational method was employed in the research. In the analysis of the data, Pearson Moments Multiplying Correlation Coefficient and Progressive Regression Analysis were used. According to the findings, it has been found out that secure, preoccupied, fearful and dismissive attachment styles significantly predict contact, full contact and post-contact disturbances; dismissive and fearful attachment styles significantly predict dependent contact disturbances, while secure and preoccupied attachment styles did not significantly predict dependent contact disturbances. The findings have been discussed in consideration of the literature.

Key Words: Gestalt Therapy, Contact disturbances, Attachment styles, University students.

INTRODUCTION

Human, a social being, has to co-exist with other people around in order to sustain own life and to meet own needs. Thus, human contacts with other people in own environment within a social group. The term “contact” is defined as touch, intercourse, corelate, get in touch and interview (Tagay, 2010). Gestalt therapy is concerned with therapy process, contact, contact disturbances and the awarenesses regarding these. Human contacts by hearing, touching, smelling, seeing, tasting, speaking and moving (Voltan-Acar, 2006).

In Gestalt therapy, contact is a significant concept for understanding the individual. According to Laura Perls (1992), contact is the recognition of others, awareness of the differences and the experience of the edges of I and the other; in other words, it is the sound experience of I and the other (Voltan-Acar, 2006). The fact that contact relationship occurs between I and the other not only expresses another individual but nature, environment and even the individual oneself as well.

Contact, which enables organism to grow and learn, can be defined as being attentive to something by oneself or being together with the others. Thus, the concept of contact can not only be experienced between the individual and environment but also be experienced in the form of individual’s contact with oneself (Goldstein, Krasner and Garfield, 1989). Styles of contact are affected by the condition of discerning and rejecting differences. While one form of contact helps growth and development, the other may not...

According to Gestalt theory, rather than emotions, how they have been experienced is important. If the figure has not been completed even though it has emanated from the ground. It means that individuals has unfinished buisness in their emotions, such as resentment, anger, hatred and guiltiness, which have not been revealed yet. Because these emotions are not experienced in fully awareness, they hide in the background and can hamper person’s efficiently establishing relationship with oneself and with the others. The unfinished buisness carry on until the time when the individual is faced with one’s emotions one cannot explain and one can cope

with them (Corey, 1995). The unfinished business prevent person's establishing good and healthy contact with oneself and with others and cause some contact impediments to be experience.

The contact disturbances dealt with in this study are the disturbances of contact, full contact, dependent contact, post contact. Contact phase is the stage in which the need becomes clear. The contact disturbance developed in this stage is projection. The contact disturbance of projection is the process that person direct the emotions, attitudes and thoughts which he possesses but he does not accept to other people and he projects these as if they do not belong to him. People project the characteristics which they find it difficult to accept that they possess these characteristics to others (Latner, 1992). Sometimes, they project their positive attitudes that they have not been able to integrate to out. That is to say, the person who has lots of negative self-image may project his talents to his friend as if they exist in them (Voltan-Acar, 2006).

Full contact disturbance includes retroflection and deflection disturbances. There are two ways of retroflection. Person receives the thoughts regarding him from out and this person harms oneself. Thus, one directs one's energy to oneself. Such kind of harmful thoughts negatively affect person's biological structure, especially one's muscle system and chemical balance of the body. For example, the one who knows that one will get injurious feedbacks from family turns this kind of harmful thoughts to oneself (Brown, 2004). Another way of retroflection, is the fact that person does the things which he wants others to do himself. Person can deflect the whole attention, care and love, which he expects from his family but cannot get, to himself. For instance, person continually strokes his bosom when he talks about loneliness. Thus, he meets the need for social support he would like to get from her family. Retroflection can be observed in every phase of contact cycle, but it is generally seen in the phase of full contact (Clarkson, 1994). Deflection, on the other hand, is that person moves away from the target by deflecting one's energy to another field outside of contact so as to reduce the effects of speculations from the environment and to avoid from intense emotions which the contact to be formed will generate (latner, 2000).

The dependence developing towards others is cited in the disturbance of dependent contact. In this contact disturbance are the contact disturbances of confluence and profection. Confluence contact disturbance indicates that individual does not become different and dissociate from the environment. Individual cannot mark off in own relationships. Relationship of the individual employing this contact disturbance lacks autonomy, distinctness and individuality (Clarkson, 1994). Profection, on the other hand, is that people do the things, which they want from others to do for themselves. In the situations in which individuals cannot express their needs and cannot speak out their wishes, they help others in meeting their requirements, and they are not aware of their such behaviour. Person's not being honest to own needs causes this contact disturbance to be used. Doing so, individuals gain secondary satisfaction (Voltan-Acar, 2006).

The stage of full contact is completed with satisfaction and the individual withdraw to assimilate. This is a healthy process. In some cases, individual withdraw from the contact without finishing full contact with satisfaction and human is not aware of this situation. This is an unhealthy one. The contact disturbance expresses in post-contact disturbance is withdrawal (Tagay, 2010). Withdrawal is withdrawing one's attention from contact object. Sometimes, attention tends also towards individual's from contact object. Withdrawal contact disturbance shows itself with sensation and behaviour such as fatigue, satiation, halation in interests, slowness in motions and discontinuation of eye-contact (Jacobs, 2007). Even one of the one contact disturbance that prevents person's development and maturation can affect one whole life.

Collins and Read (1990) point out attachment styles as another factor affecting individuals' inter-personal relationships. In infancy, parents and other people, has been the first of relations to be established later in life, how it affects relationships are discussed within the framework of Attachment Theory. According to the Attachment Theory, quality of the first relationships established in the early years of life will determine the

quality of relationships to be established in the future periods and guides the relationships to be established in adulthood (Eraslan Çapan, 2009).

According to the Attachment Theory, first years of life in accordance with the reactions of the mother and caregiver to child forms mental models of themselves or about the others and these mental models serve as a guidance and model for the close interpersonal relationships in the following years. Bowlby (1969; 1973) suggested that these expectations, which he called “mental models” or “internal working models”, were completely formed by parents or caregiver’s attitudes (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Later, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) described a model of four attachment styles (secure, dismissing, preoccupied and fearful) that individuals may approximate to varying degrees, in which two types of internal working models are postulated; namely, a model of the self and a model of others. These internal working models can be dichotomized as positive (self as worthy of love and attention; other as trustworthy, caring and available) or negative (the self as unworthy of love; the other as uncaring, rejecting and distant). The explanations concerning the attachment styles included in this model is given below.

Secure attachment style: Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) emphasized that securely attached adolescents are less in need of others’ approval and can relatively develop intimacy with others easily. In addition, these individuals can manage to remain self-reliant. In other words, they fear neither abandonment nor emotional intimacy. While these individuals regard themselves as worth loving, they have the expectations that others are reliable and accessible.

Preoccupied attachment style: Persons with a *preoccupied* style are assumed to have internalized a negative self model and a positive other model; this schema disposes them to express particularly strong needs for intimacy and correspondingly strong fears of rejection in their close relationships. They are obsessive with their relationships. They are afraid of both being abandoned and of others’ abandoning them in their affiliations (Cooper, Shaver and Collins, 1998).

Fearful attachment style: The individuals with fearful attachment style are presumed to have incorporated negative internal working models of both self and other; as a result they are both fearful of rejection and of emotional closeness and are most likely to be socially avoidant. (Sümer and Güngör, 1999).

Dismissive attachment style: Persons with a *dismissive* style are assumed to have incorporated a positive model of self and a negative model of other; as a result of this configuration, dismissive individuals acknowledge discomfort with closeness and intimacy and prefer to maintain higher levels of separateness in their intimate peer relationships (Sümer and Güngör, 1999). As also seen in the explanations above, each attachment style which can be developed with the relationships in the family in the first years of life is associated with different personal characteristics.

The relationships developed with attachment figures in the period of infancy and childhood greatly affect the relationships in the later periods of life. The attachment relationships flourished at the early periods of life regulate peoples’ standpoints for themselves and for others, and one’s relationships with others (Damarlı, 2006).

While there are researches analyzing the relationships between the attachment styles and different variables such as depression, psychopathology, identity, decision-making strategies, ect. (Canbolat 2010, Çalışır, 2009; Kart, 2002; Kesebir S., Özdoğan-Kavzoğlu S., Üstündağ M.F. 2011), also some researches come across with the descriptive studies investigating the attachment styles of teachers (Acer&Akgun, 2010; Eraslan-Çapan, 2009; Erözkan, 2011; Morris-Rothschild, 2003; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006;).

There are few studies in the field of Gestalt therapy. It is observed that the researches and studies regarding Gestalt approach and Gestalt psychology are mostly experimental studies as regards learning (Foulds and Hannigan, 1976; Reitenour, 1984; Wasserstein, 2002). The studies carried out in relation to Gestal therapy are, on the other hand, limited generally to case analysis (Imes and Gailis, 2002) and scanning (Alvim, 2007; Baver and Toman, 2003; Handlon and Fredericson, 1998; Huckabay, 2002; Iaculo, 2007; Lyon, 2001). In recent years, on the other hand, it has been observed that there is an increase in experimental and descriptive studies in the field of Gestalt therapy (Hartung, 1991; Jacobs, 2007; Kirkpatric, 2005; Korkut, 1992; Mackay, 2002; Maree, 2007; O'Leary, E. & Nieuwstraten 2000; Prosnick, 1999; Riet, 2008; Shraga, 1991; Tofte, 2001).

In addition, the studies carried out concerning Gestalt contact disturbances and attachment styles were not observed in the literature. According to Gestalt therapy, the contact styles people use or the processes of establishing contact is affected from the environment, family structure, social environment and cultural characteristics. Similarly, it is seen that attachment styles as well are shaped by the relationships established with attachment figures. In this study, we aimed to determine if there is a significant predictor of contact disturbances and attachment styles. It is believed that the research results obtained in this context will contribute to the concerned researches and to the researches be made in this field.

METHOD

Participant

Relational method was employed in the research. Total 318 students ,studying in the different departments of Faculty of Education, at Mehmet Akif Ersoy University in 2010-2011 Academic Year, have been participated in this research. The group includes 199 female and 119 male students, 41 of them are from the department of Primary School Teaching, 39 from English Teaching, 73 from Social Sciences Teaching, 52 from Preschool Teaching, 29 from Computer and Instructional Technologies, 26 from Turkish Teaching, 23 from Mathematics Teaching and 35 from Painting Teaching.

Data Collection Tools

Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale: In this research, Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale (GCDS) developed by Tagay (2010) was used in order to measure the contact disturbances of university students. GCDS is composed of 24 items and 4 sub-scales. These sub-scales are contact, full contact, dependent contact and post-contact. Several methods were used to determine reliability of GCDS. First, exploratory factor analysis was performed for the scale. Factor analysis revealed a KMO coefficient of .87 also, the Barlett test was significant. The eigen value of the GTEÖ revealed four factors with value greater than one the factors of the scale, accounted for a total variance of %42.33. The factor weights of the items ranged from .42 to .75. According to the confirmatory factor analysis the goodness of fit statistics such as CFI and GFI for all subscales has greater than .90 and SRMR's have less than .07. The factor analyses revealed four factors and 24 items. It also showed that the model had high fit indices. The contact factor had five items, full contact factor had eight items, dependent contact factor had seven items and final contact had four items. Internal consistency reliability was assessed by computing Cronbach's alpha coefficients for this form administered to the 365 participants. The resulting coefficients were .61 for the contact, .79 for the full contact, .75 for the dependent contact and .60 for the final contact. The scale was administrated to 81 university students from Pamukkale University twice in order to acquire test-re-test reliability. The time interval between the two administrations were three weeks. Test-re-test reliability coefficients were .74 for the contact, .77 for the full contact, .69 for the dependent contact and .65 for the final contact. In sum, the final form of GTEÖ consisted of 24 items measuring four (contact, full contact, dependent contact and final contact) subscales. the inventory was formed in a five point likert type scale (ranging from 1 to 5).

Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ): Relationship Scales Questionnaire, developed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) and adapted to Turkish by Sümer and Güngör (1999), was employed to measure the

attachment styles of university students. The scale, developed to measure the adults' attachment styles, is made up of 4 sub-scales consisting of secure, preoccupied, dismissive and fearful attachment styles. The scale is composed of 30 items. The reliability coefficients of the scale were calculated by the Retst Method and varied between .54 and .78. The parallel form validity of this scale was tested with the Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) and the correlation coefficients varied between .49 and .61 (Sümer and Güngör, 1999).

Procedure

The data were collected from the fourth-grade students attending in the different departments of Faculty of Education, at Mehmet Akif Ersoy University in 2010-2011 Academic Year, Fall Semester. Before going on to application, the students were informed regarding the objective and importance of the research and they were asked to answer the scale items and personal information form sincerely. The application lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

Predicted variable of the research is contact disturbances. The contact disturbances as the predicted variable of the study, consist of four groups including contact, full contact, dependent contact and post-contact. On the other hand the attachment styles as the predicting variable of the study consist of four groups including secure, dismissive, preoccupied and fearful attachment styles. Whether there is a linear relationship between the attachment styles and contact disturbances has been examined with scatter diagram in SPSS programme. It was determined that there is a linear relationship between the predicting and predicted variables. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between the variables, and then step-wise regression analysis technique was applied. The research data were entered to SPSS 15 programme and the analyses were carried out in this programme. In the study, significance level was considered as.05.

FINDINGS

Mean and standard deviation results of the college students from the each measures were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviations from the sub-scales.

Scales	n	\bar{X}	Ss
Contact	318	12,26	4,34
Full contact	318	17,77	5,52
Dependent contact	318	25,51	4,62
Post contact	318	11,32	3,37
Secure attachment	318	4,11	1,05
Preoccupied attachment	318	3,70	,89
Fearful attachment	318	4,17	1,01
Dismissive attachment	318	4,51	1,10

When the Table-1 is examined, it has been determined that college students mean and standard deviations are 12.26 for "Contact" (SS=4.34), 17.77 for "Full Contact" (SS=5.52), 25.51 for "Dependent Contact" (SS=4.62), 11.32 for "Post-Contact" (SS=3.37), 4.11 for "Secure Attachment" (SS=1.05), 3.70 for Preoccupied Attachment" (SS=.89), 4.17 for "Fearful Attachment" (SS=1.01) and 4.51 for "Dismissive Attachment" (SS=1.10).

In the study, the relationship between the contact disturbances (contact, full contact, dependent contact and post-contact) and the attachment styles (secure, dismissive, preoccupied and fearful attachment styles) were primarily examined, and this has been presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation of Variables

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Contact	-	.31**	.13*	.38**	-.38**	.11*	.25**	.52**
2.Full contact	.31**	-	.15**	.27**	-.20**	.06	.09	.33**
3.Dependent contact	.13*	.15**	-	.24**	.01	.08	.14*	.18**
4.Post contact	.38**	.27**	.24**	-	-.24**	.10	.02	.28**
5.Secure attachment	-.38**	-.20**	.01	-.24**	-	-.02	.12*	-.42**
6. Preoccupied attachment	.11*	.06	.08	.10	-.02	-	.04	.05
7.Fearful attachment	.25**	.09	.14*	.02	.12*	.04	-	.33**
8. Dimissive attachment	.52**	.33**	.18**	.28**	-.42**	.05	.33**	-

*p< .05 **p< .01

As shown in Table 2 that the relationships between the contact and preoccupied attachment; dependent contact and fearful attachment had significant level (p<.05). In addition, The correlation coefficients between contact and secure, fearful and dismissive attachment variables are statistically significant (p<.01). It was observed that the relationships between full contact and secure and dismissive attachments; between dependent contact and dismissive attachment; between post-contact and secure and dismissive attachments are statistically significant (p<.01).

Table 3: Stepwise Multi-Regression Analysis Results for Prediction of Contact Disturbances.

Contact	R	R2	R2 Change	F	F Change	Beta
Secure attachment	.381	.145	.145	53.79	53.79	-.381
Preoccupied attachment	.397	.157	.012	29.41	4.45	.109
Fearful attachment	.499	.249	.091	34.65	38.18	.305
Dismissive attachment	.582	.338	.090	40.00	42.35	.365

*p<.05 (n=318)

In Table 3 it can be seen that the most predicting variable of contact disturbance is, in a negative way, secure attachment with the variance of 14.5%, and this is in a positive way followed respectively by fearful attachment with 091%, by dismissive attachment with 090% and by preoccupied attachment with 012%. It is noticed that the all variables' total statement percent of contact disturbance is 33.8%.

Table 4: Stepwise Multi-Regression Analysis Results for Prediction of Full Contact Disturbances.

Full Contact	R	R2	R2 Change	F	F Change	Beta
Secure Attachment	.205	.042	.042	13.882	13.882	-.205
Preoccupied Attachment	.214	.046	.004	7.564	1.235	.061
Fearful Attachment	.245	.060	.014	6.674	4.716	.120
Dismissive Attachment	.343	.118	.058	10.449	20.528	.294

*p<.05 (n=318)

In Table 4 it can be seen that the most predicting variable of full contact disturbance is, dismissive attachment with the variance of 058%, and this is, respectively followed in a negative way by secure attachment with 042%, in a positive way by fearful attachment with 014% and by preoccupied attachment with 004%. It is observed that the all variables' total statement percent of full contact disturbance is 11.8%.

Table 5: Stepwise Multi-Regression Analysis Results for Prediction of Dependent Contact Disturbances.

Dependent Contact	R	R2	R2 Change	F	F Change	Beta
Secure attachment	.012	.000	.000	0.44	.044	.012
Preoccupied attachment	.088	.008	.008	1.240	2.435	.088
Fearful attachment	.163	.026	.019	2.841	6.004	.138
Dismissive attachment	.231	.053	.027	4.423	8.954	-.201

*p<.05 (n=318)

In Table-5 it can be seen that the most predicting variable of dependent contact disturbance in a negative way is, dismissive attachment with the variance of 027%, and this is, respectively, followed in a positive way by fearful attachment of 019%, by preoccupied attachment of 008%. It is observed that the all variables' total statement percent of dependent contact disturbance is 0.53%.

Table 6. Stepwise Multi-Regression Analysis Results for Prediction of Post Contact Disturbances.

Post Contact	R	R2	R2 Change	F	F Change	Beta
Secure Attachment	.244	.059	.059	19.959	19.959	-.244
Preoccupied Attachment	.263	.069	.010	11.727	3.346	.099
Fearful Attachment	.269	.072	.003	8.145	.982	.054
Dismissive Attachment	.330	.109	.037	9.589	12.989	.235

*p<.05 (n=318)

In Table 5 it can be seen that the most predicting variable of post contact disturbance in a negative way is secure attachment with the variance of 059%, and this is, respectively, followed by dismissive attachment with 037%, by preoccupied attachment with 010% and by fearful attachment with 003%. It is observed that the all variables' total statement percent of post-contact disturbance is 11%.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the contribution of attachment styles was analyzed in predicting the contact disturbances of college students. Results of the analyses indicated that secure, preoccupied, fearful and dismissive attachment styles significantly predicted the college students' contact, full contact and post-contact disturbances. Also, it was understood that dismissive attachments styles significantly predicted the dependent contact disturbance, while secure, preoccupied attachment styles did not significantly predict the dependent contact disturbances. The findings have been discussed in consideration of the literature because a similar research could not be found.

Secure attachment style significantly predicts the college students' contact, full contact and post-contact disturbances at a negative level and fearful, dismissive and preoccupied attachment styles also significantly

predict them as positive. Reflection contact disturbance is developing in the contact disturbance level. Reflection is the process in which person has but not accept the emotions, behaviour and thoughts and reflects them as if they did not belong to oneself. Human beings reflect the characteristics to the others, which they have difficulties in accepting that these features exist in them (Latner, 1992). Prejudice is the way of reflection that is generally destructive and negative. There is very little honesty in reflecting. Generally, person refers oneself in a way as would like to see (Clarkson, 1994). The fact that a student who does not study lessons blames the teacher because of the low grade from the exam is an example for reflection (Sharf, 2000).

Deflection and retroreflection contact disturbances are developing in the full contact disturbance. The individuals who unawareness and often use contact disturbance of deflection cannot express their feelings clearly, they express their feelings in indirect ways and there is no clearness in their expressions. These people exhibit irrelevant behaviour to digress in their interpersonal relations and they often joke to ignore when people talk about the topics bothersome for them (Kepner, 1982). Retroreflection is appropriating the given messages, for self. Thus, the individuals who often use this contact disturbance blames themselves and harm themselves (Tagay, 2010).

Withdrawal observed in the post-contact disturbance, on the other hand, individual's withdrawing attention from the contact object. Sometimes, attention tends towards the individual from contact object. Contact disturbance of withdrawal can show itself through sensation and behaviour such as fatigue, satiation, halation in interests, slowness in movements and discontinuation in eye-contact (Jacobs, 2007).

Securely attached people have positive feelings and thoughts concerning themselves and others. They behave warmer and closer to others and their friendships and relationships are balanced (Morsünbül, 2005). It is seen that these findings obtained match up with the literature. On the other hand, in a study where the college students's relationships between the interpersonal relationships and attachment styles were examined, it was observed that secure attachment style accounts for sustaining relationship style and dismissive attachment style for inhibitory relationship style (Eraslan Çapan, 2009).

In the study, it was concluded that fearful and dismissive attachment styles of the college students significantly predict the dependent contact disturbance, while secure and preoccupied attachment styles did not significantly predict the dependent contact disturbance. Confluence and Profection contact disturbance developing in the dependent contact disturbance. In the contact disturbance of confluence and retroreflection a situation like the boundaries' between the environment and individual being uncertain or not existing is in question. People cannot draw their own line in their relationships. This contact disturbance of individual's relationships has lack autonomy, difference and individuality (Clarkson, 1994; Jacobs, 2007). A negative relationship was found between the dependent contact and dismissive attachment. Self-respect of the individuals with dismissive attachment style is high and they abstain from close relationships. This situation shows contrast with dependent contact disturbance.

In fearful attachment style, individuals want to develop intimacy, but they have difficulty in this. Thus, considering that the individuals with fearful attachment style also have difficulty in determining the boundaries of their relationships, it is an expected result that there is a significant relationship between dependent contact disturbance and fearful attachment style in a positive way. It is seen that the findings obtained match up with the literature.

In his study, in which he examined the attachment styles and Decision Strategies of the university students, Erözkan (2011) put forward that there are significant differences between genders and parents' attitudes with "secure attachment" and "fearful attachment". In Tagay's study (2010), in which university students' contact disturbances were examined in terms of different variables, contact, full contact and dependent contact levels of the university students reporting that they have protective parents attitude were found to be significantly

higher than the dependent contact levels of university students reporting that they have strict and democratic parents attitude. In addition, dependent contact levels of the university students reporting that they have divorced parent proved to be significantly lower than contact levels of the university students reporting that they have nuclear and large family.

When the results are taken into consideration in general, it can be said that attachment styles significantly predict contact disturbances. It is thought that this result will contribute to the application and the following investigations. It can be said that when assessing a behaviour or contact disturbance, including attachment styles of the clients too in the psychological counseling plan will make contribute to the psychological counseling practices. Furthermore, it is thought that the application of similar works to different groups will contribute to the field.

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