



The Link Between Verbal Aggressiveness and Attachment Styles Amongst College Students from Different Ethnic Groups



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Introduction

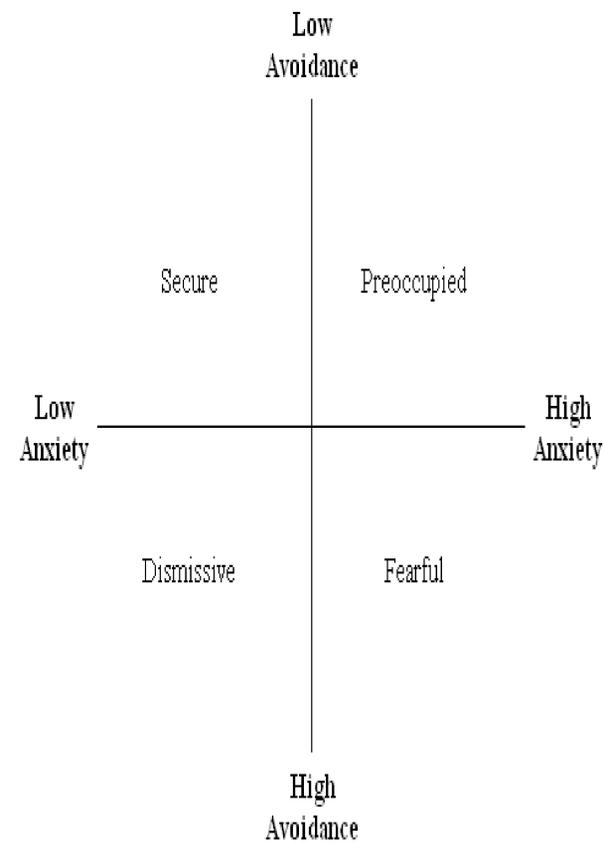
Verbal aggressiveness and attachment styles are two variables within communication that have returned little to no research when searched cohesively. The purpose of this study would be to see if there is in fact a link between the two variables among the subjects. Verbal aggressiveness measures the propensity of one to verbally attack another person's self concept. Attachment is "any form of behavior that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived of as better able to cope with the world. It is most obvious whenever the person is frightened, fatigued or sick, and is assuaged by comforting and care giving". The importance of this study and research conducted on these two variables is to better understand these variables not only as behaviors but as attitudes. This study will help communication professionals identify factors that may explain the attitudes and behaviors of different ethnic groups.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research question for this project would be "Is there a link between verbal aggressiveness and attachment styles among college students of different ethnicities?" . The first hypothesis for this study is that there will be a difference in attachment styles for the ethnic groups. The second hypothesis is that the white students will have more of a secure attachment style than the other races. The third and final hypothesis for this study is that verbal aggressiveness will be higher in other races than in the white students.

Materials and Instrumentation

The main method for collecting data was the administering of surveys. The survey was used to measure verbal aggressiveness and different attachment styles in college students from different ethnic backgrounds. The survey consisted of 38 questions in total. One section of the survey consisted of questions that asked about the verbal aggressiveness of the participants. These questions focused on seeing how the participants go about getting others to comply with whatever it is they want them to do. Another section of the survey dealt with the attachment styles of the participants. A 5 point Likert scale was used to see how participants described their feelings in general about close relationships. Under attachment styles, there were three subscales identified. Those subscales were the close attachment subscale, the anxiety attachment style, and the depend attachment style.



Results

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare attachment styles for whites and people of color. There was a significant difference in the scores for whites ($M = 3.1556$, $SD = .76589$) and people of color ($M = 2.8378$, $SD = .74635$); $t(148) = 2.573$, $p = .011$ (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = $.31778$, 95% CI: $.74$ to 5.62) was very large (Cohen's $D = .42$). This means that a difference was found for attachment styles when comparing white students to students of color. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare verbal aggressiveness for whites and people of color. There was no significant difference in scores for whites ($M = 2.4013$, $SD = .56991$) and people of color ($M = 2.4180$, $SD = .57631$); $t(148) = -.178$, $p = .859$ (two-tailed). The magnitude of differences in the means (mean difference = $-.01667$, 95% CI: -2.02 to 1.68) was very small (Cohen's $D = -.03$). This basically means that there was not a difference in the scores for verbal aggressiveness for the different races.



Conclusions

Although verbal aggression and attachment styles are two widely reviewed communication variables, there were not too many findings of them being studied cohesively. The purpose of this study was to research the two communication variables and examine them amongst different ethnic groups. There was a significant difference in attachment styles for students of color and white students. The first independent samples t-test supported the first two hypotheses. White students reported having more of a secure attachment style than students of other races. There was not, however, a significant difference in verbal aggressiveness regardless of the races of the respondents. The third and final hypothesis was not supported by the results of this study. The overall research question of whether or not there is a relationship between verbal aggressiveness and attachment styles among different ethnic backgrounds has not completely been answered by the findings of this study, Additional research is needed.

References

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