



Research Article

Representation of children attachment styles in corman's instruction of family drawing

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ABSTRACT

Corman's family drawing assessment was evaluated as a measure of different attachment styles in children; specifically not and whether children's attachment style is represented in their family drawing. Corman's method (1967) of family drawing comprises precise instructions that children can use to represent their desires about their family and life in a drawing. Using multi stage random cluster sampling, 590 students were selected to complete the Attachment Style Classification Questionnaire (Finzi et al., 2000). They were also asked to draw a family using Corman's instructions. Data analysis was performed using two statistical methods (Pearson and Spearman correlational coefficient). The results showed that an increased level of secure attachment led to lower levels of evaluation of parents, devaluation of parents, omission of self and dissimilarity to one's real family and higher levels of identification with parents ($p < 0.05$). Also as avoidant attachment increased, evaluation of parents, self-evaluation and proximity to one's parents decreased and devaluation of parents, omission of parents and dissimilarity to one's real family increased ($p < 0.05$). Also increased anxious attachment led to less omission of parents and less representation of dissimilarity to one's real family and more evaluation of parents, distance from parents and identification with parents ($p < 0.05$). Finally, the findings of this research showed that Corman's instructions can be a suitable tool to measure different types of attachment.

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Introduction

Attachment is an emotional relationship between children and their caregivers and is an important factor in child development (Muris & Maas, 2004). Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1982) argued that people possess a "behavioral attachment system" which acts to get comfort from the caregivers and maintain proximity to them, leading to a consistent sense of security. Through this system, a child attempts to establish a balance between exploration and proximity-seeking behaviors.

Ainsworth and Bell (1970) developed an experimental procedure called Strange Situation in order to observe the variety of attachment patterns exhibited between mothers and infants. She identified three main attachment styles: secure, insecure avoidant and insecure anxious/ambivalent. Ainsworth, Bell and Stayton (1971); Ainsworth, Bell and Stayton (1974) found that maternal sensitivity is the best predictor of a secure attachment relationship, while rejecting maternal responses lead to insecure/avoidant

attachments. Infants showing insecure anxious/ambivalent attachment suffer from inconsistent primary care. In these children experiences sometimes their needs are met and sometimes are ignored by the mother/father. Maternal sensitivity is considered as the underlying basis for secure attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). Bigelow et al. (2010) found that mothers' sensitivity to their infants was relatively consistent across the infants' first 2.5 years of life. Mothers' scores on maternal sensitivity measures within each time period were correlated with their maternal sensitivity scores in a different time period, suggesting individual measures of maternal sensitivity were tapping similar aspects across the time periods. Maternal vocal contingency at 4 months was the strongest predictor of infants' attachment security over 2 years later.

DeKlyen and Greenberg (2016) studied the effect of genes on attachment and argued that environmental effects are well substantiated, but genetic effects are not. However, it would be hasty to exclude the role of genes given the current corpus of evidence. Their study attests to the importance of the environment in the development of attachment.

The quality of attachment plays a vital role in an individual's development, as it affects the degree to which an individual can

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adapt to deviation from normal development without showing psychopathology (Rosenstein & Horowitz, 1996). Insecure attachment is often seen as a risk factor of normal development, and all forms of insecure attachments are commonly found in children who have experienced neglect (Alexander, 1992; Rosenstein & Horowitz, 1996). For example, insecure attachment associated with depression (Bifulco, Moran, Ball, & Bernazzani, 2002; Wayment & Vierthaler, 2002) low self-esteem (Fearon & Belsky, 2016; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994), self-criticism (Murphy & Bates, 1997), and dysfunctional attributions about partners' behavior increase the likelihood of jealousy and separation anxiety (Collins, 1996). Several studies show a prospective connection between attachment insecurities and vulnerability to disorders. Attachment insecurities are associated with a wide variety of mental disorders, ranging from mild negative affectivity to severe, disorganizing, and paralyzing personality disorders. (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). According to Fearon, Bakermans-Kranenburg, Van IJzendoorn, Lapsley and Roisman (2010) and Groh, Roisman, van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg and Fearon (2012) avoidance, but not resistance or disorganization, was significantly associated with internalizing symptoms. Insecurity and disorganization were more strongly associated with externalizing than internalizing symptoms.

On the other hand, secure attachment provides the basis for healthy emotional and social development during later childhood and even in adulthood (Bowlby, 1969). Children who have secure attachment function better than their counterparts emotionally, socially and academically (Weinfeld, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 2008). They display better behavioral adjustment and emotional regulation (Granot & Mayseless, 2001; Thompson & Meyer, 2007). Many studies showed that secure attachment was also associated with less anxiety and less depressive symptom (Brenning, Soenens, Braet, & Bosmans, 2011; Davies & Woitach, 2008; Richaud de Minzi, 2006). From a therapeutic standpoint, researchers have reviewed preliminary evidence that situationally heightening people's sense of attachment security reduces the likelihood and intensity of psychiatric symptoms (e.g., PTSD, eating disorders) (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012).

Recognition and treatment of attachment disorders are very important in childhood. One of the research methods used to study children is the analysis of their creations such as drawings (Saneei & Haghayegh, 2011). Different drawing styles are thought to reflect general personality traits and provide a non-intrusive tool for exploring the child's inner world (Madigan, Ladd, & Goldberg, 2003). Family drawing can also help identify emotional interaction between the child and his/her family. A simple conversation with a child could never clearly show his/her real emotions towards his/her family, because children often attempt to conceal their negative experience with their caregivers. Instead, a child doing a family drawing has less control on her emotions and freely releases the fears, loves and doubts (Ferrari, 1973). Family drawings are a sensitive and valid approach to assessing disturbances related to attachment representations during childhood (Howard et al., 2017).

Family drawing tests have different functions. One of these tests, named Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD) was described by Burns and Kaufman (1987). Based on Corman's latest instruction (1967), the child is asked to draw an imaginative family. Because of precise instruction, children can draw their desires about their life and family (Corman, 1967). Family drawing is considered as a tool to project the child's feelings about their role in the family unit. The distance and the interaction between the figures in the drawing are thought of as the most psychologically meaningful features of the drawings (Saneei & Haghayegh, 2011).

Kaplan and Main (1985) were the first researchers to suggest that children's drawings might be a fruitful way of capturing attachment representation. These researchers used family draw-

Table 1
Frequency of the sample considering area and sex.

Sex	Areas				Total
	2	5	13	16	
Girl	62	54	35	143	294
Boy	84	47	82	83	296
Total	146	101	119	226	590

ings by kindergarten children as predictors of assignment of secure or insecure attachment categories. Their studies were based on a system of signs incorporating constructs such as size, location, degree of movement, individuation, completeness of figures, quality of smiles, and impressions of vulnerability. Drawings of children who had avoidant attachment included smiling, non-individuated family members which were distant from each other, often without arms, and floating. Children who were resistant infants drew either very large or very small figures which were unusually close together, and often emphasized vulnerable or intimate body parts. However, secure children drew complete, grounded, centered, and individuated figures (Kaplan & Main, 1985).

Many researchers have used the checklist developed by Kaplan and Main to study the relationship between children's drawing of family members and their attachment: Fury, Carlson and Sroufe (1997) modified and expanded Kaplan's main checklist to consider individual differences in the drawings of older children in their sample (n = 171, eight-years-old, high risk children). The results support the use of children's drawings as a highly potential measure for representation of children's attachment. For example, anxious-avoidant children drawings lacked individuation and anxious-resistant children drew figures separated by barriers. Eight global rating scales were developed to assess attachment types by Fury (1996). Madigan et al. (2003) repeated Fury's study on a low-to-moderate risk sample. They studied 123 seven-years-old children and found a relation between attachment styles and family drawings. For example, avoidant children were more likely to exaggerate heads and resistant children were more likely to draw floating figures. Pianta, Logmaid and Ferguson (1999) studied drawings of 200 five-year-old children and found that Kaplan and Main coding system was significantly associated with previous and concurrent social and behavioral competence. Shiakou (2012) also found that maltreated children depicted significantly more items in their drawings linked to an insecure attachment pattern than non-maltreated children, while the non-maltreated children made use of significantly more drawing features linked to a secure attachment pattern. In a later study, Procaccia, Veronese and Castiglioni (2014) used Kaplan & Main's instruction to study school-age-children with the main aim of empirically investigating differences in the representations of securely vs. insecurely attached children. In their study the drawings of securely attached children were more likely to draw figures which were well-individuated, gender-differentiated etc. On the other hand, anxious, ambivalent and avoidant children were more likely to draw poorly individuated and poorly gender-differentiated figures. Pace, Zavattini and Tambelli (2015) using the global rating scales found that late-adopted children assessed with family drawings were more insecure on the attachment categories and achieved lower scores on positive global ratings such as Vitality/Creativity and Family Pride/Happiness scales, higher scores on the Role Reversal scale, and higher scores on the Bizarreness/Dissociation scale. Congruent with this finding, Howard et al. (2017) found that compared to biological children, at risk adopted children scored lower on both positive global ratings, Vitality and Family Pride, and higher on five of the six negative global ratings (i.e. Vulnerability, Anger, Global Pathology, Isolation and Bizarreness).

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