

# The Associations Between the Maladaptive Personality Dimensions of Neediness and Self-Criticism, Defense Styles, Selfobject Needs, and Attachment Styles in an Iranian Sample

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The present study extends previous findings by examining whether defense styles, selfobject needs, attachment styles relate to Neediness and Self-Criticism, as maladaptive personality dimensions focused, respectively, on relatedness and self-definition in an Iranian sample. Three hundred and 52 participants completed a sociodemographic questionnaire as well as the Persian forms of the Depressive Experiences Questionnaire, Experience of Close Relationships-Revised, Defense Style Questionnaire, Beck Depression Inventory—II and Selfobject Needs Inventory. Two multiple linear regression analyses, entering Self-criticism and Neediness as criterion variables, were computed. According to the results, high attachment anxiety, high immature defenses, high depressive symptoms, and high need for idealization were related to self-criticism, and explained 47% of its variance. In addition, high attachment anxiety, low mature defenses, high neurotic defenses, high avoidance of mirroring, and low avoidance of idealization/twinship were related to neediness, and explained 40% of its variance. A principal components analysis was performed, entering all the studied variables. Three factors emerged; 1 describing a maladaptive form of psychological functioning and 2 describing more mature modes of psychological functioning. The results are discussed in their implications for the understanding of neediness and self-criticism as maladaptive personality dimensions focused, respectively, on relatedness and self-definition.

*Keywords:* neediness, self-criticism, attachment styles, defense styles, selfobject needs

According to Blatt's model (1974, 2004, 2008), interpersonal relatedness and self-definition play a crucial role in the process of personality development. Interpersonal relatedness refers to a process by which a person establishes and maintains mature, reciprocal, and mutual satisfying relationships with others. Self-definition is related to the development of a positive, differentiated, and integrated sense of identity. An integration of interpersonal relatedness and self-definition is essential for an optimal development and for psychological and physical well-

being (Blatt & Zuroff, 1992). Differences in the relative emphasis that individuals put in the processes of relatedness and self-definition define two basic personality styles with specific modes of cognition, coping, and defense strategies. But an excessive emphasis on each of the two processes/dimensions specifies two maladaptive personality dimensions (dependency/neediness, self-criticism) or two forms of vulnerability to distress and psychopathology, especially depression (Blatt, 2004, 2008; Blatt & Shichman, 1983).

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