

Hodges and Tizard Study

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Aims

- To investigate the effect of **institutional upbringing** on later attachments.
- To investigate the effects of **privation** on later social and emotional development.
- To investigate if the effects of privation can be reversed.

Procedure

Jill Hodges and Barbara Tizard (1989) followed the development of 65 children who had been in residential nurseries from only a few months old.

This is known as a longitudinal study. The study was also a field experiment. The independent variable (what happened to the children at age 4) occurred naturally.

The care provided was of good quality, but carers were discouraged from forming attachments with the children (i.e. privation occurred).

By age 4, 24 children were adopted, 15 returned to their natural home (restored), and the rest stayed in institutions

They were also compared with a control group, who had spent all their lives in their own families. The control group was closely matched to the children in the experimental group. For example, in terms of sibling number, home location (London), parental occupation, position in family, age, gender etc.

The children were assessed for social and emotional competence at four, eight and sixteen years old. The assessment comprised interviewing the children and their parents and teachers and a set of questionnaires.

Findings

At four years of age none of the institutionalized children had formed attachments, but by eight years of age those who were adopted had formed good attachments. Also their social and intellectual development was better than that of children returned to their own families.

Those returned to their natural families (**restored**) showed more behavioral problems and the attachments were weaker. Nevertheless all those children who had spent their early years in institutions were more attention-seeking from adults and showed some difficulties in their social relationships, particularly with their peers.

Some of these children were interviewed again at 16 years of age, as were their parents and care-workers. They were compared with a new control group as the original control children no longer matched the children in the adopted and restored groups.

Hodges and Tizard found that the adopted children still had good attachments which compared favorably with the control children. Fewer restored children were reported as having good attachments but the children who had been brought up in institutional care had experienced most instability and showed some difficulties in their later attachments.

Conclusion

We can conclude from this evidence that Bowlby was correct to emphasize the importance of the early years, but the effects of delay in the formation of attachments do not necessarily persist into adulthood and lead to affectionless psychopathy, as Bowlby predicted. Indeed, loving relationships and high quality care are necessary to reverse privation effects.

Evaluation:

However, Hodges and Tizard used interviews and questionnaires, both of which can produce answers that are affected by social desirability - the wish to appear in a good light. The responses of those interviewed may have been inaccurate, and this would affect the results.

Another difficulty in this research is that six of the original 51 families of eight-year-olds refused to take part in this later research. It could be that families experiencing more difficulties were more likely to refuse, and this may also apply to the comparison group, because the families who agreed to take part may have been those with fairly good relationships with their 16-year-olds. Thus, the results of the research may be biased due to the sample.

Institutionalized children don't just suffer emotional privation but also poor physical care such as bad diet and also lack of stimulation. As a result it is difficult to separate out the effects of privation and of physical care.

References

Hodges, J. & Tizard, B. (1989) Social and family relationships of ex-institutional adolescents. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 30, 77-97.

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