



Attachment

A-level Revision Notes AQA(A)

By [Saul Mcleod](#), updated 2020

Definition

Attachment can be defined as an emotional bond between two people in which each seeks closeness and feels more secure when in the presence of the attachment figure.

Caregiver-Infant Interactions in Humans

Interactions between very young babies and their parents are baby led, with the adult responding to the behavior of the baby.

Reciprocity

AO1

The word reciprocal means two-way, or something that is mutual. Infant and caregiver are both active contributors in the interaction and are responding to each other.

Reciprocity is a form of interaction between infant and caregiver involving mutual responsiveness, with both infant and mother responding to each other's signals and each elicits a response from the other. Smiling is an example of reciprocity – when a smile occurs in the infant it triggers a smile in the caregiver, and vice versa.

AO3

Reciprocity influences the child's physical, social and cognitive development. It becomes the basis for development of basic trust or mistrust, and shapes how the child will relate to the world, learn, and form relationships throughout life.

Jaffe et al. said that from birth, babies move in a rhythm when interacting with an adult almost as if they were taking turns as people do when having a conversation.

Interactional Synchrony

AO1

Interactional synchrony is when two people interact and tend to mirror what the other is doing in terms of their facial and body movements (emotions and behaviours).

Interactional synchrony is form of rhythmic interaction between infant and caregiver involving mutual focus, reciprocity and mirroring of emotion or behavior. Infants coordinate their actions with caregivers in a kind of conversation.

From birth babies move in a rhythm when interacting with an adult almost as if they were taking turns. Infant and caregiver are able to anticipate how each other will behave and can elicit a particular response from the other.

For example, a caregiver who laughs in response to their infants giggling sound and tickles them, is experiencing synchronised interaction.

Interactional synchrony is most likely to develop if the caregiver attends fully to the baby's state, provides playful stimulation when the infant is alert and attentive, and avoids pushing things when an overexcited or tired infant is fussy and sending the message 'Cool it. I just need a break from all this excitement'.

AO3

Heimann showed that infants who demonstrate a lot of imitation from birth onwards have been found to have a better quality of relationship at 3 months. However, it isn't clear whether the imitation is a cause or an effect of this early synchrony.

Many studies involving observation of interactions between mothers and infants have shown the same patterns of interaction. However, what is being observed is merely hand

movements or changes in expression. It is extremely difficult to be certain, based on these observations, what is taking place from the infant's perspective. Is, for example, the infant's imitation of adult signals conscious and deliberate?

This means that we cannot really know for certain that behaviors seen in mother-infant interaction have a special meaning.

Observations of mother-infant interactions are generally well-controlled procedures, with both mother and infant being filmed, often from multiple angles. This ensures that very fine details of behavior can be recorded and later analysed.

Furthermore, babies don't know or care that they are being observed so their behavior does not change in response to controlled observation which is generally a problem for observational research. This is a strength of this line of research because it means the research has good validity.

Stages of Attachment

AO1

Rudolph Schaffer and Peggy Emerson (1964) studied 60 babies at monthly intervals for the first 18 months of life (this is known as a longitudinal study).

The children were all studied in their own home and a regular pattern was identified in the development of attachment. The babies were visited monthly for approximately one year, their interactions with their carers were observed, and carers were interviewed.

A diary was kept by the mother to examine evidence for the development of an attachment. The following measures were recorded:

- **Stranger Anxiety** - response to arrival of a stranger.
- **Separation Anxiety** - distress level when separated from carer, degree of comfort needed on return.
- **Social Referencing** - degree that child looks at carer to check how they should respond to something new (secure base).

They discovered that baby's attachments develop in the following sequence:

Asocial (0 - 6 weeks)

Very young infants are asocial in that many kinds of stimuli, both social and non-social, produce a favourable reaction, such as a smile.

Indiscriminate Attachments (6 weeks to 7 months)

Infants indiscriminately enjoy human company and most babies respond equally to any caregiver. They get upset when an individual ceases to interact with them.

From 3 months infants smile more at familiar faces and can be easily comforted by a regular caregiver.

Specific Attachment (7 - 9 months)

Special preference for a single attachment figure. The baby looks to particular people for security, comfort and protection. It shows fear of strangers (stranger fear) and unhappiness when separated from a special person (separation anxiety).

Some babies show stranger fear and separation anxiety much more frequently and intensely than others, but nevertheless they are seen as evidence that the baby has formed an attachment. This has usually developed by one year of age.

Multiple Attachment (10 months and onwards)

The baby becomes increasingly independent and forms several attachments. By 18 months the majority of infants have formed multiple attachments.

The results of the study indicated that attachments were most likely to form with those who responded accurately to the baby's signals, not the person they spent more time with. Schaffer and Emerson called this sensitive responsiveness.

Intensely attached infants had mothers who responded quickly to their demands and,

interacted with their child Infants who were weakly attached had mothers who failed to interact.

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The most important fact in forming attachments is not who feeds and changes the child but who plays and communicates with him or her. Therefore, responsiveness appeared to be the key to attachment.

AO2 Scenario Question

Laura is 7 months old she is looked after by a child minder, Jackie, while her parents are at work.

Recently she has started to show great distress when her mother drops her off and cries inconsolably. Use your knowledge of the stages of development of attachment to explain her behavior.

How long is this behavior likely to last? Explain your answer.

Multiple Attachments

AO1

Many of the babies from the Schaffer and Emerson study had multiple attachments by 10 months old, including attachments to mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings and neighbours.

By 18 months 31% had five or more attachments. The mother was the main attachment figure for about half of the children at 18 months old and the father for most of the others.

The multiple attachments formed by most infants vary in their strength and importance to the infant. Attachments are often structured in a hierarchy, whereby an infant may have formed three attachments but one may be stronger than the other two, and one may be the weakest.

AO3

The Schaffer and Emerson study has low population validity. The infants in the study all came from Glasgow and were mostly from working class families. In addition, the small sample size of 60 families reduces the strength of the conclusion we can draw from the study.

However, accuracy of data collection by parents who were keeping daily diaries whilst clearly being very busy could be questioned. A diary like this is also very unreliable with demand characteristics and social desirability being major issues. Mothers are not likely to report negative experiences in their daily write up.

The study lacks historical validity. It was conducted in the 1960s when gender roles were different – Now, more men stay at home to look after their children and more women go out to work so the sample is biased.

The Role of the Father

AO1

There is now an expectation in Western cultures that the father should play a greater role in bringing up children than was previously the case. Also, the number of mothers working full time has increased in recent decades, and this has also led to fathers having a more active role.

However, whereas mothers usually adopt a more caregiving and nurturing role compared to father, fathers adopt a more play-mate role than mothers. For example, fathers are more likely than mothers to encourage risk taking in their children by engaging them in physical games.

Most infants prefer contact with their father when in a positive emotional state and wanting to play. In contrast most infants prefer contact with their mother when they are distressed

and need comforting.

AO3

Numerous factors effect the father's role and the impact he has on his child's emotional development. For example, culture, father's age, and the amount of time the father spends away from home. The existence of so many factors means it difficult to make generalisations about the father's role.

It is possible that most men are just not psychologically equipped to form an intense attachment because they lack the emotional sensitivity women offer. Oestrogen underlies caring behaviour and there continues to be sex stereotypes which affect male behaviour.

However, Field found that when fathers have the main caregiver role, they adopt behaviours more typical of mothers therefore the key to attachment is the level of responsiveness, not the gender of the parent.

Economic implications – Mothers will feel pressured to stay home because research says they are vital for healthy emotional development but in some families, this may not economically be the best solution.

It is not important – McCallum and Golombok found that children growing up in single or same sex families didn't develop differently from those in two parent families – Evidence undermines the idea of fathers having distinct roles.

if father can be primary attachment figure, this information should be shared in antenatal classes etc. to ensure fathers play an equal role in childcare – Research can be used to improve the quality of care of infants and to strengthen attachment bonds.

Cultural Factors

There are also cultural differences in the role of the father. Until very recently men were expected to be breadwinners and not to have direct involvement in their children's care. However this might be a very stereotypical view rather than reflect reality as fathers might not have been directly involved in the day to day care but they were involved in factors like play, instruction and guidance.

In modern familie, fathers are less likely to engage in physical play in middle class Indian families.

Social Policy

In the UK, fathers until last year were not given any paternal leave so the responsibility for child care was implicitly given to the mothers. This could change the attachment the children make with their fathers. However this is not the case in every country so the pattern of attachment between father and children might be different.

Biological factors

Men seem to lack the emotional sensitivity to infant cues (Heerman, et al. 1994) that women offer spontaneously this could be due to the fact that women produce a hormone, oestrogen which increases emotional response to other's needs. However Frodi et al. (1978) found that men's physiological response was the same than women's.

The child

Age and gender: Freeman et al. (2010) found that male children are more likely to prefer their father as an attachment figure than female children. He also found that children are more likely to be attached to their father during their late childhood to early adolescence. Infants and young adults are less likely to seek attachment to their fathers.

Temperament: According to Manlove et al. (2002) fathers are less likely to be involved with their infant if the infant has a difficult temperament.

Animal Studies of Attachment

Harlow

AO1

Harlow wanted to study the mechanisms by which newborn rhesus monkeys bond with their mothers.

These infants were highly dependent on their mothers for nutrition, protection, comfort and



socialization. What, exactly, though, was the basis of the bond?

The behavioral theory of attachment would suggest that an infant would form an attachment with a carer that provides food. In contrast Harlow's explanation was that attachment develops as a result of the mother providing "tactile comfort", suggesting that infants have an innate (biological) need to touch and cling to something for emotional comfort.

Procedure

16 monkeys were separated from their mothers immediately after birth and placed in cages with access to two surrogate mothers, one made of wire and one covered in soft terry towelling cloth.

- Eight of the monkeys could get milk from the wire mother
- Eight monkeys could get milk from the cloth mother

The animals were studied for various length of time.

Results

Both groups of monkeys spent more time with the cloth mother (even if she had no milk). The infants of the second group would only go to the wire mother when hungry. Once fed they would return to the cloth mother for most of the day. If a frightening object was placed in the cage the infant took refuge with the cloth mother. The infant would explore more when the cloth mother was present.

Then Harlow observed the difference in behavior differences between the monkeys who had grown up with surrogate mothers and those with normal mothers. They found that:

- a) They were much more timid.
- b) They didn't know how to act with other monkeys.
- c) They were easily bullied and wouldn't stand up for themselves.
- d) They had difficulty with mating.
- e) The females were inadequate mothers.

These behaviors were observed only in the monkeys who were left with the surrogate mothers for more than 90 days. For those left less than 90 days the effects could be reversed if placed in a normal environment where they could form attachments.

Harlow concluded that “contact comfort” (provided by the cloth mother) was more important than food in the formation of attachment. This also shows that contact comfort is preferable to food but not sufficient for healthy development.

He also concluded that early maternal deprivation leads to emotional damage but that its impact could be reversed in monkeys if an attachment was made before the end of the critical period. However if maternal deprivation lasted after the end of the critical period then no amount of exposure to mothers or peers could alter the emotional damage that had already occurred.

Harlow found therefore that it was social deprivation rather than maternal deprivation that the young monkeys were suffering from. When he brought some other infant monkeys up on their own, but with 20 minutes a day in a playroom with three other monkeys, he found they grew up to be quite normal emotionally and socially.

Harlow's research has helped social workers to understand risk factors in child neglect and abuse such as a lack of comfort (and so intervene to prevent it) - using animals to study attachment can benefit children that are most at risk in society, can also have later economic implications as those children are more likely to grow up to be productive members of society.

AO2 Scenario Question

In Japan mothers have great difficulties finding child care for their babies. Government officials say that "eventually, robots will be able to take up and assume many of these tasks that women are currently doing at present".

Based on Harlow's research explain the effects this could have on children.

AO3

Harlow's work has been criticized. His experiments have been seen as unnecessarily cruel (unethical) and of limited value in attempting to understand the effects of deprivation on human infants.

It was clear that the monkeys in this study suffered from emotional harm from being reared in isolation. This was evident when the monkeys were placed with a normal monkey (reared by a mother), they sat huddled in a corner in a state of persistent fear and depression.

In addition Harlow created a state of anxiety in female monkeys which had implications once they became parents. Such monkeys became so neurotic that they smashed their infant's face into the floor and rubbed it back and forth.

Harlow's experiment is sometimes justified as providing a valuable insight into the development of attachment and social behavior. At the time of the research there was a dominant belief that attachment was related to physical (i.e. food) rather than emotional care.

It could be argued that the benefits of the research outweigh the costs (the suffering of the animals). For example, the research influenced the theoretical work of [John Bowlby](#), the most important psychologist in attachment theory. It could also be seen a vital in convincing people about the importance of emotional care in hospitals, children's homes and day care.

Lorenz's Imprinting Theory

AO1

Lorenz (1935) took a large clutch of goose eggs and kept them until they were about to hatch out. Half of the eggs were then placed under a goose mother, while Lorenz kept the other half beside himself for several hours.

When the geese hatched Lorenz imitated a mother duck's quacking sound, upon which the young birds regarded him as their mother and followed him accordingly. The other group followed the mother goose.

Lorenz found that geese follow the first moving object they see, during a 12-17 hour critical period after hatching. This process is known as imprinting, and suggests that attachment is innate and programmed genetically.

Imprinting has consequences, both for short term survival, and in the longer term forming internal templates for later relationships. Imprinting occurs without any feeding taking place. If no attachment has developed within 32 hours it's unlikely any attachment will ever develop.

To ensure imprinting had occurred Lorenz put all the goslings together under an upturned box and allowed them to mix. When the box was removed the two groups separated to go to their respective 'mothers' - half to the goose, and half to Lorenz.

Imprinting does not appear to be active immediately after hatching, although there seems to be a critical period during which imprinting can occur. Hess (1958) showed that although the imprinting process could occur as early as one hour after hatching, the strongest responses occurred between 12 and 17 hours after hatching, and that after 32 hours the response was unlikely to occur at all. Lorenz and Hess believe that once imprinting has occurred it cannot be reversed, nor can a gosling imprint on anything else.

Explanations of Attachment

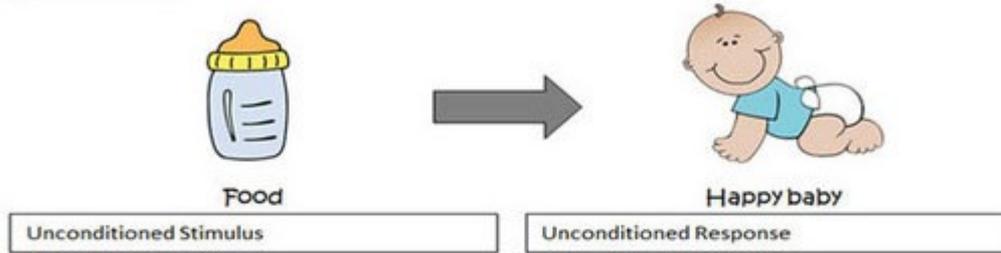
Learning Theory

AO1

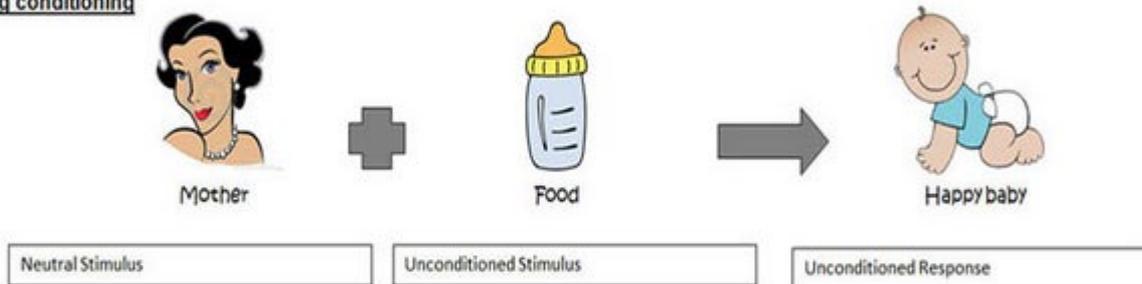
Dollard & Miller (1950) state attachment is a learned behavior that is acquired through both classical and operant conditioning. It is a nurture theory. According to classical conditioning food (UCS) produces pleasure (UCR). The child simply associates food and mother together. The mother becomes the conditioned stimulus and happiness becomes the conditioned response...attachment has formed.

Attachment by Classical Conditioning

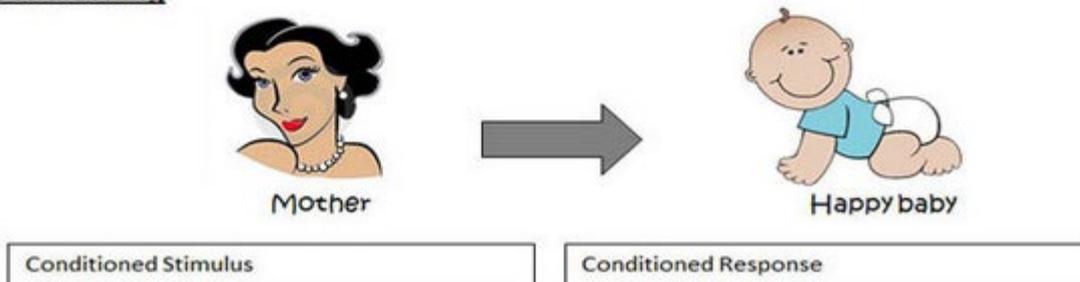
1. Before conditioning



2. During conditioning



3. After conditioning



Attachment can also be learned by operant conditioning. The presence of the caregiver is reinforcing for the infant. The infant gains pleasure / reward as they are being fed. The behavior of the infant is reinforcing for the caregiver (the caregiver gains pleasure from smiles etc. – reward). The reinforcement process is therefore reciprocal (two way) and strengthens the emotional bond / attachment between the two.

Dollard & Miller (1950) used the term secondary drive hypothesis to describe the processes of learning an attachment through operant and classical conditioning. Secondary drive hypothesis explains how primary drives which are essential for survival, such as eating when hungry, become associated with secondary drives such as emotional closeness. They extended the theory to explain that attachment is a two way process that the caregiver must also learn, and this occurs through negative reinforcement when the caregiver feels pleasure because the infant is no longer distressed.

Schaffer and Emerson found less than half of infants had a primary attachment to the person who usually fed them.

Harlow's research suggested monkeys became attached to the soft surrogate mother rather than the one who fed it. This goes against the learning theory of attachment.

Lorenz found goslings imprinted on the first moving object they saw which suggest attachment is innate and not learnt.

Bowlby's Monotropic Theory

AO1

[Bowlby's monotropic theory of attachment](#) suggests attachment is important for a child's survival. Attachment behaviors in both babies and their caregivers have evolved through natural selection. This means infants are biologically programmed with innate behaviors that ensure that attachment occurs.

Critical Period

This theory also suggests that there is a **critical period** for developing an attachment (about 0 - 2.5 years). If an attachment has not developed during this time period then it may well not happen at all.

Monotropy

A child has an innate (i.e. inborn) need to attach to one main attachment figure. This is called **monotropy**. This concept of monotropy suggests that there is one relationship which is more important than all the rest. Although Bowlby did not rule out the possibility of other attachment figures for a child, he did believe that there should be a primary bond which was much more important than any other (usually the mother).

Other attachments may develop in a hierarchy below this. An infant may therefore have a primary monotropy attachment to its mother, and below her the hierarchy of attachments may include its father, siblings, grandparents, etc.

Internal Working Model

The child's relationship with a primary caregiver provides an **internal working model**

which influences later relationships. This internal working model is a cognitive framework comprising mental representations for understanding the world, self and others. A person's interaction with others is guided by memories and expectations from their internal model which influence and help evaluate their contact with others.

There are three main features of the internal working model: (1) a model of others as being trustworthy, (2) a model of the self as valuable, and (3) a model of the self as effective when interacting with others. Around the age of three these seem to become part of a child's personality and thus affects their understanding of the world and future interactions with others.

AO3

Konrad Lorenz (1935) supports Bowlby's monotropic theory as the attachment process of imprinting is an innate process which has a critical period. Also, the geese also attached to a single person/animal or object, thus showing monotropic behavior. However, [Rutter's Romanian Orphan Study](#) showed that attachments can form after the critical period.

The idea of monotropy and hierarchy is supported by research into attachments formed by the Efe tribe of Congo. Efe women share the care of infants in the tribe and take turns to breast feed them, however the infants return to their natural mother at night and form a stable bond with the mother.

Use of contradictory evidence: eg Schaffer and Emerson's findings re multiple attachments

Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation study provides evidence for the existence of internal working model. A secure child will develop a positive internal working model of itself because it has received sensitive emotional care from its primary attachment figure. An insecure-avoidant child will develop an internal working model in which it sees itself as unworthy because its primary attachment figure has reacted negatively to it during the sensitive period for attachment formation.

Implications (including economic implications) of monotropy theory: eg role of fathers, mothers returning to employment, use of daycare etc.

The importance of monotropy is overemphasised – Thomas questions the benefits of monotropy and suggests having a network of attachments to support infants and their needs and Van Ijzendoorn argued that a stable network of adults can provide better care than one mother – The theory lacks value and may require adjustment.

Ainsworth's Strange Situation

AO1

Procedure

Ainsworth and Bell (1971) conducted a controlled observation recording the reactions of a child and mother (caregiver), who were introduced to a strange room with toys. In the **strange situation** about 100 middle-class American infants and their mothers took part. The infant's behavior was observed during a set of pre-determined activities.

The Strange Situation procedure involved the child experiencing eight 'episodes' of approximately 3 minutes each.

The child is observed playing for 20 minutes while caregivers and strangers enter and leave the room, recreating the flow of the familiar and unfamiliar presence in most children's lives. Observers noted the child's willingness to explore, separation anxiety, stranger anxiety and reunion behavior.

Ainsworth & Bell observed from the other side of a one-way mirror so that the children did not know that they were being observed.

Findings

	Secure	Resistant	Avoidant
Separation Anxiety	Distressed when mother leaves	Intense distress when the mother leaves	No sign of distress when the the mother leaves
Stranger Anxiety	Avoidant of stranger when alone, but friendly when the mother is present	The infant avoids the stranger - shows fear of the stranger	The infant is okay with the stranger and plays normally when the stranger is present
Reunion Behavior	Positive and happy when mother returns	The infant approaches the mother, but resists	The Infant shows little interest when the mother

		contact, may even push her away	returns
Other	Uses the mother as a safe base to explore their environment	The infant cries more and explores less than the other two types	The mother and stranger are able to comfort the infant equally well
% of infants	70%	15%	15%

Types of Attachment

Secure Resistant

The main characteristics of this attachment type are:

- (i) Infants are upset when left alone by the mother.
- (ii) Infants are happy when mother returns and seek contact with the mother.
- (iii) Infants avoid the stranger when alone, but friendly when the mother is present.
- (iv) The infants uses the mother as a safe base to explore their environment.

This type of attachment occurs because the mother meets the emotional needs of the infant.

Insecure Avoidant

The main characteristics of this attachment type are:

- (i) Infants are unconcerned by mother's absence when she leaves the room.
- (ii) Infants shows little interest when they are reunited with the mother (i.e. she returns to the room).
- (iii) Infants are strongly avoidant of mother and stranger, showing no motivation to

interact with either adult. The stranger is treated similar to the mother (does not seek contact).

This type of attachment occurs because the mother ignores the emotional needs of the infant.

Insecure Resistant / Ambivalent

The main characteristics of this attachment type are:

- (i) infants are clingy to their mother in a new situation and are not willing to explore – suggesting that they do not have trust in her.
- (ii) they are extremely distressed when left alone by their mother.
- (iii) they cannot be comforted by a stranger and will not interact with them – they treat the stranger and the mother very differently.
- (iv) when the mother returns they are pleased to see her and go to her for comfort, but then cannot be comforted and may show signs of anger towards her.

This type of attachment occurs because the mother sometime meets the needs of the infant and sometimes ignores their emotional needs, i.e. the mother's behavior is inconsistent.

AO2 Scenario Question

Johan has been adopted at the age of 4. Before this he was in an orphanage where there was very little emotional care. He is now 6 years old. His parents have noticed that he behaves in the same way towards strangers than he does with them.

Johan hurt himself recently and he did not ask for them but accepted comfort from a man who stopped to help him.

What type of attachment is Johan displaying? What is the reason for this?

AO3

A problem of the study is that it lacks of population validity. The original study used

American infants. The study tells us about how this particular group behaves and cannot be generalised to the wider population and other cultures.

Another criticism of the study is that it has low ecological validity, and the results may not be applicable outside of the lab. The environment of the study was controlled and the eight scripted stages of the procedure (e.g. mum and stranger entering and leaving the room at set times) would be unlikely to happen in real life.

One strength of the study is that it is easy to replicate. This is because it follows a standardised procedure involving the 8 episodes of the mother and stranger entering the leaving the room.

Cultural Variations in Attachment

AO1

[Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg \(1988\)](#) wanted to investigate if attachment styles (secure and insecure) are universal (the same) across cultures, or culturally specific (vary considerably from place to place, due to traditions, the social environment, or beliefs about children).

They did not collect the data for their study, instead they analysed data from other studies using a method called meta analysis. Data from 32 studies in 8 different countries was analyzed.

All the 32 studies used the strange situation procedure to study attachment. Using a meta analysis (statistical technique) they calculated the average percentage for the different attachment styles (e.g. secure, avoidant, resistant) in each country.

Country	Number of studies	Percentage of each attachment type		
		Secure	Insecure-avoidant	Insecure-resistant
Great Britain	1	75	22	3
Germany	3	57	35	8
Netherlands	4	67	26	7
Sweden	1	74	22	4
Japan	2	68	5	27
Israel	2	64	7	29
United States	18	65	21	14
China	1	50	25	25
Mean		65	21	14

Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenburg (1988) meta-analysis of studies comparing attachment type across different cultures

Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenburg found that secure attachment was the majority of infants (70%). The lowest percentage of secure attachments was shown in China, and the highest in Great Britain. It was also found that Western countries that support independence such as Germany had high levels of insecure avoidant.

Whereas Eastern countries that are more culturally close, such as Japan, had quite high levels of insecure resistant. The exception to the pattern was China which an equal number of avoidant and resistant infants.

AO3

One problem is that many of the studies used in the meta analysis had biased samples which cannot claim to be representative of each culture. For example, only 36 infants were used in the Chinese study which is a very small sample size for such a populated country. Also most of the studies analyzed were from Western cultures.

The Strange Situation was created and tested in the USA, which means that it may be culturally biased (ethnocentric), as it will reflect the norms and values of American culture. This is a problem as it assumes that attachment behavior has the same meaning in all cultures, when in fact cultural perception and understanding of behavior differ greatly. For example, the belief that attachment is related to anxiety on separation. This may not be the case in other cultures, e.g. Japan.

There is significant variation of attachments within cultures: Van Ijzendoorn looked at multiple studies in each country, and found that every study produced different levels of each attachment classification. This intra-cultural variation suggests that it is an over

simplification to assume all children are brought up in the same way in particular country.

Bowlby's Theory of Maternal Deprivation

AO1

Bowlby's Maternal Deprivation Hypothesis suggests that continual disruption of the attachment between infant and primary caregiver (i.e. mother) could result in long term cognitive, social, and emotional difficulties for that infant. Bowlby originally believed the effects to be permanent and irreversible.

He argued that the first 2.5 years of life, the critical period, were crucial. If the child was separated from their primary attachment figure (often the mother) for an extended period of time and in the absence of substitute care damage was inevitable.

Use the acronym - ADDIDDAS to remember the effects of maternal deprivation: Aggression, Delinquency, Dwarfism, Intellectual retardation, Depression, Dependency, Affectionless Psychopathy, Social maladjustment.

Affectionless psychopathy is an inability show affection or concern for others, lack of shame or sense of responsibility. Such individuals act on impulse with little regard for the consequences of their actions. For example, showing no guilt for antisocial behavior.

The 44 Juvenile Thieves

Bowlby was a psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, working at the London Child Guidance Clinic in the 1930s and 1940s.

Aim: To investigate the long-term effects of maternal deprivation.

Procedure: He selected an opportunity sample of 88 children attending his clinic.

Group 1- thief group: 31 boys and 13 girls in the 'theft group' were referred to him because of their stealing.

Group 2- control group: 34 boys and 10 girls were referred to him because of emotional problems.

The two groups were matched for age and IQ.

The children and their parents were interviewed and tested by a psychiatrist (Bowlby), a psychologist and a social worker focusing specifically on their early life experiences.

Findings: 14 children from the theft group were identified as affectionless psychopaths, 12 of those had experienced prolonged separation of more than six months from their mothers in their first two years of life whereas only 5 of the 30 children not classified as affectionless psychopaths* had experienced separations. Out of the 44 children in the control group, only 2 had experienced prolonged separations and none of them were affectionless psychopaths.

AO2 Scenario Question

Anca is an orphan who has been adopted by a British couple. Before being adopted, Anca lived in an institution with lots of other children in very poor conditions. Her new parents are understandably concerned about how Anca's early experiences may affect her in the future.

Use your knowledge of the effects of institutionalisation to advise Anca's new parents about what to expect.

(5 marks)

You have to advise her parents on what to expect.

Answer

Provided by [PsychLogic Revision Notes](#)

“Apart from suffering maternal deprivation, because Anca lived in an institution with very poor conditions, she may have been mentally under-stimulated, malnourished and uncared for.

In a study of similar children conducted by Rutter, orphans scored worse than a control group on measures of physical, social and cognitive development.

Therefore, Anca may be physically and intellectually underdeveloped for her age and may show poor peer relations and disinhibited attachment - a form of insecure attachment where children do not discriminate between people to whom they try to attach to, being overly friendly, clingy and attention seeking.

However, if she does form an attachment at a fairly young age these negative effects may be reversed.”

AO2 Scenario Question

Laura is 2 years old, her mother died of cancer recently and she has not got any family to look after her. Her social worker, Phil is considering Laura's future.

Based on your knowledge of the maternal deprivation hypothesis what advice would you give Phil? Explain your answer.

AO3

Bowlby's Maternal Deprivation is supported by [Harlow's \(1958\) research with monkeys](#). He showed that monkeys reared in isolation from their mother suffered emotional and social problems in older age. The monkey's never formed an attachment (privation) and as such grew up to be aggressive and had problems interacting with other monkeys.

Due to Bowlby's theory a number of real life applications have been made: In orphanages now they have to take account of emotional needs, fostered children have to be kept in one stable home rather than being moved around. In maternity units mothers are now allowed to spend more time with their babies as well as if they have a sick child the visiting hours in hospital have been extended, parents can even stay overnight if they wish.

Critics such as Rutter have also accused Bowlby of not distinguishing between deprivation and privation – the complete lack of an attachment bond, rather than its loss. Rutter stresses that the quality of the attachment bond is the most important factor, rather than just deprivation in the critical period.

Bowlby assumed that physical separation on its own could lead to deprivation but Rutter

argues that it is the disruption of the attachment bond rather than the physical separation. This is supported by Radke-Yarrow (1985) who found that 52% of children whose mothers suffered with depression were insecurely attached. This figure raised to 80% when this occurred in a context of poverty (Lyons-Ruth, 1988).

This shows the influence of social factors. Bowlby did not take into account the quality of the substitute care. Deprivation can be avoided if there is good emotional care after separation. Hodges and Tizard's research (on privation / institutional care) shows that the effects of deprivation can be reserved.

Romanian orphan studies: effects of institutionalisation

AO1

Institutionalisation is the behaviour patterns of children who have been raised outside of the family home in an institution such as an orphanage or a residential children's home.

Note, you need to describe the effects of institutional care - this means the results of research studies rather than the procedure (i.e. what happened).

Rutter's Study

Procedure: Rutter (1998) studied Romanian orphans who had been placed in orphanages, aged 1-2 weeks old, with minimal adult contact. This was a Longitudinal study and natural experiment, using a group of around 100 Romanian orphans and assessed at ages 4, 6 and 11, then re-assessed 21 years later.

58 babies were adopted before 6 months old and 59 between the ages of 6-24 months old. 48 babies were adopted late between 2-4 years old. These were the 3 conditions Rutter used in his study.

Findings: Those who were adopted by British families before 6 months old showed 'normal' emotional development compared with UK children adopted at the same age.

Many adopted after 6 months old showed disinhibited attachments (e.g. attention seeking behavior towards all adults, lack of fear of strangers, inappropriate physical contact, lack of checking back to the parent in stressful situations) and had problems with peers.

Conclusion: This study suggests long-term consequences may be less severe than was once thought if children have the opportunity to form attachments. When children don't form attachments, the consequences are likely to be severe.

Note: Disinhibited attachment is where children don't discriminate between people they choose as attachment figures. The child doesn't seem to prefer his or her parents over other people, even strangers. The child seeks comfort and attention from virtually anyone, without distinction. They will treat strangers with overfriendliness and may be attention seeking.

AO3

This study provided detailed measurements through the use of interviews and observations of the children's behaviors. The problem is that it is not easy to find out information about the institutional experience for the child and therefore we don't know the extent of early privation experienced by these children.

Another problem with this type of study is that once the children were adopted they may not wish to take part in the study anymore so the results would not be representative.

The Bucharest Early Intervention Project

Procedure: Zeanah et al. (2005) assessed the attachment in 136 Romanian orphans aged between 12-31 months who had spent an average of 90% of their life in an institution and compared them to a control group who spend their life in a "normal family". The attachment type was measured using the Strange Situation.

Infants took part in the Strange Situation to assess attachment type. They

Findings: 74% of the control group was found to be securely attached but only 19% of the institutionalised group. 65% of this group were classified as disorganised attachment

(a type of insecure attachment were the children display an inconsistent pattern of behavior; sometimes they show strong attachment other times they avoid the caregiver).

The institutionalized children showed signs of disinhibited attachment.

AO3

There may be other factors – Other than emotional deprivation, the physical conditions of the Romanian orphans were appalling, the lack of cognitive stimulation would also affect their development – Most institutionalised children experience multiple risks thus maternal deprivation should not be over exaggerated.

The Influence of Early Attachment on Childhood and Adult Relationships: Including the Role of an Internal Working Model

According to Bowlby (1969) later relationships are likely to be a continuation of early attachment styles (secure and insecure) because the behavior of the infant's primary attachment figure promotes an internal working model of relationships which leads the infant to expect the same in later relationships.

Childhood Relationships

AO1

According to Bowlby's theory when we form our primary attachment we also make a mental representation of what a relationship is (internal working model) which we then use for all other relationships in the future i.e. friendships, working and romantic relationships.

In other words there will be continuity between early attachment experiences and later relationships. This is known as the continuity hypothesis.

Childhood Friendships

According to attachment theory, the child who has a secure attachment style should be more confident in interactions with friends.

AO3

Considerable evidence has supported this view. For example, the Minnesota study (2005) followed participants from infancy to late adolescence and found continuity between early attachment and later emotional/social behavior. Securely attached children were rated most highly for social competence later in childhood, were less isolated and more popular than insecurely attached children.

Hartup et.al (1993) argues that children with a secure attachment type are more popular at nursery and engage more in social interactions with other children. In contrast, insecurely attached children tend to be more reliant on teachers for interaction and emotional support.

An alternative explanation for continuity in relationships is the temperament hypothesis which argues that an infant's temperament affects the way a parent responds and so may be a determining factor in infant attachment type. The infant's temperament may explain their issues (good or bad) with relationships in later life.

Adult Relationships

AO1

Parenting Style

Research indicates an intergenerational continuity between adults attachment types and their children, including children adopting the parenting styles of their own parents. People tend to base their parenting style on the internal working model so attachment type tends to be passed on through generations of a family.

AO3

Research by Bailey (2007) found that the majority of women had the same attachment classification both to their babies and their own mothers.

Harlow's monkeys showed a link between poor attachment and later difficulties with parenting because they had a lack of an internal working model.

AO1

Romantic Relationships

There also appears to be continuity between early attachment styles and the quality of later adult romantic relationships. This idea is based upon the internal working model where an infant's primary attachment forms a model (template) for future relationships. The IWM influences a person's expectation of later relationships thus affects his attitudes towards them. In other words there will be continuity between early attachment experiences and later relationships.

AO3

Adult relationships are likely to reflect early attachment style. This is because the experience a person has with their caregiver in childhood would lead to the expectation of the same experiences in later relationships. This is illustrated in Hazan and Shaver's love quiz experiment. They conducted a study to collect information of participants' early attachment styles and their attitudes towards loving relationships.

They found that those who were securely attached as infants tended to have happy lasting relationships. On the other hand, insecurely attached people found adult relationships more difficult, tended to divorce and believed love was rare. This supports the idea that childhood experiences have significant impact on people's attitude toward later relationships.

An alternative explanation for continuity in relationships is the temperament hypothesis which argues that an infant's temperament affects the way a parent responds and so may be a determining factor in infant attachment type. The infant's temperament may explain their issues (good or bad) with relationships in later life.

This theory is accused of being reductionist because it assumes that people who are insecurely attached as infants would have poor quality adult relationships. This is not always the case. Researchers found plenty of people having happy relationships despite having insecure attachments. Therefore the theory might be an oversimplification.

Example Essays

Attachment Essays

Discuss research into the influence of early attachment on adult relationships

Discuss the usefulness of animal studies for investigating attachment

Discuss Bowlby's theory of attachment. Use learning theory as a part of your discussion

Exam Question Guides

Revision Resources

How To Write AQA Psychology Essays for 16 Marker Questions

How To Answer AQA Psychology Short Context Questions

How to Answer 'Design a Study' Research Methods Questions

Research Methods Exam Questions and Answers

Research Methods Exam Questions and Answers (48 marks)

Research Methods Exam Questions and Answers (24 marks)

How to Revise for Psychology A-level

Revision Notes

Paper 1: Introductory Topics

Social Influence

Memory

Attachment

Psychopathology

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

Biopsychology

Research Methods

Paper 3: Issues and Options

Issues & Debates

Schizophrenia

Aggression

Forensic Psychology

Relationships

Gender

Past Papers

AS Paper 1

2017 Exam Paper

2017 Mark Scheme

2017 Examiner Report

2016 Exam Paper

2016 Mark Scheme

2016 Examiner Report

A-Level Paper 1

2017 Exam Paper

2017 Mark Scheme

2017 Examiner Report

Assessment Objectives

AO1

Demonstrate knowledge

(a) demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.

(b) show a knowledge and understanding of psychological theories, terminology, concepts, studies and methods.

AO2

Application of knowledge

(a) apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures:

in a theoretical context

in a practical context

when handling qualitative data

when handling quantitative data

This skill area tests knowledge of research design and data analysis, and applying theoretical understanding of psychology to everyday/real-life examples.

Analyse, interpret and evaluate

(a) analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to:

make judgements and reach conclusions

develop and refine practical design and procedures.

Examples of how you can score AO3 marks

Whether or not theories are supported or refuted by valid research evidence.

After describing a theory go on to describe a piece of research evidence saying, 'X's study supports/refutes this theory...' and then describe the research study.

Contextualising how the topic in question relates to broader debates and approaches in Psychology.

For example, would they agree or disagree with a theory or the findings of the study?

Animal Research - This raises the issue of whether it's morally and/or scientifically right to use animals.

The main criterion is that benefits must outweigh costs.

Animal research also raises the issue of extrapolation. Can we generalize from studies on animals to humans as their anatomy & physiology is different from humans?

General criticisms and/or strengths of theories and studies.

E.g. 'Bandura's Bobo Doll studies are laboratory experiments and therefore criticisable on the grounds of lacking ecological validity'.

To gain marks for criticising study's methodologies the criticism must be contextualised: i.e. say why this is a problem in this particular study.

‘Therefore, the violence the children witnessed was on television and was against a doll not a human’.