

AQA Psychology A-level

Topic 3: Attachment

Notes



Part 1: Caregiver-infant interactions in humans: reciprocity and interactional synchrony

Reciprocity and Interactional Synchrony

Attachment = a strong **reciprocal** emotional bond between an infant and a primary care giver.

Reciprocal = two/both ways; the child has to bond with the mother, and the mother has to bond with the child for an attachment to form successfully. They must both be able to contribute to the relationship and generate a response, such as when a parent smiles at the child, the child would smile too. The importance of reciprocity was demonstrated by Brazleton et al, who found that children as young as 2 weeks old can attempt to copy their caregiver, who in turn responds to the child's signals two-thirds of the time (Feldman).

It has been said that reciprocity is important in teaching the child to communicate. It also allows the parent to better care for the child as they can detect certain cues from the baby and respond to their needs sooner and more effectively.

Interactional synchrony = when the infant and primary caregiver becomes synchronised in their interactions. Condon and Sander (1974) said that children can synchronise their movements with the sound of an adult's voice, and Brazleton et al demonstrated that young infants can copy the displayed distinctive facial expressions or gestures. The way the two interact changes slightly according to the rhythm, pitch, volume etc of the adult's speech.

This has been found to lead to better communication between the parent and child when the child is older.

- + Many of these studies used controlled observations. Specifically, Brazleton et al even filmed the interactions from different angles. This not only ensures a high level of detail and accuracy in the observations, but also allows valid conclusions to be drawn because inter-rater reliability can be established: independent observers can rewatch the tapes and compare their findings.
- The main issue with observations of such young children is that we do not know whether their actions are meaningful, especially since children as young as 2 weeks old have little or no motor coordination. Bremner drew the distinction between behavioural response and



behavioural understanding: just because an interaction appears to be reciprocal, does not mean that the child understands the purpose of either reciprocity or interactional synchrony.

Part 2: Stages of Attachment identified by Schaffer

Schaffer and Emerson's study (1964)

Aim	To identify stages of attachment/find a pattern in the development of an attachment between infants and parents
Participants	60 babies from Glasgow, all from the same estate.
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They analysed the interactions between the infants and carers • They interviewed the carers • The mother had to keep a diary to track the infant's behaviours based on the following measures: <p>Separation Anxiety - signs of distress when the carer leaving, and how much the infant needs to be comforted when the carer returns</p> <p>Stranger Anxiety - signs of distress as a response to a stranger arriving</p> <p>Social Referencing - how often the infant looks at their carer to check how they should respond to something new</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was a longitudinal study lasting 18 months • They visited the infants on a monthly basis and once again at the end of the 18 month period.



Findings/Conclusion

They found that the babies of parents/carers who had 'sensitive responsiveness' - (who were more sensitive to the baby's signals) - were more likely to have formed an attachment.

They found that sensitive responsiveness was more important than the amount of time spent with the baby, so infants formed more attachments with those who spent less time with them but were more sensitive to their needs than those who spent more time with them but were less sensitive.

Infants who had parents who responded to their needs quickly and spent more time interacting with the child had more intense attachments. Those who had parents who did not interact with their child at all had very weak attachments.

Attachments seemed to form when the carer communicates and plays with the child rather than when the carer feeds or cleans the child.

They also used their findings to come up with the different stages of attachment

- *Asocial stage (0-6 weeks)*

This is when the infant responds to objects and people similarly - but may respond more to faces and eyes.

- *Indiscriminate attachments (6 weeks – 6 months)*

This is when the infant develops more responses to human company. Although they can tell the difference between different people, they can be comforted by anyone.

- *Specific (7 months +)*

This is when the infants begins to prefer one particular carer and seeks for security, comfort and protection in particular people. They also start to show stranger anxiety and separation anxiety.

- *Multiple (10/11 months +)*

This is when the infant forms multiple attachments and seeks security, comfort and protection in multiple people. They may also show separation anxiety for multiple people.

They found that many of the infants reached this final stage by 10 months. The infants had attachments not only with their mothers, but their fathers, siblings, extended family members and family friends. Out of all the attachments the infants formed, they varied greatly in strength and value/importance to the child.



Evaluation

P = lacks population validity.

E = 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.

E = cannot be generalised, and so is a limited explanation of attachment development.

L = Schaffer's stages of attachment lack both population validity and temporal validity - parenting techniques have significantly changed since the 1950s, such as through the influence of Bowlby's work on attachment, and so caution should be taken when generalising the findings.

P = may lack internal validity.

E = it uses the self report method as the parents kept a daily diary.

E = therefore the accuracy of data collection may not be the best. The parents were busy so may not have included the full details. They may also be subject to social desirability bias, in that they would skew their reports so they appear to be closer to what they see as socially acceptable or desirable i.e. they may believe that it is better if the infant responds to them, so they would report that it happens sooner than it actually did, or they may intentionally not report any negative experiences they have. There may also be demand characteristics as they try to tailor their report to fit or go against what they think is the aim/hypothesis of the study.

L = Therefore, caution should be taken when placing confidence in the conclusions drawn from this study.

P = the asocial stage cannot be studied objectively.

E = children as young as 6 weeks lack basic motor co-ordination skills, meaning that we cannot establish whether their responses, such as 'separation anxiety', are deliberate.

E = Bremner drew the distinction between behavioural response and behavioural understanding. Just because a child appears to have a bond with their primary caregiver, does not mean that such a bond exists or that the child understands the significance of such a bond.

L = Therefore, it is important not to draw causal conclusions!

Part 3: The Role of the Father

- Schaffer and Emerson found that 75% of the infants in their study formed a secondary attachment to their father by the age of 18 months, with 29% doing so within a month of forming a primary attachment, as demonstrated by separation anxiety. This suggests that the father is important, but is unlikely to be the first person to which the child develops an attachment to.
- However, this does not mean that the father cannot become the primary attachment figure, as suggested by Tiffany Field. She observed interactions between infants and their primary caregiver mothers or fathers, and found that primary caregivers, regardless of gender, were more attentive towards the infant and spent more time holding and smiling at them. This suggests that although mothers are often expected to become primary attachment figures, this does not always have to be the case!
 - There is still a lack of agreement over the extent of the influence of the father as a primary attachment figure. For example, MacCallum and Golombok demonstrated that children growing up in homosexual or single-parent families were not different compared to children



with two heterosexual parents. If the father was so crucial in the development of an attachment with the infant, then we would not expect these findings. This suggests that the exact role of the father is still disputed.

— It could also be that the gender of the primary caregiver is largely dictated by society, where women in particular are expected to be caring and sensitive, and biology, where women have higher levels of oestrogen and lower levels of testosterone compared to men. Therefore, this suggests that there are social and biological constraints on who the primary attachment figure is.

— Research into the importance of primary attach figures is socially sensitive, as later abnormalities in development (such as intellectual disability or affection less psychopathy) are often blamed on the parent(s). This means that a single father or mother may be pressured to return to work at a later point in order to increase the likelihood that their child will form a secure attachment.

Part 4: Animal Studies of Attachment: Lorenz and Harlow

- Lorenz demonstrated the concept of imprinting - this is where animals will attach to the first moving object or person they see directly after birth. Lorenz showed that imprinting occurred in a clutch of goose eggs, where half attached to and followed Lorenz after seeing him as the first moving person after birth. Imprinting/ the formation of an attachment must occur within the critical period of attachment development, which is usually the first 30 months of life, after which an attachment is not possible and the consequences of a failure to form an attachment are irreversible.

- Sexual imprinting is also a similar idea, where animals will attach to and display sexual behaviours towards the first moving object or animal they see directly after birth. Lorenzi reported of a case of a peacock who was born surrounded by turtles, and so only desired to mate with turtles in later life.

— There are significant issues associated with trying to generalise findings from Lorenz's studies. For example, mammalian attachment systems are different to that of birds, because mammals can potentially form attachments at any time during their lives and at a greater emotional intensity. Therefore, this suggests that such findings have low ecological validity because they cannot be generalised beyond the research setting within which they were found.

— Sexual imprinting is not as permanent as Lorenz theorised. For example, Guiton et al demonstrated that chickens who'd imprinted on washing up gloves eventually learned to prefer to mate with other chickens, despite this initial imprinting. This means that learning and experience are more important factors in attachment formation than imprinting.

- Harlow demonstrated the importance of contact comfort with rhesus monkeys and two 'Iron Maidens' (as pictured). The researchers found that



when the monkeys were scared, irrespective of which wire monkey was dispensing milk, the baby monkeys would always seek comfort from the cloth-bound mother. This led to the conclusion that contact comfort was more important than food in the development of attachments!

- Harlow also reported developmental issues associated with the infant monkeys, even those who had the option of choosing the cloth-bound mother. The researchers found that such monkeys were less skilled at mating, were aggressive towards their own children and would be socially reclusive. This also demonstrated the importance of a secure attachment to a primary attachment figure within the critical period i.e. the first 30 months of life.
- + Harlow's research has significant practical value, especially in the design of zoos and the care of animals in shelters. His research demonstrated the importance of attachment figures and intellectual stimulation, alongside contact comfort, which means that zoos should ensure that animals have the opportunity to form such attachments in order to ensure healthy development.
- Despite ethical issues not detracting from the quality or utility of the research (in terms of reliability and validity), there were some significant ethical breaches. For example, long-term psychological harm was inflicted upon the monkeys, in the form of later difficulties mating and forming secure attachments, which Harlow most likely envisioned. In such cases, a cost-benefit analysis should be conducted to assess whether the ethical costs are smaller or larger than the benefits of an improved understanding of attachment.

Part 5: Explanations of Attachment: Learning Theory and Bowlby's Monotropic Theory

The Learning Theory of Attachment

In line with an empiricist approach, learning theory views children as being born with blank slates. Everything we know is learned through our experiences, so a baby has to learn to form an attachment with its mother. We learn to form attachments through classical and operant conditioning, in line with learning theory and behaviourism. This is the idea of 'cupboard love' i.e. where we form attachments to the person providing us with food. Hunger is a primary drive and attachment is the result of an association formed between the caregiver and the satisfaction of primary drive reduction i.e. feeling less hungry.

Classical conditioning (like Pavlov's dog):

- By the process of classical conditioning, the baby forms an association between the mother (a neutral stimulus) and the feeling of pleasure that comes with being fed (an innate unconditioned response)
- At first, the baby feels comforted by food
- However, each time it is fed, the mother is also present (e.g. breast feeding)
- It quickly associates the mother with the pleasure of being fed
- Before long, the mother becomes a conditioned stimulus and also causes pleasure for the child
- This means that the baby feels happier when the mother is near
- This is the beginning of the formation of an attachment

<u>Pavlov's dog</u>	
Food = Drooling	
(unconditioned stimulus)	(unconditioned response)
Food + Bell = Drool	
Bell = Drool	
(conditioned stimulus)	(conditioned response)
<u>Attachment formation</u>	
Food = Pleasure	
Food + Mother = Pleasure	
Mother = pleasure	



Operant conditioning (like Skinner's rats):

- The child carries out an action such as crying, which triggers a response, such as the mother coming to comfort or feed the baby
- The more this happens, the more that the action is reinforced, as the child associates the mother with those rewards
- i.e the reward for crying encourages the child to cry more to receive more rewards like attention and food
- Food is the primary reinforcer
- The mother is the secondary reinforcer

Skinner's rats

The rats were starved and put in a box containing food and a lever. Every time the rat passed a certain line in the box, it would be given food. The line was moved further from the rat to make the task more difficult. The rat learned to pass the line to be rewarded. Next, food was only given if the rat touched the lever. The rat learned to touch the lever. Then, food was only given if the rat actually pulled the lever. Finally, the rat learned to pull the lever.

Key words:

Stimulus = event causes a response

Response = the action that happens as a result of a stimulus

Innate = natural, from birth

— There is contradictory evidence from animal studies. For example, Harlow demonstrated that contact comfort was more important than food in the development of an attachment, where the baby monkeys formed a primary attachment to the cloth-bound mother, regardless of which mother was dispensing milk. This suggests that there is no unconditioned stimulus (of food) and even if there is, it has very little influence upon the formation of attachments.

— There is also contradictory evidence from human studies! For example, Brazleton et al emphasised the importance of interactional synchrony and reciprocity in the secure formation of attachments between a primary caregiver and infant - these are universal features of attachment. Attachments form not to the person who spends the most time with the infant, but rather the person who is most attentive to the infant and deals with their signals most skilfully. This means that the unconditioned stimulus of food is irrelevant in most cases!

— The focus on unconditioned and conditioned stimuli means that there is a loss of focus. Interactional synchrony and reciprocity are both universal features of attachment and should be treated as such, as demonstrated by Feldman and Brazleton. Learning theory does not account for these aspects and so is a limited explanation of only some aspects of attachment formation.

Part 6: Bowlby's Monotropic Theory of Attachment

This is the evolutionary theory of attachment. It states that attachments are innate, i.e you are born with it. The acronym, ASCMI (like 'ask me'), summarises the theory.

A = Adaptive – attachments are an advantage, or beneficial to survival as it ensures a child is kept safe, warm and fed

S = Social releasers – e.g. a cute face on a baby. These unlock the innate tendency for adults to care for a child because they activate the mammalian attachment system.

C = Critical period – This is the time in which an attachment can form i.e. up to 2.5 to 3 years old. Bowlby suggested that if an attachment is not formed in this time, it never will. If an attachment does not form, you will be socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically stunted.



Bowlby demonstrated this in his 44 juvenile thieves study, where maternal deprivation was associated with affectionless psychopathy and intellectual disability.

M = Monotropy – means ‘one carer’. Bowlby suggested that you can only form one special intense attachment (this is typically but not always with the mother). This attachment is unique, stronger and different to others. Maternal deprivation, which is characterised by a lack of a mother figure during the critical period for attachment formation, results in emotional and intellectual developmental deficits i.e. affection less psychopathy and intellectual disability.

I = Internal working model – This is an area in the brain, a mental schema for relationships where information that allows you to know how to behave around people is stored. Internal working models are our perception of the attachment we have with our primary attachment figure. Therefore, this explains similarities in attachment patterns across families. Those who have a dysfunctional internal working model will seek out dysfunctional relationships and behave dysfunctionally within them.

+ There is supporting evidence for the importance of internal working models, as presented by Bailey et al. Through the observation of 99 mothers and the recording of their children’s attachment type using the Strange Situation, the researchers found that poor, insecure attachments coincided with the mothers themselves reporting poor attachments with their own parents. Therefore, this suggests that internal working models are likely to be formed during this first, initial attachment and that this has a significant impact upon the ability of children to become parents themselves later on in life.

— Monotropy is an example of socially sensitive research. Despite Bowlby not specifying that the primary attachment figure must be the mother, it often is (in 65% of cases). Therefore, this puts pressure on working mothers to delay their return to work in an effort to ensure that their child develops a secure attachment. Any developmental abnormalities in terms of attachment are therefore blamed on the mother by default. This suggests that the idea of monotropy may stigmatise ‘poor mothers’ and pressure them to take responsibility.

— Monotropy may not be evident in all children. For example, Schaffer and Emerson found that a small minority of children were able to form multiple attachments from the outset. This idea is also supported by van Ijzendoorn and Kronenberg, who found that monotropy is scarce in collectivist cultures where the whole family is involved in raising and looking after the child. This means that monotropy is unlikely to be a universal feature of infant-caregiver attachments, as believed by Bowlby, and so is a strictly limited explanation of some cases of attachments.

Part 7: Ainsworth’s ‘Strange Situation’

Mary Ainsworth designed a study called ‘the strange situation’ as a procedure to assess how securely attached a child was to its caregiver, and if it is insecurely attached, to assess which type of insecure attachment it has. This was a controlled observation conducted through a two-way mirror.

There were seven stages which each lasted 3 minutes.

1. The caregiver enters a room, places the child on the floor and sits on a chair. The caregiver does not interact with the child unless the infant seeks attention.



2. A stranger enters the room, talks to the caregiver and then approaches the child with a toy.
3. The caregiver exits the room. If the infant plays the stranger observes without interruption. If the child is passive, the stranger attempts to interest them in the toy. If they show distress the stranger attempts to comfort them.
4. The caregiver returns while the stranger then leaves.
5. Once the infant begins to play again, the caregiver may leave the room, leaving the child alone briefly.
6. The stranger enters the room again and repeats behaviour mentioned in step 3 (observing, engaging, comforting as needed)
7. The stranger leaves and the caregiver returns.
The “strange situation” places the child in a mildly stressful situation in order to observe 4 different types of behaviour which are separation anxiety, stranger anxiety, willingness to explore and reunion behaviour with the caregiver.

Using this procedure, Ainsworth was able to identify 3 types of attachments:

- Secure = this was the most popular attachment type (with both types of insecure attachments being equally as common). This was found when the infant showed some separation anxiety when the parent/caregiver leaves the room but can be easily soothed when the parent/caregiver returns. A securely attached infant is also able to play independently but used their parent/caregiver as a safe base to explore a new environment. This usually accounts for 65% of children.
- Insecure resistant = this is when the infant becomes very distressed and tries to follow them when the parent/caregiver leaves, but when they return, the infant repeatedly switches from seeking and rejecting social interaction and intimacy with them. They are also less inclined to explore new environments. This usually accounts for 3% of children, and so is the least common attachment type.
- Insecure avoidant = this is when the infant shows no separation anxiety when their carer leaves the room and shows no stranger anxiety when a stranger enters the room. They may show anger and frustration towards their carer and actively avoid social interaction and intimacy with them. They are able to explore and play independently easily, no matter who is present. This



accounts for around 20% of children.

Evaluation

P = It only measured the relationship type with one attachment figure

E = They only used mothers and their child in the study

E = This can mean that the wrong attachment type for a child can be identified, as although they may not be so strongly attached to the mother, they may be securely attached with their father or an extended family member. The study wrongly assumes that the child will be closer to the mother than any other adult figure. Therefore, the study lacks internal validity, as it does not always correctly measure a child's attachment type with their primary caregiver.

P = There are ethical issues involved.

E = 20% of children cried desperately at one point.

E = This highlights how it is ethically inappropriate, as a large proportion of the participants could have experienced psychological harm. This is unethical as it could cause long term emotional damage to the child, for the sake of a simple study.

L = Despite ethical issues not detracting from the quality of the research (i.e. in terms of validity and reliability), it is important to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to assess whether the ethical costs are smaller than the benefits of an improved knowledge within this subject field.

P = The study lacks population validity.

E = It was primarily based on Western culture almost all of the studies were carried out in America.

E = It therefore suffers from cultural bias, so we are less able to generalise the findings and criteria to other cultures. This is particularly the case due to the individualist-collectivist divide between Western and Eastern countries, alongside cultural differences in upbringing and the experiences which the child is exposed to.

L = This suggests that the findings are culture bound and also lack ecological validity, because the results can only be generalised to the research settings within which they were found.

P = The study also lacks ecological validity.

E = It was conducted in a lab setting, so all the variables were highly controlled.

E = Despite the strict control over confounding and extraneous variables increasing the confidence that can be placed in drawing a 'cause and effect' relationship between the two outcomes. This is not representative of real life so it lacks mundane realism and cannot be generalised to reality.

E = However, the high control of variables means it is easily replicable so the findings are highly reliable. This increases confidence in the idea that the findings were not simply a 'one-off' but were statistically significant.



L = This increases the confidence that can be placed in the attachment classification of children assessed using the Strange Situation!

Part 8: Cultural Variations in Attachment - Van Ijzendoorn

Country (number of studies)	Percentage of each attachment type		
	Secure	Avoidant	Resistant
USA (18)	65	21	14
UK (1)	75	22	3
Holland (4)	67	26	7
Germany (3)	57	35	8
Japan (2)	68	5	27
China (1)	50	25	25
Israel (2)	64	7	29
Sweden (1)	74	22	4

• Van Ijzendoorn and Kronenberg (1988) conducted a meta-analysis of 32 studies using 8 countries, all investigating the patterns of attachment across a variety of cultures. The findings are displayed to the right.

• Several other studies have also been conducted into the distribution of attachment patterns across various cultures. For example, Simonella et al demonstrated

that the proportion of securely attached children in Italy was only 50%, which was lower than expected and lower than the predictions formed across a variety of different cultures. The researchers suggested that these changes may be due to changing cultural and social expectations of mothers - more mothers are working and are choosing to use professional childcare to enable them to do so, thus decreasing the likelihood that their children will be able to form a secure attachment with a consistent primary caregiver.

- Similarly, Jin et al (2012) found that when the Strange Situation was used to assess 87 Korean infants aged 6 months old, the vast majority of insecurely attached children were actually classed as insecure resistant, as opposed to insecure avoidant. Therefore, since this pattern is similar to that of Japan, this suggests that similarities in child-rearing practices are influential in establishing patterns of attachment.
 - The study may lack ecological validity i.e. it did not measure what it intended to measure. The study attempted to measure cultural variations in attachment through studying different countries. However, multiple different cultures can exist within the same country, and this cultural variation was unlikely to be acknowledged. For example, Sagi and van Ijzendoorn found that rural areas had an overrepresentation of insecure-resistant individuals, whereas urban areas had similar attachment patterns to the Western world. This therefore suggests that van Ijzendoorn and Kronenberg did not account for such differences and so are more likely to be studying differences between countries of attachment patterns, rather than culture.
 - The Strange Situation has been criticised as being culture-bound, in that the sample was biased (only used American children) and so the findings are unlikely to be generalised to other cultures, such as collectivist cultures. This is an example of imposed etic because Ainsworth assumed that the stages of attachment she developed could be universally applied to all children across all cultures, whereas this is unlikely to be the case.
 - + The findings of van Ijzendoorn and Kronenberg can be considered reliable due to the significantly large samples that they used i.e. 1990 children. This replicability increases the validity and faith in the conclusions drawn because it decreases the likelihood that the observed results were simply due to chance or a 'one-off'.



Part 9: Bowlby's Theory of Maternal Deprivation

This is the theory that an attachment is essential for healthy psychological and emotional development. It states that there will be many negative consequences of maternal deprivation (being deprived/separated from a mother-like figure), such as:

- An inability to form attachments in the future (see the Internal Working Model)
- Affectionless psychopathy (being unable to feel remorse)
- Delinquency (behavioural problems in the child's teenage years)
- Problems with cognitive (brain) development

Attachments are commonly disrupted in situations when a child is put in day care, has prolonged stays in hospital care or were put in institutional care to be separated from abusive/neglectful or unintentionally absent parents. This can have temporary effects on the child, or permanent but fairly mild harm. Privation is when a child fails to form any attachments at all. This has been said to be more harmful to a child. One of the most common causes of privation has been institutional care.

In order to assess the effects of maternal deprivation, Bowlby conducted his 44 juvenile thieves study. He found that out of 44 thieves, 14 displayed signs of affectionless psychopathy and 12 of these had suffered from maternal deprivation during the critical period of attachment formation i.e. the first 30 months of life. This was compared to only 5 affectionless psychopaths in the remaining 30 thieves. Therefore, on this basis, Bowlby believed that early maternal deprivation caused affectionless psychopathy and consequently, criminality!

— Lewis et al disagreed with Bowlby's conclusion that affectionless psychopathy and maternal deprivation caused criminality. Through collecting qualitative data from interviews conducted with 500 juveniles, the researchers found no link between maternal deprivation and a difficulty in forming relationships in later life. This suggests that Bowlby may have made incorrect causal conclusions.

— Bowlby's 44 juvenile thieves study suffers from several methodological limitations. One of these includes researcher bias - Bowlby was aware of what he wanted to find and so may have phrased the interview questions in a way which influenced the respondents to reply in a certain way i.e. leading questions. Secondly, Bowlby also based his theory of maternal deprivation from interviews collected from war-orphans. This does not control for the confounding variable of poor quality care in orphanages or post-traumatic stress disorder, which may have had a larger influence on the children's development rather than simply maternal deprivation.

— The effects of the critical period may not be as concrete as Bowlby originally believed. For example, the case of two twins locked away in cupboards in Czechoslovakia for the first 7 years of their lives was reported by Koluchova. Despite the obvious trauma and maternal deprivation which occurred for an extended period of time, even exceeding the critical period, the researchers found that with appropriate fostering, the twins made a full psychological recovery. Therefore, the effects of maternal deprivation are not always so clear-cut.



Part 10: Effects of Institutionalisation

Children in institutional care are very likely to experience privation.

A number of such studies into children in care all show that young children admitted to institutional care usually respond with acute distress. An example of a study is by Hodges and Tizard.

Hodges and Tizard, 1989

Aim	To observe the effects of institutionalisation on how infants form attachments and the quality of attachments they form
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They followed a group of 65 British children from early life to adolescence. • The children has been placed in one institution when they were less than four months old. • At this age children have not yet formed attachments. • There was an explicit policy in the institution against the ‘caretakers’ forming attachments with the children. • An early study of the children found that 70% were described as not able ‘to care deeply about anyone’. • Thus we can conclude that most, if not all, of these children had experience early emotional privation (a lack of attachment rather than simply a disruption of attachments).
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children were assessed at regular intervals up to the age of 16. • Some of the children remained in the institution, but most had left it (where ‘ex-institutional’), and had either been adopted or restored to their original families. • The ‘restored’ children were less likely to have formed attachments with their mothers, but the adopted children were as closely attached to their parents as both groups of ex-institutional children had problems with peers. • They were less likely to have a special friend and less likely by other children. • They were also more quarrelsome and more likely to be bullies, and also sought more attention from adults (a sign of disinhibited attachment).
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These findings suggests that early privation had a negative effect on the ability to form relationships even when given good subsequent emotional care. • This supports Bowlby’s view that the failure to form attachments during the sensitive period of development has an irreversible effect on emotional development. • The children cope well at home, when the other person in the relationship was working hard on their behalf, but the same was not true for peer relationships



Romanian Orphan Studies

Wars in Eastern Europe have provided more opportunities to study the effects of institutionalisation on attachment, as many children have been left homeless and put into care. One example of a study was by Rutter et al in a Romanian orphanage.

Rutter et al (2007)

Aim	To investigate the effects of institutionalisation in a group of 165 Romanian orphans.
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studied a group of about 165 Romanian orphans and assessed them at four, six and eleven years old, in terms of psychological, emotional and physical development. These results were compared to 50 children adopted in Britain at roughly the same time, which acted as a control group.
Findings	The majority of orphans were malnourished. The mean IQ was dependent upon the age of which the orphans were adopted. For example, those adopted before 6 months of age had an IQ 25 points higher than those adopted after 2 years of age, as also demonstrated by Goldman. Those adopted after 6 months displayed signs of disinhibited attachment (a type of disorganised attachment), whereas those adopted before 6 months rarely showed such signs. This is characterised by attention-seeking and affectionate behaviour being shown towards any or all adults, and is thought to be the result of having too many caregivers within the critical period of attachment formation, so a secure attachment cannot be developed.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rutter et al demonstrated the importance and effects of adopting orphans at different ages, which was directly related to their rate of recovery. A full recovery could be made if adoption occurred before the age of 6 months. This includes both emotional and intellectual developmental recoveries. These conclusions were supported by the Bucharest Early Intervention project carried out by Zeanah et al (2005), who demonstrated that 65% of their sample of 95 orphans displayed signs of disorganised attachments, compared to only 20% of the healthy, non-deprived control group.



Evaluation	<p>+ The main advantage of Rutter's study, compared to other adoption studies, is that he was able to study the effects of institutionalisation in isolation through removing the confounding and extraneous variables of PTSD and trauma often associated with war orphans. This increases the confidence that researchers can place in drawing reliable conclusions about the effects of institutionalisation and the displayed differential rates of recovery.</p> <p>— A key methodological issue associated with Rutter's study is the focus on short-term recovery, rather than long-term rates. For example, just because a child adopted at the age of 3 years olds does not exhibit normal intellectual development at age 4, does not necessarily mean that the child has an intellectual disability or that they will not achieve normal development at a later point in their lives. Therefore, to increase the validity of the conclusions drawn, it would have been better to carry out the study across a longer time scale.</p> <p>— Some researchers have criticised the findings from Rutter's study as having very low ecological validity because the conditions of the Romanian orphanages were especially poor. For example, the orphanages did not provide any intellectual stimulation for the orphans, which may have had a larger impact on their intellectual development compared to maternal deprivation as a single cause. Cases of abuse were also frequently reported. Since the average orphanage would have considerably better conditions, this suggests that the findings cannot be generalised beyond the research setting they were found in.</p>
------------	---

Many of those Romanian orphans adopted after six months showed disinhibited attachment and had problems with peers. This suggests that long-term consequences may be less severe than was once thought if children have the opportunity to form attachments. However, when children do not form attachments (i.e continuing failure of attachment) then the consequences are likely to be severe.

Attachment Disorder

Attachment disorder has recently been recognised as a distinct psychiatric condition and included in the DSM. It is essentially what psychologists like Spitz and Bowlby and Rutter have been writing about for about 50 years: when some children experience disruptions of early attachments this affects their social and emotional development. Children with attachment disorder have:

- No preferred attachment figure.
- An inability to interact and relate to others that is evident before the age of five.
- Experience of severe neglect or frequent change of caregivers

These are two kinds of attachment disorders:

- Reactive or inhibited: shy and withdrawn, unable to cope with most social situations
- Disinhibited attachment: over-friendly and attention seeking



Part 11: Influence of Early Attachment on Childhood and Adult Relationships

Bowlby suggested that there will be continuity (a similarity or connection) between your experiences as a baby/your attachment type or quality, and your relationships later in life (in childhood and adulthood). These relationships include friendships, romantic relationships and family relationships etc. He said that when we form our first main attachments, we form an internal working model, which is a mental template for what a relationship is and how to behave.

Early attachments have also been found to determine various personality types, which can influence many parts of your life, but one notable part is your parenting style when you have a child of your own. It has been found that we are more likely to raise our children similarly to how we were raised, as our internal working model was built using our parent's' parenting style as a template, which was demonstrated by Bailey et al (2007). A result of this is that you and your child will have a similar attachment type to that of you and your parents. This is why attachment style tends to be passed on through generations of a family.

The internal working model affects your expectations of others and subsequently your attitude towards them, which would have an impact on the quality of romantic relationships in adulthood. For example, someone who is insecure resistant may have trust issues and may find it hard to commit to one person.

A child's internal working model can lead to the development of an attachment disorder. If they experience abuse or neglect in their childhood, they may grow up to resist or reject intimacy in their adult relationships. It may also lead to a lack of responsiveness or excessive over-familiarity.

Evaluation

P = This is supported by Bailey (2007).

E = They found that the majority of women (out of the 99 studied) had the same attachment classification both to their babies and their own mothers.

E = This supports the idea of continuity, as suggested by Bowlby. The internal working models that we develop in response to our first attachment to our primary attachment figure contain our perceptions of what a normal relationship looks like, and so we seek out such relationships in accordance with our internal working model.

P = Hazan and Shaver supported the idea that the quality/type of early attachments have a significant impact on our ability as adults to form attachments.

E = Hazan and Shaver found that those who were securely attached as children had happier and longer lasting relationships, and those who were insecurely attached had more divorces and tended to believe love was rare.

E = This supports the idea that childhood experiences have significant impact on people's attitude toward later relationships.

P = It is reductionist and deterministic, due to suggesting that the influence of early attachments is deterministic, so a poor-quality attachment inevitably means that the individual will become bad parents themselves and be unable to form 'normal' romantic relationships and friendships in adulthood.



E = it suggests that insecurely attached infants are doomed to grow up and have bad adult relationships, when this is of course not true.

E = There are many cases of insecurely attached children growing to have strong happy relationships.

P = Research support link between early attachment type and success in later relationships.

E = Fraley conducted a meta-analysis of studies- found correlations of up to 0.50 between early attachment types and later relationships.

E = This demonstrates the link between some attachment types (e.g. insecure-anxious) and adult relationships being less clear than they were with other attachment types. This in turn suggests that some attachment types are more unstable over time, and so reduces the confidence that can be placed in Bowlby's theories of attachment and continuity.

P = Supported by Simpson et al

E = longitudinal study – participants were studied at 4 key points: infancy, early childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Attachment types and romantic relationships were assessed at different stages. Found that securely attached children were more expressive and emotionally attached in later romantic relationships

E = support claim that expression of emotions in adult romantic relationships can be traced back to early attachment experiences

P = The influence of early attachment on future relationships is guilty of determinism.

E = There are significant problems with the research. For example, the theory suggests that children who are insecurely attached are doomed for later relationships. This is deterministic because it assumes that implies no choice/free will, and that self-fulfilling prophecies must occur.

E = Other research suggests that plenty of insecurely attached children grow up to experience happy and fulfilling relationships. For example, such researchers suggest that experiences throughout life and genetic factors play a role in functioning. The temperament hypothesis, proposed by Kagan, is an alternative explanation that sees the quality of adult relationships as being determined biologically by innate personality factors. This suggests that attachment styles are irrelevant to adult relationships and thus implies that any attempts to develop better-quality relationships by changing people's attachment styles to more positive ones will not work!

