

Cultural variations in attachment (psychology)

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Discuss cultural variations in attachments. A culture is a group of people who have their own norms, values and customs. The Kroonenberg study showed that in a study of 8 countries the culture attachment patterns seem to be quite similar. The most common attachment type was a secure attachment. In western countries the dominant attachment type was avoidant and in non-western countries the dominant type was resistant. These results were reached from data from 2000 strange situation studies in 32 different countries.

There are many cross-cultural similarities such as in Ainsworth's Uganda study she observed various universals in attachment behaviour. This study showed that infants in Uganda were similar to infants in the UK and USA because they used their mothers as a secure base for exploration, and mothers of securely attached infants showed more sensitivity towards their infants than those who were insecurely attached. Tronick studied an African tribe who live in extended family groups.

The infants are looked after and even breastfed by different women but normally sleep with their mother at night times. Despite the different carers the infants still showed one primary attachment to the mother. Fox studies infants raised on Israeli kibbutzim that spent their time being cared for in a communal. Attachment was tested in the strange situation with either the mother or the metapelet. The infants were equally attached to both of the caregivers except in the reunion behaviour where they showed greater attachment to their mothers.

This suggests that the mothers were still the primary caregiver despite the shared care. There are also many cross-cultural differences. Grossmann and <https://assignbuster.com/cultural-variations-in-attachment-psychology/>

Grossmann found that German infants were more commonly insecurely rather than securely attached. This is due to the fact that in German culture they keep some interpersonal distance between the parents and children so that infants do not engage in proximity-seeking behaviour. This caused them to seem insecurely attached in the strange situation.

Takahashi used the strange situation to study 60 middle-class Japanese infants and their mothers. It was found that there was a similarity in the rate of securely attached infants to those in the US sample (Ainsworth). However there was no evidence of avoidant attachment but there was high rates of resistant attachment. The Japanese infants were extremely distressed when left alone and 90% of the infants the study had to be stopped with at that point. Once again this is because of the different child care practises in the different cultures.

In Japanese culture the infant is rarely apart from the mother which explains why they were so distressed in the strange situation when separated. All of these studies show that despite the cultural variations in the infant care arrangements the strongest attachment formed is still with the child's mother. The research does show that there are differences in the patterns of attachment that can be related to the difference in cultures. Rothbaum argued that attachment theory and research is not relevant to other cultures because it is so rooted in American culture.

The sensitivity hypothesis promoted that the secure attachment was related to the caregiver's responsiveness and sensitivity. Rothbaum argued that this only reflects western ideas of autonomy. In Japan sensitivity is about promoting dependence rather than independence. Sensitivity has the <https://assignbuster.com/cultural-variations-in-attachment-psychology/>

opposite objective in the different cultures. The continuity hypothesis said that infants who are securely attached go on to develop more socially and emotionally competent children and adults. The competence means being able to explore and be independent and be able to regulate one's emotions.

In Japan the opposite is true. Once again it has the opposite objective in the different cultures. The secure base hypothesis says that in the west secure attachments are seen as providing the infant with a secure base which they can explore, thus promoting independence. Japan attachment relationships are dependence-orientated. Behaviours associated with insecure ambivalent attachment are more typical of the characteristic *amae* relationship which may explain why these classifications are higher in Japan.

Rothbaum spoke about the behaviour of Japanese mothers and infants. This might be an incorrect generalisation because within Japan there are different subcultures which have different child care practices. The Kroonenberg study found more variation within cultures rather than between them. Kroonenberg suggested that the cross-cultural similarities could be caused due to the fact that the media spread the same ideas about parenting all over the world so they are exposed to similar influences.