

# Attachment, cognitive and language development influences



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## Introduction

In this paper we will discuss the Case Study of Hannah G. We will look at different theories to Attachment, Cognitive and Language development. We will look at how parenting styles and influence in the marital system can influence a child. We will look at how genetics and environmental factors influence development, as well as a child temperament.

## Attachment theory

Bowlby believes that attachment isn't present at birth, it develops after the first nurture, comfort and protection the mother or the primary caregiver provides (Louw, Louw, & Van Ede, 2012). Relationships with primary caregivers that involve emotional and affective engagement, has an impact on how a person perceive themselves, others, and the world (Reuther, 2013). Psychologist Harry Harlow also concluded through an experiment with monkeys and surrogate mothers that comfort and security plays an important role in the development of attachment. In the experiment, Harlow uses two surrogate mothers. Both mothers were made out of wire. Both mothers were equipped with feeding equipment. Only one of the mothers was covered in a soft cloth. The monkeys showed more interest in the clothed mother, they would go to the wire mother to suck on the bottle for food, and return to the clothed mother (Louw et al, 2012).

Freud believes that “ early experiences can have a long-term effect on personality development” (Shaffer, 1994, p. 43). If we take Freud psychosexual stages we see that the oral stage may have an impact in the attachment between infant and mother or primary caregiver. During the first

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year the infant are spitting, chewing, sucking, and biting objects. Freud suggested that the sex instinct seek pleasure through the mouth. A baby's basic pleasures, food, are pleased through sucking on the mothers' breast. When a baby is weaned off the mothers' breast too early the person may later in life be over dependant on others (Shaffer, 1994).

Erikson agrees with Freud that the mothers feeding process has an impact on the development of the child's personality. However, Erikson believes that the mothers' responsiveness to the infant is just as important as the feeding process. The child learns to trust through the caregiver or mother who provided food, comfort, affection, and safety. If these needs are not met, the child learns that other people are not to be trusted. This takes place from birth to one year. Erikson calls it the Basic trust versus mistrust stage (Shaffer, 1994).

Even though Erikson, Freud, Bowlby and Harlow has different views on the topic on attachment. They all have the same conclusion. For attachment to take place the infant needs has to be met by the mother or the caregiver. If there is an interruption in the attachment process, there may be long-term effects.

### Cognitive and language development

Piaget described cognitive development as " an individual's interaction with the environment" (Louw et al, 2012). Piaget argues that development perceives learning how we interpret the world through mental schemas allowing us to make sense of our environment. Learning happens when facing situations that our schema cannot process leading to disequilibrium.  
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To equalise itself the mind simulates new information or adapt to using new skills. Piaget calls this the process of assimilating new information and skills into our pre-developed schema. Piaget believed that thought determines language. He believed that once children were able to think in a certain way they developed the language to describe their thought (Louw et al, 2012). Vygotsky agrees with Piaget that learning happens by interacting with the environment. Vygotsky argued that learning proceeds development. He holds that our present stage of development is enhanced when confronted with new tasks, just out of reach of our present abilities. Vygotsky believed that language and thoughts are independent but they converge through development. He believed that children developed language through social interaction with adult who already know the language. Through that action they can connect these thoughts and the language they have learned (Louw et al, 2012). Bronfenbrenners Ecological theory suggest that a child's development is determined by what they experience in their environments they spend time in. (Friedman & Wachs, 1999)(Check plagiarism).

### Emotional development

Babies are able to “ read” others emotions from a young age. Being able to distinguish others emotions is important for a baby's social and emotional development, it has an impact on attachment bonds. As babies grow older they constantly seek approval or disapproval from people they trust. If a Mother or primary caregivers are emotionally unavailable or only irregularly responsive to the infant or child's needs may result in an insecure attachment ( Zilberstein, 2013). Ethologists believe that an infant who were neglected, or parent who are inattentive will not develop a strong emotional

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attachment with their caregiver. This may lead the child to be shy and emotionally unresponsive to other people (Shaffer, 1994).

### Parenting Styles & Marital system

Uninvolved parents is parents who have rejected their children or who has their own personal issues to attend to than to attend to the child every need other than their basic needs, food and cloths (Kip & Shaffer, 2009). Children of uninvolved parents may show signs of impulsiveness, antisocial, and have relational problems with others ( Louw et al, 2012). They might also be aggressive and have external behaviours such as temper tantrums (Kip & Skaffer, 2009). Children become angrier and distress when parents cannot stop arguing. A child's distress increases when the arguing between parents increases. " Children who observe intense and destructive conflicts between their parents suffered from emotional insecurity, depression, anxiety, behavior problems, relationship difficulties, and poor regulations, even years later" (Clarke-Sewart & Parke, 2011, p. 190).. Parents who can resolve their problems in a respectful manner can teach the child to how to resolve conflict in a positive and respectful manner. " Children were most likely to have problems if their parents expressed anger frequently, intensely, physically, and without resolution"(Clarke-Stewart & Parke, 2011, p. 190). Parents amicable marriages parenting style can be angry and instructive, children will in return act aggressively when interacting with the parent. They might even act aggressively towards other children (Clarke-Stewart & Parke, 2011).

Children's social interaction develops by observing their parents. (Clarke-Stewart & Parke, 2011).

Bandura believes that observational learning is the most important learning method (Shaffer, 1994). Children simulate what they have observed. In the experiment with the Bobo dolls, children observed and learned the aggressive response adult shown towards the doll and they simulated the same aggression towards the doll. Not only do they learn to simulate this behaviour but children become emotionally aroused when watching people fight (Shaffer, 1994). Bandura suggested that aggressive behaviours that are maintained become habitual (Shaffer, 1994). Urie Bronfenbrenners Bioecological model refers to the effect the child has on the environment and the environment on the child, this includes reciprocal interactions between the developing child and other people, objects, and symbols in their immediate environment (Cockcroft et al, 1999).

Being an only child and temperament

Only children always wants to be the centre of attention. They tend to be possessive over their belongings and everything must go their way. Because they are the only sibling, they spend more time in adults' company. Because they spend so many time in adult companies they tend to find it hard to socialise with their peer, they prefer socialising with adults (Rosemond, 2011). Only children have low tolerance for discomfort that caused by frustration, disappointments, boredom, and by being denied what that want. This is may result in tantrums of verbal of physical abuse. They lack empathy towards others; they are unable or are unwillingly to see that their behaviour

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affects others. They struggle to adapt to demands that are set by situations outside their immediate family. For example a school setting where are establishes social structures and recognised authority figures. They have a poor self-esteem and are chronically miserable, angry, and anxious (Mamen, 2006).

A difficult child is a child who does not easily adapt to into daily routines or new environments. They cry a lot and has temper tantrums and is difficult to comfort. Deviant behaviour is a result of children who grows up in a home were marital problems persist. This happens when a child behaviour and environment influences compliments each other (Louw et al, 2012).

#### Role of the media

Bandura believies television violence enhances aggressive behaviour in children (Shaffer, 1994). Rowel Huesmann suggested that not only does television violence predict aggressiveness in children and adults but also their involvement in criminal activities (Shaffer, 1994, p. 495). We can see that conflict and aggression is a norm for Hannah. Hannah has learned and observed that the world is a violent place ant that interpersonal problems can be solved aggressively (Shaffer, 1994). Drabman and Thomas suggested that television violence may detach the viewers emotional reactions to aggressive episodes. This may lead to a person to lack strong empathic distress for the victims of aggression (Shaffer, 1994).

#### Case Study Hanna

Hannah has difficulty expressing herself and her feelings. This could be an indication that maybe there are an interruption in the development of her schemas of emotions. We learned that Hannah's mother was unavailable for some time with depression, and this could have had an impact on how she developed socially. This could also imply that Hannah's Schema of emotions aren't developed well. The fact that her parents are uninvolved parent could also have an impact, as well as the parents' marital problems. She was emotionally detached from her mother from birth and she grew up in a home were she was constantly exposed to aggression. This aggression is from the conflict between her parents and the aggression of television violence. The fact that Hannah finds it hard to make friend and bits or hits other children can be explained by many reasons, it can be because she has attachment issues, being away from her mother could have caused her to develop mistrust in the world and other people. She might be trying to solve a problem in an aggressive as she had learned through her parents conflict and the television violence is that it is the only way to resolve conflict, as she hits and bits them. She might also find it hard to make friends because as we discussed she does not know how to connect with them in a social way because she exposed to adult company most of the time. Her parents marital problems has an impact on her having an antisocial behaviour. Hannah interact aggressively toward her parents, this could be either their uninvolved parenting styles or their marital conflict or it could be both. We see that Hannah has a difficult child temperament that is why they find it difficult to manage her. If we consider the bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner we can conclude that most of Hannah's deviant behaviour is



based on nurture. Nurture refers to the influences the environment has on a person's characteristics.

## Conclusion

We can conclude that there are many factors that can explain Hannah's behaviour. The fact that she does not have a bond with her mother. The learned behaviours from her parents, as well as the television. Nurture plays a big role in Hannah's development. We cannot just rely on one theory to explain a person's development but rather consider all.

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