

To what extent does attachment quality determine a child's self concept and ability...



AIMMy aim is to determine ??? To what extent does attachment quality determine a child's self concept and ability to form friendships??? There are 2 main perspectives to Child development and how children develop attachments these are known as empiricists and nativists theories.

John Bowlby was a nativist and his theory of attachment forms the basis for the nativist argument: The main principles of Bowlby's theory are that: Children need a close continuous relationship with their mothers for successful personality development and that the child must form an attachment by about 6 months of age; after that and until the age of 3 children strongly need to be close by their mothers and if this doesn't happen then later in life the children will have difficulties forming relations or forming them with inappropriate people, He called these children 'affectionless characters' Any obstacle or disruption to forming this attachment constitutes maternal deprivation. Bowlby stated that a mother's love is as important as vitamins and protein This theory was supported by Mary Ainsworth and her experiment called 'Strange situations'. This was an experiment carried out under controlled conditions to show what would happen when a mother/caregiver left her child in a room with a stranger and what the child's reaction would be to both the stranger and also to the mother when she returned. Ainsworth concluded that there were 3 types of attachment. These are Secure (Type B attachment), Insecure-avoidant (Type A attachment) and finally Insecure-Ambivalent (Type C attachment). Both of these theories are based on Reciprocity, this is Rudolph Schaeffer's word for the way in which the mother responds to the behaviour of her baby and is influenced by it and the

baby in turn is influenced by the mother's behaviour these are the basis that the attachment is formed.

The opposite of the nativist theories are the empiricists and they base their arguments and ideas around Watson, Skinner, and Piaget & Locke. Locke believed we are moulded by experiences (operant and classical conditioning) that we are blank pages to be written on by adults. His view was that children are born they differ in their potential for intelligence and temperament but have no facilities for innate learning, therefore believing solely in the influences of nurturing. Classical conditioning is the process whereby learning results from the association of a stimulus with a response; Operant conditioning is the process of learning voluntary behaviour by association with either reinforcement or punishment.

(The main theorists here are skinner-operant conditioning and Pavlov-classical conditioning)Ivan Pavlov's most famous experiment was called 'Salivating Dogs'. Basically he observed that dogs would salivate at the sight of someone bringing them food, he theorised that it was this more than the food that made them salivate so he began to ring a bell whenever they were about to be fed in conjunction with the food the dogs would salivate then over a gradual period time he got to the point where just ringing the bell would induce salivation proving his theory, This theory was also supported by Watson's Little Albert experiment. These theories were given further credence by Dollard and Miller with their 'Theory on attachment and learning.

Also called classical conditioning and respondent conditioning. A learned automatic reflex response. (Dog salivates on sight of person who does nothing but brings it food). Antecedent events become associated with one another: A stimulus that does not produce a response is linked with one that does. Learning is evident when the new stimulus also begins to elicit responses. Classical conditioning is passive and involuntary. It simply “happens to” the learner when a Conditioned stimulus and unconditioned stimulus are associated.

Classical conditioning depends on reflex responses a dependable, inborn stimulus-and-response connection. Pain causes reflex withdrawal of various parts of the body. The pupil of the eye reflexively narrows in response to bright lights.

Various foods cause salivation. It is entirely possible for humans to associate any of these or other reflex responses with a new stimulus. In addition, more complex emotional, or “gut,” responses may be conditioned to new stimuli. Many involuntary, autonomic nervous system responses (“Fight-or-flight” reflexes) are linked with new stimuli and situations by classical conditioning.

Phobia. Fears that persist even when no realistic danger exists. Persons with fears of animals, water, heights, thunder, fire, bugs, or whatever, can often trace their fear to a time when they were frightened, injured, upset, or in pain while exposed to the feared object or stimulus. Reactions of this type, called: Conditioned emotional responses? are often broadened into phobias by stimulus generalization. These can be learned indirectly, a fact that adds to their effect on us. Children who learn to fear thunder by watching as their

parents react to it have undergone similar conditioning. Vicarious classical conditioning occurs when we observe the emotional reactions of another person to a stimulus and thereby learn to respond emotionally to the same stimulus. Such learning probably affects feelings in many situations.

The film Jaws made ocean swimming a conditioned fear stimulus for many people. If films affect us, we might expect the emotions of parents, friends, and relatives to have even more impact. The emotional attitudes we develop towards certain types of food, minority groups or escalators are probably not only conditioned by direct experience but vicariously as well. The following are a list of definitions that are common when exploring attachment theories

Neutral stimulus? a stimulus that does not evoke a response, such as a bell. Conditioned stimulus. A stimulus to which one has learned to respond. Unconditioned stimulus.

Something one does not need to learn a response to (the food) typically produces a reflex response or "built in,"? unconditioned (non learned) response

Therefore this clearly demonstrates that depending on the mother/caregivers response to the child's need will directly relate to how comfortable the child will be in both the company of their peers and also will demonstrate how happy the child is in their own company which in turn becomes clearer when they begin school. A child's coming to school - is considered to be a turning point in his life which provokes changes in child's personality and influences his adaptive behaviour. According to Elkonin (2001) this time in child's development is marked by changing the leading activity.

A child masters the learning activity, which promotes the development of reflexia, and his own activity becomes a subject of his evaluation. The peculiarities of this adjustment are considered to be dependent on the peculiarities of child's personality. Among these are self-esteem, ability to communicate with others and mastering new social position. Overstated self-esteem and the level of appraisal lead to non-critical aspire to leadership, aggressive behaviour and resistance to adults' demands (Neymark, 1975; Yufereva, 1987) which tells negatively on adjustment. Low self-esteem also leads to problems among which there is a lack of initiative and independence. It was also mentioned (Kolominsky & Panko, 1988) that failure in communication with others very often leads to negative attitudes to school.

Mastering the new social position of a schoolchild is also considered to be very important in the development of a child. Changing of social developmental situations when a child comes to school play a very special role in the development of child's self-esteem (Lipkina & Rybak, 1968; Radina, 1995; Zakharova, 1998). Research reveals the development of such characteristics of self-esteem at this age as consciousness and reflex. When coming to school a child changes his sensitivity to the evaluation of his social environment. According to Karabanova (2002) the social environment affects a child not directly, but by means of a personality oriented image (as child perceives this influence of social environment and his position in it).

Furthermore a convincing body of evidence has accumulated to indicate that unless children achieve minimal social competence by about the age of 6 years, they have a high probability of being at risk into adulthood in several

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ways (Ladd, 2000; Parker & Asher, 1987). Recent research (Hartup & Moore, 1990; Kinsey, 2000; Ladd & Profilet, 1996; McClellan & Kinsey, 1999; Parker & Asher, 1987; Rogoff, 1990) suggests that a child's long-term social and emotional adaptation, academic and cognitive development are enhanced by frequent opportunities to strengthen social competence during childhood. Hartup (1992) notes that peer relationships in particular contribute a great deal to both social and cognitive development and to the effectiveness with which we function as adults. He states that "the single best childhood predictor of adult adaptation is not school grades, and not classroom behaviour, but rather, the adequacy with which the child gets along with other children. Children who are generally disliked, who are aggressive and disruptive, who are unable to sustain close relationships with other children, and who cannot establish a place for themselves in the peer culture are seriously at risk" (Hartup, 1992, p.

1). The risks are many: poor mental health, dropping out of school, low achievement and other school difficulties, and poor employment history (Katz & McClellan, 1997). Because social development begins at birth and progresses rapidly during the preschool years, it is clear that early childhood programs should include regular opportunities for spontaneous child-initiated social play.

Berk and Winsler (1995) suggest that it is through symbolic/pretend play that young children are most likely to develop both socially and intellectually. Thus, a periodic assessment of children's progress in the acquisition of social competence is appropriate to demonstrate how children act toward each other (cooperatively or aggressively, helpfully or

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demandingly, etc.) and it appears to have a substantial impact on the relationships they develop (Ladd, 2000). However, healthy social development does not require that a child be a “social butterfly.” The most important consideration to note is the quality rather than the quantity of a child's friendships. Children (even rejected children) who develop a close friend increase the degree to which they feel positively about school and themselves over time (Ladd, 1999). (Rothbart & Bates, 1998; Kagan, 1992) There is evidence that some children are simply shy or more inhibited than others, and it may be counterproductive to push such children into social relations that make them uncomfortable.

Furthermore, unless that shyness is severe enough to prevent a child from enjoying most of the “good things of life,” such as birthday parties, picnics, and family outings, it is reasonable to assume that, when handled sensitively, the shyness will be spontaneously outgrown. So therefore in conclusion it is suggested that there is a strong argument supporting both the empirics viewpoint as well as that of the nativists and that at different stages of development that we draw upon aspects of all of their theories and this will hopefully produce well rounded and balanced individuals. This begins with the instinctive social releasers from babies then leading onto both operant and classical conditioning as the child grows and gains greater social understanding.

Thus if a child displays a strong attachment to a parental figure and considers that their needs are met and is loved, they will assume that everybody will like them therefore raising their self image and identity

leading to potentially a strong character with positive interaction within their

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