

MR K

A-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY A* RESOURCES

200+ Essential Studies For A-Level Psychology

Topics Covered:

Social Influence • Memory • Attachment • Psychopathology
Approaches • Biopsychology • Issues & Debates

Attachment

Early bonding, attachment types, and long-term developmental effects

3.1 Caregiver-Infant Interactions

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1. Meltzoff & Moore (1977) — Infant imitation
2. Brazelton et al. (1975) — Reciprocity
3. Isabella et al. (1989) — Synchrony & security
4. Feldman (2007) — Cross-cultural synchrony

3.2 Stages & Multiple Attachments

Pages 19-20

5. Schaffer & Emerson (1964) — Stages of attachment
6. Field (1978) — Role of the father
7. Grossman et al. (2002) — Paternal sensitivity
8. Lamb (1975) — Father responsiveness
9. Brown et al. (2012) — Same-sex parenting

3.3 Animal Studies of Attachment

Pages 20-21

10. Lorenz (1935) — Imprinting in geese
11. Harlow (1958) — Contact comfort in monkeys
12. Suomi & Harlow (1972) — Peer vs maternal rearing
13. Maestripieri (1999) — Intergenerational transmission

3.4 Types & Cultural Variations

Pages 21-22

14. Ainsworth et al. (1978) — Strange Situation
15. Van IJzendoorn & Kroonenberg (1988) — Cultural differences
16. Takahashi (1990) — Japanese infants
17. Grossmann et al. (1985) — German infants
18. Main & Solomon (1986) — Disorganised attachment

3.5 Maternal Deprivation

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19. Bowlby (1944) — 44 Juvenile Thieves
20. Bowlby — Tuberculosis study
21. Rutter et al. (1998) — Romanian orphans
22. Chugani et al. (2001) — Brain activity in orphans

3.6 Later Relationships

Pages 23-24

23. Myron-Wilson & Smith (1998) — Attachment & bullying
24. Hazan & Shaver (1987) — Love quiz
25. Waters (1978) — Attachment Q-Sort
26. Waters et al. (2000) — Attachment stability
27. Collins & Read (1990) — Working models in adults
28. Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991) — Four attachment styles

3.7 Additional Studies To Fill In

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3.1 Caregiver-Infant Interactions

1 Meltzoff & Moore (1977) – Infant Imitation (Caregiver-Infant Interactions)

Methodology: Observed 12–21 day-old infants' ability to imitate adult facial gestures in a controlled setting.

Findings: Infants consistently mimicked adult gestures (e.g., sticking out tongues, mouth opening).

SO: This demonstrates that infants are biologically prepared (innately programmed) to engage in social interactions which are crucial for attachment formation.

Strength – Controlled Observation: Use of independent observers and controlled procedures increased inter-rater reliability and reduced the risk of observer bias (strengthening validity).

SO: This provides strong empirical support for the claim that imitation in infants is consistent and measurable. However, fails to show how imitation is important for attachment formation (lacks explanatory power).

2 Brazelton et al. (1975) – Reciprocity in Caregiver-Infant Interactions

Methodology: Observed caregiver-infant pairs interacting and recorded patterns of reciprocal behaviours during interaction.

Findings: Identified synchronised "dance-like" interactions where mother and baby actively take turns during interaction.

SO: This highlights the role of reciprocity in attachment, showing how mutual responsiveness helps build early emotional bonds.

Strength – Naturalistic Observations: Used detailed video analysis in a familiar setting to identify synchronised behaviours, increases ecological validity.

SO: This supports the notion that interaction patterns occur naturally in everyday life and are not just lab-based concepts, supporting Bowlby's theory.

3 Isabella et al. (1989) – Synchrony and Attachment Security

Methodology: Observed 30 mother-infant pairs to assess the level of interactional synchrony during face-to-face play at 3 months. Attachment style assessed at 1 year using Ainsworth's Strange Situation.

Findings: Infants who experienced high levels of synchrony were more likely to be securely attached. Mothers of insecurely attached infants showed less responsiveness and lower synchrony.

SO: This supports the idea that caregiver sensitivity is foundational to the development of secure attachment, reinforcing the view that early interactions shape later emotional bonds.

Limitation – Correlational Design: Study established a link between attachment and synchrony, but this does not indicate a causal relationship. Variables such as infant temperament, father interactions, or maternal health could influence attachment.

SO: This reduces the internal validity of the findings, as it is unclear whether synchrony causes secure attachment, limiting the use of this evidence in sensitivity-based theories and early maternal interventions.

4 Feldman (2007) – Synchrony Across Cultures (Caregiver-Infant Interactions)

Methodology: Used naturalistic and structured observations to assess interactional synchrony between caregivers and infants across a range of cultures (Western and non-Western) and family structures (e.g., two-parent, single-parent).

Findings: Consistent synchrony patterns (e.g. coordinated gaze, mutual smiling) found regardless of cultural background and family types.

SO: This supports the biological universality of attachment behaviours, supporting Bowlby's monotropic theory.

Strength – Generalisability: Feldman's study had high generalisability as the sample was diverse and multicultural.

SO: The results are more likely to apply to the wider population, strengthening the claim that synchrony is a biologically universal aspect of attachment and not restricted to specific cultural parenting norms.

3.2 Stages of Attachment & Multiple Attachments (Role of the Father)

5 Schaffer & Emerson (1964) – Stages of Attachment (Development of Attachment)

Methodology: Longitudinal study of 60 infants in Glasgow, observed monthly for the first year, and again at 18 months. Interviewed mothers and made direct observations assessing separation and stranger anxiety.

Findings: Identified four stages of attachment: asocial, indiscriminate, specific, and multiple.

SO: This provides evidence that attachment develops in a predictable sequence based on age and social experience.

Strength - High Ecological Validity: Conducted in naturalistic home settings, using real-life behaviour.

SO: This increases ecological validity and supports the real-world relevance of the stages of attachment.

Limitation – Limited Population & Temporal Validity: All participants were from 1960s, working-class and Scottish.

SO: This limits generalisability to modern and diverse populations with different parenting practices, though the identified stages remain influential.

6 Field (1978) – Role of the Father (Multiple Attachments)

Methodology: Compared interactions between primary caregiver mothers, fathers, and secondary caregiver fathers with infants. Analysed several factors (duration of gaze, attention to infant, smiling).

Findings: Primary caregiver fathers showed more nurturing behaviours (prolonged mutual gaze etc), similar to mothers, whilst secondary caregiver fathers showed fewer.

SO: This suggests that the role of attachment is based on responsiveness and caregiving rather than biological sex.

Strength – Challenges Gender Stereotypes: Demonstrates fathers can form secure attachments.

SO: This supports flexible caregiving roles in modern parenting and validates non-traditional families - further supporting Bowlby's theory that responsiveness is key to forming secure attachments.

Limitation – Methodological Shortcomings: The relatively small sample and short observation periods may not fully capture the complexity or consistency of caregiving over time.

SO: This limits the generalisability and reliability of the findings as we cannot be certain that the observed paternal behaviour would lead to similar long-term secure attachments in the same way as maternal behaviour.

7 Grossman et al. (2002) – Same-Sex Parenting (Multiple Attachments)

Methodology: Longitudinal study examining German families over time (infants - teens) – observing parental sensitivity and attachment outcomes.

Findings: Father sensitivity not linked to infant attachment, but related to quality of later relationships. Fathers' play style more predictive of future attachment.

SO: This shows that fathers contribute differently to development, particularly through stimulated, play-oriented interactions of caregiving, not parental gender or sexuality, predicts secure attachment.

Strength – Longitudinal Design: Allowed researchers to assess developmental changes over time and establish temporal relationships between early child-father interactions and later outcomes.

SO: This strengthens the claim that fathers play a role in later social and emotional development, increasing the credibility of the idea that paternal involvement is different from maternal attachment, underlining the importance of each.

8 Lamb (1975) – Father Responsiveness

Methodology: Reviewed observations of infants interacting with mothers and fathers. Examined how often fathers took on caregiving roles, and how responsive they were.

Findings: Fathers less likely to become primary caregivers (Schaffer & Emerson → 3%), but when they were, they were as sensitive and responsive as mothers. Fathers are preferred for playful interactions.

SO: This shows that fathers are biologically capable of nurturing care, but social and cultural roles may restrict their involvement.

Strength – Supports Experience over Biology: Challenges the assumption that caregiving is biologically determined, showing that attachment depends more on interaction.

SO: This supports wider societal and policy shifts to encourage paternal involvement from birth - e.g. promoting paternity leave.

6.10 Additional Studies For You To Fill In

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Methodology:

Findings:

SO:

Strength / Weakness – _____

SO:

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Methodology:

Findings:

SO:

Strength / Weakness – _____

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Methodology:

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Strength / Weakness – _____

SO:

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