How Early Attachment May Influence Adulthood

This essay will evaluate evidence that states that relationship formation in adulthood is based on the interactions And attachments people make in the early stages of infancy. John Bowly (1969) hypothesised that childhood interactions with their caregiver are crucial to the formation of relationships in adulthood. It has been stated that When an infant is removed from its Mother, it goes into dispute, then desolation, and then detachment (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). In the attendance of The caregiver during such stressful situations, their attachment style becomes apparent (Zimmermann and Becker-stoll, 2002). A child that is in an environment that is safe and secure tend to be alert, courageous, and when the mother is present, the infant is more interested in figuring out its surroundings, Hazan and Shaver (1987). (Ainsworth et al, Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Rice, 1990) attachment Theory states that the amount of care, Affection, attention and awareness a person receives in their early Childhood has a direct relation to the Feeling of confidence and refuge they have in adulthood. Brennen and Shaver (1995); Collins (1996); Simpson (1990) have demonstrated that there is an association amid attachment style in childhood with romantic styles in later life. Such theories do allow the idea that adult personality and the Relationships they've formed have been Influenced by the attachment they've had as children. It is imperative to Evaluate the evidence to verify its reliability.

It has been mentioned that infants who are separated from their caregiver due to reasons such as natural Disasters, or war, go through a process of grieving in which they may be tremendously distressed and Apprehensive but in general recover once they are reunited with their loved ones. There are situations in which An infant may permanently be detached from their caregiver, Infants that go through such an experience usually Would recuperate if they can preserve a form of attachment with another individual (Bowlby, 1960,1980). The research done on adoption children show that it is better if the undying separation is done in the earlier Stages of infancy rather than much later to avoid distressing behaviour from the child (Van Jlzendoorn & Juffer, 2006). Children that are exposed to abusive behaviour or ill-treatment from dysfunctional families or Orphanages and then carry on to be adopted before 1 year of age show significant growth physically, Cognitively, behaviourally, and even in a social context. Whereas, children adopted passed the 1 year of age Have a tendency to form insecure attachment and this could be caused due to the loss of trust they experienced When they were taken away from their original caregiver, and this kind of detachment at such a young age Could end up showing other developmental delays. Infants that have been through a series of separation from Their caregivers may be eternally stained by their experience of love lost. (Colins, 1996; Ward, Munro & Dearden, 2006).

According to Bowlby and Ainsworth's attachment theory, Children that are securely attached should be more Cognitively and expressively proficient. To support this theory, In an early longitudinal study, Everett Waters And his associates (Waters, Wippman , & Sroufe, 1979) measured the attachment an infant has to their mothers At 15 months, and then observed children at the age of 3. Securely attached infants turned into children who Were enquiring, self-sufficient, and enthusiastic to gain more knowledge. In the other hand, infants that were Insecurely attached were much less self-determining. The children that were securely attached as infants were Also competent within society. They often initiated play activities and were more insightful to the desires and The opinion of other children (Schneider, Atkinson, & Tardif, 2001).

Research suggests that secure attachment in Infancy is linked to positive emotional development and they have a greater capacity to deal with anxiety and regulate emotion in later life. (Gunnar, 1998, 2000; Kochanska, 2001).

The more secure relationship children have with their caregiver the better adjusted they are in society. They are Self-assured and do well in school (Jacobsen & Hofmann, 1997); they are acknowledged by peers and have Close friendships (Elicker, Englund, & Sroufe, 1992). In a longitudinal study, Jeffrey Simpson and his Colleagues (2007) studied 78 individuals from early life to their early 20s. They were able to discover a Association amid secure attachment at 12 months of age to the quality of a child's peer relations in elementary School, which then predicted the quality of friendship in adolescence, which in turn predicted the emotional Quality of romantic relationship in early adulthood.

Supporting the assumption of attachment continuity, individuals that face secure attachment in their infancy and Childhood will normally gain a solid romantic relationship in adolescence (Dykas et al, 2006). Though, Individuals that go through an experience that is quite depressing and has a dramatic evolution into Adolescence more often shows potential discontinuity of attachment (Aikins et al, 2009). A longitudinal analysis done by Lewis and colleagues (2000), measured attachment in infancy using the strange situation procedure on 84 white middle-class participants. They also collected childhood memories at 13 years of age and also did the Adult attachment interview in young adulthood. The results of this study showed a significant discontinuity between infant attachment styles and adolescent maladjustment. Though this study had findings that show long term effects of childhood attachment being discontinued, there is a major culture difference as the participants used were all white, This is a major disadvantage as it is not possible to generalise the findings.

John Bowlby's research is quite detailed and thorough and as the years go by multiple studies have been done And prove his theory that the importance of early attachments in childhood is a major element in how Individuals form relationships in adulthood, however, one main reoccurring weakness in various studies is the Factor of culture not being an important detail in the participant sample. Evidence from cross-cultural studies (Rothbaum et al, 2000), reveal that attachment relationship is not the most prominent aspect in socialization and Social amendment in all communities or cultures (Waters & Cummings, 2002). Moreover, it has been Acknowledged that the secure attachment style that was established in a lot of the western samples is not the Prevalent style of attachment in other cultures. Fish (2004) stated that only half of Appalachian, USA, infants in The strange situation procedure came out as securely attached, however, at four years this vaguely amplified, This factor does challenge the accuracy of western research that report attachment continuity from infancy to Childhood to then adulthood (Mcelwain & Volling, 2004).

Many psychologists have gone a little more in-depth on theorizing about the roots of adult attachment styles and decided to not solely focus on just the family or origin of the individual. According to many theorists, an Important factor in shaping attachment orientation is the friendships that develop in adolescence and early adulthood (Fraley & Davis, 1997; Firman, Simon, Shaffer, & Bouehey, 2002; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005). The Parent interaction with the child still remains a crucial role in the individual's development; recent studies have showed that peer relationships tackle issues relating to familiarity, reliance, and support. It's been suggested that For quite a number of people, close friends can serve important attachment functions such as the feeling of refuge and even being a safe sanctuary to open up more on

their feelings and emotions; (Fraley & Davis, 1997; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997; Zeifman & Hazan, 2008). Research has also mentioned that people who Have closer bonds with friends are more likely to be secure in their attachment orientation (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Most studies on adult attachment elaborate on how interactions with parents/caregiver during childhood influence adult relationships (Auslander, Short, Succop, & Rosenthal, 2009; Avila, Cabral, & Matos, 2011; Feeney, 2004; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Fealey, 2010). The research study done by Santiago, et al (2017) brought up the idea that a long lasting romantic relationship has the capacity to change the link between the adult attachment style to peers and the adult perception of their past attachment to their parents. To prove this Santiago, et al (2017) hypothesised that excellent bonds that are made as infants certainly associates with immediacy, comfort, and the belief people have in others and negatively link with anxious behaviour. Infants that were afraid to investigate their surroundings and weren't for exploring their individuality correlated pessimistically with immediacy, comfort, and positively with anxiety. They used the PASS questionnaire to measure anxiety, trust, and feeling of comfort with proximity, They then used the FMAQ questionnaire to measure the close bonds individuals have and also included questions that dived into a person's exploration of their individuality and the separation anxiety they may or may not have experienced in their early childhood. The data that Santiago, et al (2017) collected did side correctly with the theory that attachment in early childhood didn't just have to do with the interactions with parents/ caregivers but also included factors such as childhood friendships or romantic relationships.

To conclude, early childhood attachments such as the interactions with caregiver, the close friendships that are Developed, and the romantic relationships that are formed have been proven by various research studies that They do play a crucial role in the way individuals behave in terms of forming relationships in adulthood. However, a lot of the participants used in the study were a very specific population; this does hinder the relevance of the findings for assumptions of human personality. Most of the evidence shares a common Disadvantage, which is that they only had findings concerning childhood attachment with adolescent and young- Adults; it does not show if the outcome is long term and whether it might be an aspect which may impinge on The correlation. Researchers didn't really dive into other extraneous variables such as traumatic events or Marriage. Infant attachment is essential, both because of its place in the development and connection with so Many functions such as social relatedness, arousal intonation, emotional regulation, and inquisitiveness; and so On, Attachment experience in childhood remains, even in this intricate view, imperative in the creation of a person.

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