

TITLE: EMOTIONAL DEPRIVATION IN CHILDHOOD: A BOWLBYAN CASE STUDY OF ATTACHMENT IN THE AGE OF ECONOMIC PRECARITY

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Abstract

In this qualitative case study, the effects of maternal deprivation and insecure attachment on the development of a 7-year-old kid in a low-income, single-parent household are examined using Bowlby's Attachment Theory. The research highlights some significant emotional and academic consequences of prolonged mother absence due to full-time job by using in-depth interviews with the child's teacher and behavioral observations of the child. Significant research demonstrates that, in contrast to a child's cognitive ability, attachment disruption presents as low self-esteem, social disengagement, and disinterest in the classroom. The study emphasizes the importance of family-school partnerships and the crucial role teachers play as possible secondary attachment figures in addressing emotional needs. It also considers the public conundrum that working parents confront when they must choose between material support and emotional availability. This paper contributes to discussions about child development in economically disadvantaged households by connecting attachment theory with common socioeconomic realities and advocating for structural changes to protect children's emotional health in the face of increased economic insecurity. The study concludes with helpful recommendations for educators to use attachment-sensitive teaching methods and legislators to create support systems that enable working parents to maintain loving ties with their children.

Keywords: Bowlby's Attachment Theory, Maternal Deprivation Syndrome, Parent Teacher Partnership, Childhood Isolation

1.0. Introduction

In this study, the researcher will examine the essential components of the partnership between family and teacher focused on child development, guided by Bowlby's Attachment Theory. The research objective is to cultivate a positive relationship between students' parents and teachers to facilitate the healthy development of a child both at school and at home.

1.1. Importance of Family and Teacher Partnership in Child Growth

Hornby (2011), child growth is a basic need of the time where parents and teachers are playing a crucial role in the development of the child. Parents give birth to a child and nurture him with all the luxuries and comfort of life although the teachers are playing the second parent in a student's life for his development. A child is born to get attention and love from parents and if they do not get it, they become adults in toddler age therefore attachment is particularly important in child development from parents and teacher's side.

Jeynes (2012), it is critical for instructors and parents to communicate well to make a relationship. The importance of communication to presenting and communicating information can be distributed to parents to help them understand academic goals, be aware of how their child develops in their studies, and how to assist their children at home.

Parents are known as the first teacher of a child and teachers are known as the second parents of a child therefore both are interconnected for child growth. If the parent's and teacher's bonding is not strong, they will never develop skills in the child. A child needs attention, care, love and praise from his parents and teachers, then he will be able to make himself a good student and a good human being (Jeynes 2012, Hornby 2011).

Based on Bowlby's Attachment Theory, this case study investigates the dynamics of family-teacher partnerships and how a child's general wellbeing is impacted by stable attachments both at home and in school. This study emphasizes the significance of caregiver-teacher

alignment in bolstering a child's sense of security and fostering positive developmental outcomes by examining real-world interactions, communication tactics, and collaborative practices. To improve child development in early childhood education, the findings are intended to give educators, parents, and legislators insights into how to strengthen these partnerships.

1.2. Role of Parents and Teachers in Child Development

Epstein (2018), home is the first institute to educate a child mentally, physically, ethically, and morally. The child learns from the actions of his family so what parents and siblings are doing child copy them. Good parents are the real model of a child, and the bad ones are the destroyers of a child's innocence. When a child is born parents must begin by giving him all knowledge of the world with their intellect to make him a better person in society.

Berk (2022), Parental involvement is essential for child development from birth to adulthood because they are the primary influence in a child's life. Parents must give time to their children at this age (toddler). The most important need of a child is the parent's time. If the parents do not give enough time to the child, he becomes stubborn and never changes because when he needs it, the parents are busy with their jobs and other issues. Parents are encouraged to educate their children from an early age because at that age children learn and remember things for a lifetime. Children's capabilities are stronger than any other age factor, they pick things very quickly likewise when mothers are teaching where is your nose, eyes, lips the child put his finger on the parts of his face to find.

Sigel and Bryson (2011), give some points for Parenting Involvement/ Teaching

- Encourage your child to use his mind.
- Motivate the child for achieving goals.
- Encourage your child to eat and drink by himself.
- Try to build reading habits in your child from an early age.
- Do not put them under stress for getting good grades or positions.
- Never compare your child with a brilliant child because it despairs of him.
- Try to make a friendly environment where your child shares everything with you.
- Make a routine to ask your children about their homework that is given by schoolteachers and help them out.
- Religious education is especially important for children trying to give them basic information of Islam likewise ethics and moral values.
- Do not say to your children "Don't Do, Don't Do," do them whatever they want because it makes their critical thinking strong.
- Educate the children about good and bad touches because in this era child molestation is quite common.

1.3. Famous Theorists of Child Development

The first theory on child development was given by Jean Piaget in 1896. He was the man who think about the innocence learning of childhood and make a scientific study on child development. After Piaget we have Watson, Skinner, Bloom, Bruner, Ausubel, Erikson, Freud, Gesell, Kohlberg, Bandura, Maslow, Bowlby, Bronfenbrenner, and Vygotsky. The famous theories are Psychosexual Theory, Psychosocial Theory, Behavioral Theories, Cognitive Theory, Attachment Theory, Social Learning Theory, Sociocultural Theory.

1.3.1. Attachment Theory

John Bowlby developed the core foundations of the theory by combining ideas from ethology, cybernetics, information processing, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis. As a result, he changed the way we think about a child's relationship with his mother and how it might be disrupted by separation, hardship, and loss. Mary Ainsworth's

groundbreaking method not only enabled empirical testing of some of Bowlby's theories but also aided the theory's expansion and manages some of the new paths it is presently pursuing. The concept of the attachment figure as a secure platform from which a child might explore the world was developed by Ainsworth (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991).

Bowlby's (1951), evolutionary theory of attachment proposes that children are born with a biological predisposition to create relationships with others to survive. A child's urge to bond to one main secure attachment is innate (i.e., inborn). Monotropy is the term for this. Monotropy implies that there is a single relationship that is more essential than all others. Bowlby claims that there is a key phase for attachment development (2.5 years). If an attachment has not formed during this time, it is possible that it will not form at all. Bowlby later advocated a five-year sensitivity period.

According to Bowlby's (1958), maternal deprivation hypothesis, repeated disruption of the attachment between an infant and their caretaker can lead to long-term cognitive, social, and emotional problems for the child. An internal working model, Bowlby (1949), asserts that it is a cognitive framework that consists of mental representations for interpreting the environment, oneself, and others, and is founded on the main caregiver connection. It serves as a model for all future everyday conversations, allowing people to expect, manage, and control their interactions with one another.

Bowlby (1980) claimed that the unmistakable attachment behavior of 2-month-olds is made up of a series of innate responses that serve to bond the child to the mother and the mother to the child. During the first year of life, these part reactions (such as sucking, clinging, and following, as well as the signaling behaviors of smiling and crying) develop autonomously, then become increasingly integrated and centered on a mother figure during the second six months. The relationship between the infant and its mother throughout the first five years of life, according to John Bowlby, is the most important for socialization. He claimed that disrupting this primary bond could lead to an increase in juvenile delinquency, emotional problems, and antisocial behavior.

1.4. Research Objectives

1. To investigate the effects of extended seclusion on a child's ability to interact with others and participate in class.
2. To assess how crucial it is for teachers and families to work together to support kids who have unstable attachment styles.

2.0. Literature Review

According to Dodge & Bickart (2000), the most effective system in child development is one that engages children's families in a meaningful way. As per Fitzgerald (2004), the collaboration includes the parents and society working together to help the child succeed in school. Parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, making decisions, and engaging with the community are among the six forms of school and family represented in the partnership.

Halimah et al (2020), parents' involvement in curriculum development allows them to directly see how their children are progressing, allowing them to support and extend what they learn at school and home. Teachers should set aside time to invite parents to get to know their children and to ask them to help their children in their learning at home. Teachers should explain the practice to parents in terms of developmental phases so that parents are aware of their children's interests and may generate confidence and pride in what their children can do (Halimah et al, 2020).

When considering child development from the perspective of Bowlby's Attachment Theory, the collaboration between teachers and families is particularly important. This idea underlines how a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development is shaped by their early

connections with their main carers and stresses the significance of having strong emotional attachments with them. Support for a child's healthy development may be more effectively provided if it is understood how both teachers and families influence the child's attachment experiences (Bowlby, 1988).

2.1. Foundations of Attachment Theory

2.1.1. Key Ideas

According to Bowlby's Attachment Theory, attachment is a strong emotional connection that forms between a kid and a key adult, usually the mother. This connection serves as the foundation for the child's internal working models, or mental images of themselves and other people, which direct the formation of their personalities and future relationships (Vaughn, 2018, Vertel, 2024).

2.1.2. Stages of Attachment

The phases of attachment development include indiscriminate social reactions in infancy, targeted attachment, and partnership behavior, which allows the kid to build connections outside of their immediate family (Vaughn 2018; Vertel, 2024).

2.1.3. Effects of Separation

A child's emotional and social development may suffer because of attachment disturbances such separation or deprivation (Horst et.al 2024, Vertel, 2024).

2.2. Family's Role in Attachment and Development

2.2.1. Secure Base

Children go from instantaneous, sensorimotor experiences to internalized mental models of attachment with the behavioral and emotional support of their parents. Children may explore the world with confidence because of this safe foundation (Vaughn 2018, Bretherton, I, 1992).

2.2.2. Emotional and Cognitive Development

Families may help children develop cognitive skills and emotional control via regular, sensitive parenting. These skills provide the groundwork for subsequent relationships and coping mechanisms (Vaughn 2018, Bretherton I, 1992, Ogle & Cozza 2023).

2.2.3. Hazards of Disrupted Attachment

Disrupted attachment risks include deprivation, maltreatment, and dysfunctional families, which may result in attachment disorders that affect social and emotional consequences (Vertel, 2024).

2.3. Teachers as Attachment Figures

2.3.1. Teacher-Child Relationships

In early childhood settings in particular, teachers may function as secondary attachment figures by offering a solid basis and safe refuge. High-quality interactions between teachers and students are influenced by the sensitivity and responsiveness of the teachers, even when complete attachment ties are not always formed (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012).

2.3.2. Impact on Development

Attachment concepts may be used to construct interventions that strengthen the positive teacher-student interactions that promote social, emotional, and intellectual development (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012, Wilkinson, S. R, 2023).

2.3.3. Cooperation with Families

Attachment theory-informed effective cooperation between teachers and families may foster resilience and fortify the child's support system (Wilkinson, S. R, 2023).

2.4. Challenges and Evolving Perspectives

2.4.1. Cultural Context

The implementation of attachment theory must consider cultural variations in family structures and caregiving, since it has its roots in Western settings (Ogle & Cozza 2023, Newland & Coyl, 2010).

2.4.2. Role Expansion

Current research highlights the need of including dads and other carers as attachment figures and modifying therapy strategies to include the whole family, not only the mother-child pair (Wilkinson, S. R, 2023, Newland & Coyl, 2010).

3.0. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research utilizes a qualitative approach, focusing on individual case studies to examine the role of family and teacher interactions in child development through the lens of Bowlby's Attachment Theory. Using a case study approach facilitates an examination of a particular child's experiences, revealing how home and school attachment relationships shape learning and social-emotional development.

3.2. Sample

The primary participant is Anas, a 7-year-old boy from a low-income, single-parent home. His mother works as a full-time employee from 9AM to 5PM.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews:

With Anas's mother to grasp the family system, caregiving roles, and obstacles in providing emotional support.

With Anas's teacher concerning his classroom behavior, attention and engagement, and academic performance.

3.3.2. Observational Data:

Observation of Anas's class participation and his interactions with peers and teachers on an emotional level in relation to an academic context.

3.3.3. Document Analysis:

In addition to interview and observational data, Anas's academic performance reports, teacher notes, and school records were examined.

3.4. Theoretical Framework

The underlying basis of the study is Bowlby's Attachment Theory, which highlights the significance of secure emotional attachments during a child's development. The theory's goal is to comprehend:

- The impact of Anas's relationship with his working mother on his security.
- His teacher's role in providing emotional support and engagement with school.
- The interaction between home and school in the context of his learning behavior.

3.5. Data Analysis

The recurring themes of academic engagement, emotional support, and attachment were found by using thematic analysis to examine the collected data. The interviews, observations, and school records were used to create these main themes, which were then linked to Bowlby's ideas.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Informed permission was given by Anas's teacher and mother. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were used. Regarding academic and personal information, the research was sensitive and maintained confidentiality. In challenging socioeconomic circumstances, this method provides a methodical but flexible means of investigating how attachment theory-driven family-teacher cooperation affects a child's development.

4.0. Discussion

A 7-year-old boy called Anas, who comes from a low-income, single-parent family, shows the common consequences of attachment disruption in a child's socialization, emotional maturity, and school engagement. Anas's lack of stable emotional attachment to his mother and social detachment are examined using Bowlby's Attachment Theory. In reducing these problems, the study also underlines the importance of teacher-student interaction and teacher-family cooperation.

4.1. Consequences of Disrupted Bonds

Bowlby (1969) stressed that early attachment bonds in a kid constitute the foundation for his self-esteem, emotional control, and exploratory behaviors. He is deprived of the necessary emotional stability and attentive attention because of his mother's extended hours of after-school independence due to her job schedule (9 AM–5 PM). Social avoidance and low self-esteem are sustained by Anas's evaluation that he has adapted to solitude by eating, playing, and doing his assignments by himself. He has the capacity to contribute fully to class, but his hesitancy to do so reflects an internalized belief that his efforts would go unnoticed and unappreciated.

According to attachment theory, kids with insecure attachments often exhibit the following behaviors:

- Withdrawn social engagement (avoidant behaviors)
- Diminished academic drive (because of insufficient motivation)
- Torpid engagement (emotional distress)

Anas's situation highlights a troubling sociological issue: the balance between economic security and emotional presence. Material support is provided by his mother's job, but her absence leaves an emotional void. Bowlby argues that "a child's need for a safe haven is as necessary as food and shelter," and this strengthens his argument even more.

4.2. Teachers' Roles in Filling the Gaps Left by Insecure Attachments

Anas's instructor takes on a larger role in his life since he lacks a stable attachment figure at home. As to Bowlby's "Ideologies of Secondary Attachment Figures," teachers have the potential to provide children from unstable households with a foundation of emotional stability. Anas's teacher has been interviewed, and it seems that while she respects his intelligence, she has not used any specific techniques to provide emotional support.

Various theorists suggest that educators may address attachment concerns by:

- Establishing trust through personalized interactions
- Facilitating participation in relaxed, low-stakes environments
- Delivering reliable affirmative feedback

For Anas, a more attachment-sensitive teaching strategy—like mentorship or organized peer activities—might boost his self-esteem and increase his participation in class.

It is a staggering fact that both the mother and the teacher of Anas are employed independently. Because his mother never talks about his issues with the educational institution because of her tight schedule, his inability to react leaves the instructor unable to find emotional reinforcement and presents him as a cruel individual instead

4.2.1. Effective Interventions

- 1) **Parent-teacher Meeting:** For discussions about academic success and the emotional needs of the child.
- 2) **Home School Communication:** To get in touch with phone calls, emails, diary writing, short notes and voice notes play a crucial role in helping and making things better.
- 3) **Community Support:** Research creche or after-school activities to help Anas feel less alone.

4.3. Social Consequences: Reevaluating the Priorities of Parents

This case poses moral queries regarding contemporary parenting conundrums:

1. Is it possible for material security to make up for emotional neglect?
2. How can companies help single parents more effectively?

Anas's story is an example of a bigger problem where parents must give up valuable time with their children because of money problems. Psychologists contend that the ages of 1 to 7 are critical for attachment formation, and neglect during this developmental stage may result in enduring emotional deficiencies.

5.0. Findings

The following significant conclusions about Anas's case were drawn from the researcher's observations and interviews:

5.1. Low Self Steam

Anas shows indications of low self-esteem, which is caused by a lack of emotional support at home. His unwillingness to participate in class activities indicates that he does not think his input will be appreciated.

5.2. Desocialization (Social Withdrawal)

Anas avoids social interactions with peers because they have grown accustomed to being alone for extended periods of time. His emotional detachment is reinforced by his lack of socialization, which makes it challenging for him to build relationships.

5.3. Lack of Maternal Attachment

Anas suffers from maternal deprivation syndrome, which Bowlby defined as a disorder that is harmful to emotional development, because of his mother's rigorous work schedule.

His lack of emotional support due to the lack of a stable attachment figure has contributed to his reclusive behavior.

5.4. Absence of Active Engagement in the Classroom

Despite having strong intelligence, Anas hardly contributes to class debates or group work. He is portrayed as being quiet and no longer seeking favors and attention, which is a sign of acquired helplessness.

5.5. Absence of Interest in Learning

Without a supportive family, Anas is less motivated to succeed academically. If he is not emotionally driven, he will not be inspired to thrive academically or become a proactive student.

5.6. Maternal Deprivation Syndrome

The hypothesis of maternal deprivation postulated by Bowlby holds that extended separation with a primary caretaker will result in emotional and social deprivation and this is consistent with the situation of Anas. He has lost his social skills; he has difficulties in establishing healthy relationships because of the physical and emotional absenteeism of his mother.

5.7. Results

The state of Anas is a reminder of how severe the ramifications of being deprived of emotional support at a tender age are. His low self-esteem, his social non-adaptation, and interest in academic studies are all directly linked to maternal deprivation and insecure attachment. Without treatment, such problems can go through to adolescence and adulthood and hence this can have an impact on his social and mental well-being.

Key Needs Emphasized in the Case

- It points out the importance of there being more emotional attachments to Anas and his mother.
- Interventions by teachers to support kids emotionally in the classroom.
- Policies and community actions to help single parents manage childcare and employment.

These findings help support the hypothesis of Bowlby that full development of a child is possible under safe attachment; otherwise, children such as Anas are at the risk of social and psychological disorders that may extend over a lifetime.

5.8. Conclusion

In this study, Bowlby Attachment Theory is employed to explain how maternal deprivation and insecure infant attachment severely deprives the overall development of the child through the case of Anas, a 7-year-old boy. As per the findings, the necessary though prolonged absence of his mother at work has resulted in adverse effects such as social alienation, academic disengagement, and emotional detachment, even though he is of brilliant intelligence. The study highlights the fact of poor utilization of teachers as potential secondary attachment figures and the dire need of institutional support to working single parents. To enhance parent-child relationship, it advocates the attachment sensitive teaching as well as the legislative changes arguing that the most important factor that influences the good child development is the emotional stability, not the financial support. Anas case is good evidence supporting the consideration of the emotional needs of children as the first priority in our system.

5.9. Recommendations

For Parents:

- Find a support system in the community or get a flexible work schedule that leaves you with more time with your kids.
- Attach more importance to giving emotional support to the child rather than material goods.

For Teachers:

- Use teaching methods that take attachment into account, such as trauma-informed care.
- Find and help "quiet strugglers" like Anas by giving them one-on-one attention.

For Policymakers:

- Advocate that low-income families can get childcare programs at affordable rates.
- Bring in workplace policies which allow parents to engage in the educational process of their children.

The present study indicates that the culture should change to understand that the mental and emotional well-being of a child should determine what defines a good life.

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