

**AQA A LEVEL
PSYCHOLOGY**

tutor2u 

TOPIC ESSAYS

Attachment



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With reference to reciprocity and interactional synchrony, discuss infant–caregiver interactions. (16 marks)

Interactions between caregivers and infants provide an insight into the type and nature of attachment. Reciprocity is when an infant responds to the actions of another by turn taking. The actions of the primary caregiver elicit a response from the infant. The interaction between both individuals flows back and forth. Meltzoff & Moore (1977) conducted an observational study whereby an adult displayed facial expressions or a hand gesture. Following the display from the model, a dummy was removed from the child's mouth and their expressions filmed. There was an association between the infants' behaviour and that of the adult model, showing reciprocity.

Interactional synchrony takes place when infants mirror the actions or emotions of another person, e.g. their facial expressions. The child will move their body, or carry out the same act as their caregiver simultaneously, and the two are said to be synchronised. This serves to sustain communication between the two caregiver and infant.

One limitation of research into caregiver–infant interactions is the questionable reliability of testing children. This is because infants move their mouths and wave their arms constantly, which is an issue for researchers investigating intentional behaviour. Therefore, we cannot be certain that the infants were engaging in interactional synchrony or reciprocity, as some of the behaviour may have occurred by chance. This questions the validity of research in relation to reciprocity and interactional synchrony and suggests that psychologists should be cautious when interpreting the findings from research in this area.

There are methodological problems with studying interactional synchrony using observational methods. There is the possibility of observer bias where the researchers consciously or unconsciously interpret behaviour to support their findings. To address this problem, more than one observer should be used to examine the inter-observer reliability of the observations. Recent research by Koepke *et al.* (1983) failed to replicate the findings of Meltzoff & Moore which suggests that their results of research examining infant–caregiver interactions are unreliable.

A further criticism of Meltzoff & Moore's research is that recent research has found that only securely attached infants

A good introduction outlining key specialist terminology from the onset.

A brief outline of relevant research into reciprocity highlights deeper understanding of the concept.

Both key terms named in the question have been fully addressed.

An interesting criticism to begin the evaluative commentary.

A well-elaborated limitation of research into interactional synchrony as an infant–caregiver interaction.

This evaluation point is developed well to enhance the

engage in interactional synchrony. Isabella *et al.* (1989) found that the more securely attached the infant, the greater the level of interactional synchrony. This suggests that not all children engage in interactional synchrony and that Meltzoff & Moore's original findings may have overlooked individual differences which could be a mediating factor.

Psychologists suggest that caregiver–infant interactions, such as reciprocity, are present from birth and therefore are the product of nature in order to help infants form and maintain an attachment. However, such innate behaviours do not act in isolation and interact with the environment (caregivers) to prompt a response (e.g. attention). Consequently, researchers should consider the interaction of innate infant behaviours with the environment (e.g. their caregivers) to fully appreciate and understand the complex nature of caregiver–infant interactions.

[~475 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This is an excellent response to a complex question which demands two concepts to be discussed in a balanced way. The answer provides detailed knowledge of both reciprocity and interactional synchrony, which are highly accurate. Furthermore, the discussion is centred to provide an in-depth commentary that is thorough and effective, with appropriate support from relevant research studies.

discussion.

A relevant reference to the nature–nurture debate is tied into the answer.

Outline and evaluate the role of the father in the development of attachment. (16 marks)

Traditionally, the role of the father in attachment would have been limited, as they would go to work to provide resources for the family whilst the mothers took care of the children. Although recently the role of the father has changed significantly. However, psychologists disagree over the exact role of the father. Some researchers claim that men are simply not equipped to form an attachment. Such psychologists point to biological evidence which suggests that the hormone oestrogen underlies caring behaviour in women and the lack of oestrogen in men is why they are unable to form a close attachment. Other researchers argue that fathers do not take on a caregiver role and, in fact, provide a different role, as a playmate. Finally, some researchers argue that fathers can demonstrate sensitive responsiveness and react to the needs of their children and thus can form a strong emotional tie or bond.

A concise introduction to the role of the father in attachment.

There is research evidence that provides support for the role of the father as a 'playmate'. Research by Geiger (1996) found that fathers' play interactions were more exciting in comparison to mothers'. However, the mothers' play interactions were more affectionate and nurturing. This suggests that the role of the father is, in fact, as a playmate and not as a sensitive parent who responds to the needs of their children. These results also confirm that the mother takes on more of a nurturing role.

An accurate and detailed overview of the different roles fathers are thought to play in attachment.

A well-elaborated evaluation point drawing on relevant research support.

Furthermore, research evidence also suggests that fathers do not provide a sensitive and nurturing attachment. Hrdy (1999) found that fathers were less able to detect low levels of infant distress, in comparison to mothers. These results appear to support the biological explanations highlighted above; the lack of oestrogen in men means that fathers are not biologically equipped to form close attachments with their children. This suggests that the role of the father is, to some extent, biologically determined and that a father's role is restricted because of their biological makeup. This provides further evidence that fathers are not able to provide a sensitive and nurturing type of attachment, as they are unable to detect stress in their children.

The second evaluation point is well developed, referring to issues and debates appropriately in the context of the role of the father.

However, research suggests that fathers are able to form secure attachments with their children if they are in an intimate or close marriage. Belsky *et al.* (2009) found that males who reported higher levels of marital intimacy also

An excellent evaluation point highlighting the positive role that fathers can play in attachment.

displayed a secure father–infant attachment, whereas males with lower levels of marital intimacy displayed insecure father–infant attachments. This suggests that males can form secure attachments with their children; however, the strength of the attachment depends on the father and mother relationship. Therefore, while fathers may be biologically determined to form a different relationship with their children, this relationship is mediated by their environment (the intimacy of their marriage) suggesting that while a father’s role may be determined, it is only determined to an extent and therefore a softer view of determinism is more appropriate.

[~475 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This is a sufficiently detailed and accurate account of the role of the father in attachment providing the appropriate content for a sixteen-mark essay question. The evaluation is well-detailed, thorough and effective.

Outline and evaluate animal studies of attachment. (16 marks)

Lorenz conducted an experiment where he divided goose eggs into two batches. One batch was hatched naturally by the mother and the second batch were placed in an incubator, with Lorenz making sure he was the first large moving object that the goslings saw after hatching.

An accurate summary of Lorenz's research is provided.

Lorenz found that straight after birth the naturally hatched goslings followed the mother goose, whereas the incubator-hatched goslings followed Lorenz. Lorenz noted that this imprinting only occurred within a critical period of 4–25 hours after hatching and the relationship persisted over time and proved to be irreversible.

Good use of specialist terminology: imprinting.

Since Lorenz only studied animals, we cannot generalise the results to humans as we are unable to conclude that they would behave in the same way. The attachment formation in mammals appears to be very different to that of bird species. Human parents, specifically mothers, show more emotional reactions to their offspring and can form attachments beyond the first few hours after birth. So, whilst some of Lorenz's findings have influenced our understanding of development and attachment formation, caution must be applied when drawing wider conclusions about the results.

An effective evaluation point drawing on the use of animals.

Later research has cast doubt on some of the conclusions which Lorenz drew. For example, Guiton *et al.* (1966) found that chickens would imprint on yellow washing up gloves if that was the largest moving object they first saw after birth. Later, they would then try to mate with that object in adulthood. However, they disagreed with Lorenz's predictions that this relationship persists and is irreversible. This is because with experience, the chickens could eventually learn to prefer mating with other chickens instead, suggesting that the effects of imprinting may not be as permanent as initially thought.

An excellent evaluation point, drawing on research to support the argument.

Knowledge of Harlow's research is clearly evident.

Harlow investigated attachment behaviour in rhesus monkeys. He constructed two surrogate mothers: one harsh 'wire mother' and a second soft 'towel mother'. The amount of time that the baby monkey spent with each mother was recorded. Findings showed that the baby monkeys preferred to make contact with the soft 'towel mother' and the monkeys would even stretch across to the 'wire mother' for food whilst still clinging onto the 'towel mother'. Harlow concluded that baby rhesus monkeys have an innate drive to seek contact comfort suggesting that attachment with

A well-detailed explanation of the findings and conclusion.

parents is formed through an emotional need for security.

The results from Harlow's study are of large practical value since they provide insight into attachment formation which has important real-world applications that can be useful in a range of practical situations. For example, Howe (1998) reports that the knowledge gained from Harlow's research has helped social workers to understand risk factors in neglect and abuse cases with human children who can then serve to prevent it occurring or, at the very least, recognise when to intervene. In addition, there are practical applications which are used in the care of captive wild monkeys in zoos or breeding programmes to ensure that they have adequate attachment figures as part of their care.

Harlow was criticised heavily for the ethics of his research on animals. The baby rhesus monkeys suffered greatly in terms of emotional separation from their biological mother at such an early age due to the procedure Harlow used. If the species of primates are considered sufficiently human-like to generalise the results, then it stands to reason that the effects of psychological harm that they will have endured are similar to that of a human baby. There is, however, the question of whether the insight obtained was sufficiently important to psychologists' understanding of attachment that Harlow was justified in his approach.

[~575 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This essay demonstrates an exceptionally clear understanding of two relevant animal studies in attachment. The outline knowledge is accurate and detailed, striking a balance between the two studies in equal depth. The evaluation commentary is thorough, effective and focused on the demands of the question. The evaluation draws on suitable issues and debates and research evidence to provide an interesting discussion.

A simple yet effective evaluation point which highlights the real-world application of Harlow's research.

This evaluation point highlights an important question in the use of animals in psychological research.

Outline and evaluate Bowlby's explanation of attachment. (16 marks)

Bowlby argued that infants are born with an innate tendency to form attachments with their parents to increase chances of survival.

A good introduction outlining key specialist terminology from the onset.

According to Bowlby, infants possess inborn social releasers, which unlock a biological tendency in adults to care for them. Examples include 'baby face' features or smiling and cooing. Babies must form an attachment during the critical period which is between three and six months of age. However, Bowlby later acknowledged that infants could form an attachment after this period (up to three years of age); however, he maintained that the successful formation of an attachment would be increasingly difficult after this initial period. Bowlby said that if an attachment didn't form during this time frame then the child would be damaged for life – socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

Clear understanding of Bowlby's explanation is evident.

Furthermore, infants form one special attachment which Bowlby called monotropy. Through the monotropic attachment, the infant forms an internal working model which is a mental template for future relationship expectations. If there's a healthy attachment with the caregiver then the infant will develop strong relationships later in life. However, if the child has a negative relationship with their caregiver, they will have difficult social and romantic relationships.

An excellent outline of Bowlby's work and the monotropic explanation of attachment.

A strength of Bowlby's theory comes from research by Hazan and Shaver (1987). They used a self-report questionnaire called 'The Love Quiz' to assess the internal working model. They found a positive correlation between early attachment types and later adult relationships. This supports Bowlby's idea of an internal working model and suggests that our early childhood experiences do affect our later adult relationships. Sroufe *et al.* (2005) also provide evidence for this in their Minnesota parent-child study, showing the outcome of early attachment type being carried forward and projected onto expectations of subsequent relationships.

An effective evaluation point drawing on multiple studies to support Bowlby's explanation of attachment.

Bowlby's theory suggests that attachments are an innate mechanism to aid survival, therefore supporting a nature view. His notion of an internal working model suggests that adult relationships are, to some extent, determined by an innate mechanism shaped by our nurturing early relationship experiences. This suggests that an interaction of nature and nurture is critical when considering the effects of early attachments and the internal working model, and that

An interesting discussion point about where Bowlby's theory sits with the nature and nurture debate.

psychologists should consider both biological and environmental factors when examining attachment.

There is mixed evidence for the importance of monotropy. Schaffer and Emmerson (1964) refute the idea that infants must form one special attachment to their caregiver which supersedes all others and provides the foundation for subsequent, multiple attachments. They did recognise that some infants do, in fact, follow this pattern but that there are others who can form multiple attachments with different caregivers at the same time (e.g. the mother and father simultaneously). This goes against Bowlby's notion of 'monotropy' which forms a central part of his theory of attachment.

An interesting counter-argument is provided and linked to the question.

There is an alternative explanation for attachment. Kagan (1984) proposed the temperament hypothesis which suggests that a child's genetically inherited personality traits (temperament) have a role to play in forming an attachment with a caregiver. It is thought that infants have differing temperaments because of their biological makeup which means that some are more sociable and 'easy' and others are more anxious and 'difficult' babies. It is argued that Bowlby ignored the role of temperament, preferring instead to focus on the early childhood experiences and quality of attachment, which was an oversight since personality differences in the child can influence whether they become securely or insecurely attached.

Another effective evaluation point, drawing on the role that temperament plays in explaining attachment formation.

[~575 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This is a highly detailed and accurate essay examining Bowlby's explanation of attachment. The use of specialist terminology is impressive. The evaluation is focused, thorough and effective. Overall, a remarkable account of the monotropic theory.

Outline and evaluate learning theory as an explanation of attachment. (16 marks)

Learning theory explains how infants learn to become attached through the processes of classical or operant conditioning. It is sometimes called the 'cupboard love' theory because of the focus on food.

A good introduction to the learning theory explanation of attachment.

Classical conditioning is learning by association. Before conditioning, food is an unconditioned stimulus (UCS) which produces an unconditioned response (UCR) of pleasure as a relief from hunger. The caregiver is a neutral stimulus (NS), who produces no conditioned response. During conditioning, the child associates the caregiver (NS) who feeds them with the food (UCS). Through repeated pairing, the caregiver becomes a conditioned stimulus (CS) who is associated with the pleasure from feeding. This results in the caregiver eliciting a conditioned response from the child and the formation of an attachment.

Effective use of key terminology relating to classical conditioning.

Operant conditioning proposes that when an infant feels hunger it is motivated to reduce the unpleasant feelings so cries to receive comfort. When the caregiver provides food, a feeling of pleasure is produced which is rewarding. Attachment will occur because the infant will seek the caregiver who can supply the reward.

A briefer explanation of operant conditioning but an appropriate balance for the 6 marks available for the outline.

Learning theory is undermined by research from Harlow. He found that baby rhesus monkeys spent more time with a soft towelling monkey which provided no food, in comparison to a wire monkey that provided food. This shows that baby monkeys do not form attachments based on presence of food alone and prefer contact comfort. These findings go against the learning theory explanation of attachment and suggest alternative processes may have been ignored. This counter-argument is further supported by Schaffer & Emmerson's research which demonstrated that infants formed attachments to their mothers despite often being fed by other carers.

Effective evaluation using key research to demonstrate the limitations of learning theory as an explanation for attachment.

There are methodological issues with the research evidence for learning theory. Much of the supporting research, for example Pavlov's research on dogs and Skinner's research with rats and pigeons, is criticised for its over-reliance on animals. This is an issue because psychologists argue that behaviourist explanations provide an oversimplified account of attachment formation, which is in fact a complex emotional bond between a human infant and their caregiver. As a result,

Specialist vocabulary used well to enhance the evaluative commentary.

the learning theory explanation may lack validity since it is difficult to generalise animal findings to humans with confidence that they would behave in the same way.

There is an alternative to the learning theory to explain human attachment, as proposed by Bowlby. He believed that infants have an innate readiness during the critical period to form an attachment to their caregiver to protect them from harm whilst they are young and vulnerable. The evolutionary perspective not only explains how an attachment forms, but also why – to enhance survival. It is accepted that Bowlby's theory provides a more comprehensive explanation of attachment rather than reducing a complex behaviour to a simple stimulus–response association.

The learning theory explanation suggests that attachments are the result of learning which therefore supports a nurture-based view of behaviour. Consequently, such theories are reductionist (environmental) as they reduce a complex behaviour, the formation of an attachment between infants and their caregivers, to a simple stimulus–response association. Many psychologists would argue that human attachments are far more complex and learning explanations provide an overly simplified account of human attachment.

[~525 Words]

Examiner Style Comments: *Mark band 4*

This is a first-rate response to this question. The answer provides comprehensive knowledge of both classical and operant conditioning as explanations for attachment, both of which are extremely accurate. Furthermore, the discussion provides an in-depth evaluative commentary that is detailed and effective with an excellent use of specialist terminology and reference to appropriate issues and debates.

Appropriate comparison drawn to Bowlby's theory of attachment in this penultimate evaluation point.

Sound understanding of issues and debates demonstrated here.

Discuss the strange situation as a way of assessing types of attachment. (16 marks)

Ainsworth devised a controlled observation called the Strange Situation to assess types of attachment in 9–18 month old infants. The strange Situation involves placing a child and their mother in a novel environment of mild stress, whereby they would be observed and videoed through a one-way mirror during a series of eight different situations.

An excellent introduction, setting the scene for this essay.

The purpose of the Strange Situation is to measure four key behaviours, including: exploration behaviours – how the child explores the environment and whether they use the mother as a safe base; separation anxiety – how the child responds to/behaves when the mother leaves the room; stranger anxiety – how the child responds in the presence of a stranger; and reunion behaviours – how the child acts when reunited with their mother.

A well-detailed and accurate summary of Ainsworth's Strange Situation is presented.

Depending on how the child responds in the Strange Situation would lead to one of three attachment classifications: secure, insecure–avoidant and insecure–resistant. In her original experiment, Ainsworth found the following distribution of attachment types: securely attached – 66%, insecure–avoidant – 22%, and insecure–resistant – 12%.

Knowledge of Ainsworth's key findings is accurate.

A methodological weakness of Ainsworth's Strange Situation is the type of observation she used, which was an overt observation. The parents in Ainsworth's study knew they were being observed through the one-way mirror and therefore may have displayed demand characteristics. This meant that the mothers may have been overly affectionate towards their children as they believed this is the behaviour that the scenario demanded of them. In turn, this could have altered the children's behaviour and therefore lowers the internal validity of the experiment making the Strange Situation a less valid method of assessing attachment.

A sound evaluation point which provides a well-detailed limitation of the observation methodology used.

Furthermore, Ainsworth's Strange Situation demonstrates a culture bias. Her theory and methods were based on Western ideals in relation to infant behaviour, categorising a higher proportion of children from other cultures as insecure–avoidant (e.g. Japan) or insecure–resistant (e.g. Germany). Consequently, the Strange Situation may not be a valid method of assessing attachment in other, non-American, cultures.

An interesting issue enhances the discussion here.

However, the Strange Situation method of assessing

A counter-argument is used

attachment type is said to have high reliability. The observations took place under strict and controlled methods (including video recording) using predetermined behavioural categories. Since Ainsworth has several observers watching and coding the same infant behaviours, agreement on attachment classifications could be ensured. Ainsworth *et al.* (1978) found 94% agreement between observers and when inter-observer/inter-rater reliability is assumed to a high degree the findings are considered more meaningful.

well here to balance the evaluation between strengths and limitations.

Finally, there is the possibility that Ainsworth's classification system of attachment types is incomplete. Main & Solomon (1986) conducted subsequent research whereby they analysed several hundred Strange Situation episodes via videotape and suggested that Ainsworth overlooked a fourth type. It was noted that some infants showed inconsistent patterns of behaviour which they termed Type D; insecure-disorganised. Further support for this claim comes from a meta-analysis of studies from the US conducted by van Ijzendoorn *et al.* (1999) which found that 15% of infants were, in fact, classified as Type D, suggesting that Ainsworth's original assessment of attachment is unable to fully explain all of the different types of attachments in children.

A range of appropriate research evidence is used to support the point being made.

[~500 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This is a well-structured and coherent essay discussing Ainsworth's Strange Situation. An accurate and well-detailed account of her methodology to assess attachment is presented with a range of effective evaluation points used as critique. The essay is clear and focused with specialist terminology used appropriately throughout.

Outline and evaluate research into cultural variations in attachment. (16 marks)

van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg (1988) conducted a meta-analysis of 32 studies from eight different countries that had used Ainsworth's Strange Situation. In total, the results of over 1,990 infants were included in the analysis. Their research produced several key findings in relation to the distribution of attachment in different countries with secure attachment being the most common type of attachment in all cultures examined. Japan and Israel (collectivist cultures) showed higher levels of insecure-resistant attachment whereas Germany (individualistic culture) showed higher levels of insecure-avoidant attachment.

Tronick *et al.* (1992) studied the Efe tribe from Zaire who live in extended family groups. The infants are looked after and breastfed by different women within the social group but infants sleep with their own mothers at night. Although the childrearing practices differ from Western norms, the infants still showed a preference for a primary attachment figure at six months old, echoing the notion that secure attachment is the most common globally.

A criticism of van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg's research is that they may have been comparing countries and not, in fact, cultures. For example, they compared Great Britain with Israel in their meta-analysis. Within each country there may be many different subcultures, each with their own unique ways of rearing children. Interestingly, the researchers noted that variance within countries was far greater than between countries. It therefore stands to reason that they did, in fact, collect data on subcultures within the countries they investigated rather than the whole nation.

Additionally, the sample used in their investigation was biased with 27/32 of the studies in their meta-analysis carried out in individualistic cultures. Therefore, their results are biased towards individualistic norms and values so we cannot accurately generalise the results to collectivist cultures, lowering the population validity of the findings.

Furthermore, van Ijzendoorn's research further highlights the culture bias demonstrated in Ainsworth's Strange Situation, by reporting significant differences in the distribution of attachment types (secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-resistant) in different cultures. For example, Germany has the highest rate of insecure-avoidant attachment which may be

A well-detailed account of a prominent study into cultural variations in attachment with key findings presented clearly.

A second creditworthy study which illustrates both cross-cultural differences and similarities clearly.

An effective evaluation point highlighting the problems with studying attachment cross-culturally.

A simple, yet effective, evaluation point exploring population validity.

This final evaluation point poses an interesting and in-depth examination of cultural bias, demonstrating significant understanding in this area.

the result of different childrearing practices and not a more 'insecure' population. In Germany there is a general desire to keep some interpersonal distance between parents and infants; therefore, parents would generally discourage proximity-seeking behaviours within the Strange Situation which might bias the results of attachment research in Germany which therefore incorrectly categorise children as 'insecure'. This suggests that the meta-analysis research investigating cultural variations should be treated with caution as the underlying methodology of the studies (the Strange Situation) suffers from a significant culture bias. Using a methodology of assessment beyond the sample for which it was designed is referred to as an imposed etc. This matters because attachment behaviours mean different things for different cultures and so the results may not be valid when used with samples from non-western cultures.

[~475 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This essay expresses sound knowledge and understanding of two relevant cross-cultural variation studies in attachment. The outline is accurate and detailed, striking a balance between breadth and depth across the two studies selected. The evaluation commentary is thorough, effective and focused on the demands of the question. The evaluation draws on the suitable issue of cultural bias to provide an interesting commentary.

Psychologists have studied children who have lived in institutions such as orphanages. Outline and evaluate research into the effects of institutionalisation. (16 marks)

Rutter and Songua-Barke conducted a longitudinal study of 165 children who had spent their early years in a Romanian orphanage. 111 of these children were adopted before two years old, and the others were adopted by four years old. They were compared to a control group of 52 British children. The social, cognitive and physical development of all infants was examined at regular intervals.

A well-summarised outline of this key piece of institutionalisation research.

Before adoption, the Romanian orphans showed delayed development and were physically smaller with many classified as 'mentally retarded'. Almost all the Romanian orphans who were adopted before the age of six months caught up on these measures of development, when compared to the British control group. The Romanian children who were adopted after six months continued to show significant deficits in all areas of development; they were also more likely to experience difficulties with peer relationships and often had disinhibited attachments.

Effective description of the findings which demonstrates the effects of institutionalisation.

One strength of Rutter and Songua-Barke's research findings is their real-world application to social services. Their study helped change the way that children are looked after, especially when it comes to the adoption process. Historically, mothers were encouraged to keep their babies for a substantial period by which time the critical period for attachment formation may have passed. Nowadays, infants are adopted as early as one-week old and Singer *et al.* (1985) states that children are as securely attached to their adoptive mothers as biologically related families. This demonstrates the benefit of institutionalisation research to help improve the lives of children.

An elaborated evaluative point about the real-world implications of research, with evidence provided.

Another strength of Rutter and Songua-Barke's research is that their research was longitudinal. Their research took place over many years allowing them to assess both the short-term and long-term effects of institutionalisation and subsequent benefits from adoption. Therefore, the results of their research appear to be a valid representation of the effects of being placed in institutional care as well as portraying the results of receiving quality follow-on emotional caregiving in a timely manner.

Highlighting strengths of the methodology, using key terminology, is creditworthy when applied explicitly to the question.

A criticism of Romanian orphan research is that deprivation is only one factor in development. The orphans experienced

The final evaluation point balances the essay well with a

very little or no mental stimulation and were often malnourished. This suggests that there are multiple risk factors involved in ascertaining the effects of institutional care. Furthermore, Romanian orphan studies suggest that an infant's life chances are determined by their early experiences. However, not all infants in institutional care experience the same negative effects which highlights the importance of an idiographic approach within the research. Consequently, it is difficult to interpret the results of longitudinal studies as the sole effect of deprivation, as there are many different influences that affected these children, such as living in poverty, which are not fully considered in such studies.

[~450 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This is a well-detailed and accurate account of Rutter and Songua-Barke's research on the effects of institutionalisation. It is equally possible to access the top mark band by referring to one study in depth, such as this, or two studies in less detail to achieve breadth in the response. The evaluation is thorough and effective in most places, and the final paragraph provides an interesting high-level discussion of the multiple risk factors involved which serves as an effective conclusion.

criticism and makes an appropriate reference to the issue of idiographic/nomothetic research.

Discuss Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation. (16 marks)

Maternal deprivation, which is the prolonged loss of emotional care from the mother figure, can have serious long-term consequences. Bowlby believed that ongoing maternal deprivation would have negative effects on a child in terms of their emotional development, leading to possible mental health problems or maladjustment.

A good introduction outlining psychological terminology from the onset.

Although Bowlby believed that the effects of maternal deprivation would be most acute during the critical period, he noted that there was a risk of adverse consequences up until three years old. He also acknowledged that the presence of a mother-substitute could prevent the long-term consequences if they were able to provide adequate and sensitive surrogate emotional care.

An effective balanced view of Bowlby's theory is presented here.

Bowlby claimed that maternal deprivation could result in delayed intellectual development which would lead to low IQ. Furthermore, Bowlby also argued that deprivation could lead to affectionless psychopathy characterised by individuals with a lack of shame or guilt. This leads to further problems, such as difficulty forming relationships and a higher probability of criminal tendencies.

An interesting outline of the key problems associated with maternal deprivation.

Bowlby provided research support for his theory of maternal deprivation. He examined 88 children, from 5–16 who were referred to a guidance clinic where he worked. 44 of these children were thieves. Bowlby identified 14 of these thieves as affectionless psychopaths. He then noted that 86% of the affectionless psychopaths experienced early and prolonged attachment separations in comparison to just 17% of the 'other thieves' and 4% of the control group. These findings suggest a link between early ongoing separation from the primary caregiver and later social maladjustment. The maternal deprivation hypothesis appears to lead to affectionless psychopathy and greater risk of engaging in antisocial behaviour.

A strength of Bowlby's theory is presented with reference to appropriate research findings.

There is evidence which counters Bowlby's maternal deprivation hypothesis claims. Lewis (1944) replicated the juvenile thieves study with a larger sample of children but did not find that early deprivation, caused by prolonged separation from the primary caregiver, predicted a greater likelihood of criminal behaviour in the youths. This casts doubt on Bowlby's theory as it suggests that other factors may be involved which mediate the consequences of maternal deprivation. For example, Barrett (1997) found that securely

A valid counter-argument balances the evidence for and against the impact of maternal deprivation.

attached children are more resistant to the negative effects of maternal deprivation in comparison to insecurely attached children.

Bowlby's theory and the research of Barrett highlight the importance of nature and nurture. Bowlby puts forward a critical period of development which demonstrates the importance of a biological mechanism; however, this mechanism is shaped by an infant's interactions, or lack of interactions, with their caregivers. This demonstrates the importance of considering the interaction of nature and nurture when examining maternal deprivation.

Finally, Bowlby was criticised for not making the distinction clear between deprivation and privation. Rutter (1982) suggests that privation – not having had the opportunity to form an attachment at all – leads to more damaging consequences for the child than experiencing a broken attachment in their early years. Rutter disapproved of Bowlby's use of the word deprivation for he believed that Bowlby was confusing the two concepts and using the term interchangeably.

[~500 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This is a well-detailed and accurate account of Bowlby's maternal deprivation hypothesis and its impact on childhood development. The evaluative commentary is detailed, thorough and effective as it draws on a range of interesting points. The use of specialist terminology is well-established, which adds clarity and focus to the essay.

Commentary is supported with embedded reference to the nature and nurture debate.

The final evaluation point serves to further extend the discussion about Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation theory.

Jaqueline was removed from her biological family and placed into institutional care when she was only five months old because both of her parents were heavy drug users. Although she was adopted when she was six-years old, she has problematic relationship with her adoptive parents now that she is in secondary school. Her teachers are often phoning home to say that she has been in trouble that day, often for violent outburst towards others. She struggles to engage in lessons and doesn't care much about hurting the feelings of other students in the class.

Discuss Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation. Refer to the experience of Jaqueline as part of your discussion. (16 marks)

Bowlby proposed his theory of maternal deprivation approximately 20 years before his theory of attachment. According to Bowlby, maternal deprivation, which is the loss of emotional care, can have serious long-term consequences on a child's physical, intellectual and emotional well-being.

Bowlby put forward the notion of a critical period. He believed that the effects of maternal deprivation would be at their most acute during the critical period (3–6 months); he also noted there was a risk of adverse consequences up until three years old. However, Bowlby did acknowledge that the presence of a mother-substitute could prevent the long-term consequences of deprivation if the substitute was able to provide the necessary emotional care. As Jaqueline is unlikely to have formed an attachment while she was in institutional care and she was adopted at the age of six, she has passed the critical period and did not have a mother-substitute who could prevent the long-term consequences of deprivation that she is now experiencing.

If deprivation does occur, Bowlby outlined a series of long-term consequences that could affect the individual. Bowlby claimed that maternal deprivation could result in delayed intellectual development which would lead to low IQ. Furthermore, Bowlby also argued that deprivation could lead to emotional maladjustment in the form of affectionless psychopathy characterised by individuals who feel no sense of shame or guilt. This results in other problems such as difficulty forming relationships and the possibility of crime. Jaqueline is demonstrating signs of delayed intellectual development as she is struggling to engage in her lessons, as well as showing signs of affectionless psychopathy, due to her lack of feelings when hurting other students and the difficulty she is experiencing when it comes to forming a relationship with her foster family.

Bowlby provided research support for his theory of maternal deprivation. Bowlby examined 88 children, from 5–16 who

Interesting start to set the scene for the rest of the essay.

Effective use of key terminology.

Appropriate selection of material applied to the case of Jaqueline.

Accurate and detailed outline of the effects of maternal deprivation, related specifically to the scenario.

A strength of Bowlby's theory is presented with reference to appropriate research findings.

Reference to Jaqueline remains consistent throughout the

were referred to a guidance clinic. 44 of these children were thieves; Bowlby identified 14 of these thieves as affectionless psychopaths. Bowlby found that 86% of the affectionless psychopaths experienced early and prolonged attachment separations in comparison to just 17% of the 'other thieves' and 4% of the control group. These findings suggest a link between early separations and later social maladjustment. The maternal deprivation hypothesis appears to lead to affectionless psychopathy and antisocial behaviour—the group of 86%, also suffered from prolonged and early separation which explains Jaqueline's affectionless and antisocial behaviour.

outline and evaluation elements of the essay.

However, research also demonstrates that not all children are affected by deprivation in the same way. Barrett (1997) reported that securely attached children are able to cope better with deprivation in comparison to insecurely attached children. Interestingly, Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation suggests that children who are deprived of an attachment, usually within a critical period of development, will suffer negative long-term consequences (e.g. emotional maladjustment, mental health problems, etc.). This suggests that an infant's life chances, like Jaqueline's, are determined by their early attachment experiences. However, Barrett contradicts this assumption and suggests that life chances are not determined and can be mediated by other factors. This suggests that there are individual differences that play an important role in maternal deprivation and not all children will suffer the same negative consequences that Jacqueline is experiencing.

Commentary is supported with embedded reference to the determinism.

[~550 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This is a well-detailed and accurate account of Bowlby's maternal deprivation theory and how it applies to the case of Jaqueline. Effective material is drawn from the scenario provided and intertwined seamlessly into the discussion throughout the essay, demonstrating proficiency with this skill. The evaluative commentary is detailed, thorough and effective as it draws on a range of interesting points. The use of specialist terminology is well-established which adds clarity and focus to the essay.

Outline and evaluate research into the influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships. (16 marks)

The internal working model of an infant is thought to predict the likely outcomes of behaviour in childhood and adulthood. Kerns (1994) found that securely attached infants are more inclined to have good quality peer relationships during childhood, whilst infants with insecure attachment types are likely to have difficulties with making or maintaining friendships. Sroufe *et al.* (2005) conducted the Minnesota child–parent study and found that infants who were rated high in social competence during childhood were more empathetic, popular and felt less isolated.

Hazan and Shaver reported a positive correlation between early attachment type and experiences in love. Those who reported secure attachments in childhood were the most likely to have loving and lasting romantic relationships in adulthood. Respondents to the questionnaire whose answers indicated an insecure–avoidant attachment type from infancy were more likely to report feelings of dislike in relation to intimacy. Those individuals with an insecure–resistant attachment type were more likely to have shorter relationships compared to secure respondents.

There is mixed research in determining continuity of attachment type from childhood to adulthood. Zimmerman (2000) suggests that infant attachment type and the quality of relationships with parents during adolescence are not related. These findings do not support the role of the internal working model being important in the development of childhood and adult relationships, casting doubt on the emphasis placed on this concept by developmental psychologists such as Bowlby.

An issue with investigations of the influence of attachment on later relationships and the role the internal working model is that the research is correlational. Whilst an association has been found by many researchers indicating the quality of later relationships is heavily influenced by attachment type from infancy, this does not determine causality. Fraley *et al.* (2002) found that the correlations were not always strong positive ones either, with correlation coefficients ranging from +.10 to +.50. This means that correlational research in this area is not very reliable due to an unstable array of results.

There are methodological issues with assessing attachment type retrospectively. Much research, such as the ‘Love Quiz’

Key terminology is included from the offset.

Effective use of research in the outline to demonstrate accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding of the topic.

A good balance of description has been achieved between the effects on childhood and the effects on adulthood.

An appropriate limitation to begin the evaluation commentary.

Research findings used well to underline the issue of using correlational research findings in drawing conclusions about the effects on attachment in later life.

Evaluation is directly relevant to the content of the

by Hazan & Shaver rely upon self-report from adult participants about their memories from infancy and childhood. Recollections from years gone by are likely to be impaired and any answers provided may lack accuracy due to deterioration which lowers the internal validity of findings. This problem is further compounded by the possibility that individuals may not report honestly or even have an insight into their own template of expectations since the internal working model is an unconscious framework.

description and tied closely to the question.

Research into the impact of attachment on childhood and adult relationships have very set views on the outcomes for future behaviour. Consequently, this presents a deterministic view of behaviour which suggests that an infant's early attachment experiences will have severe consequences on childhood and adulthood behaviours including mental health. However, not all psychologists (e.g. humanistic psychologists) prescribe to deterministic views and many would argue that humans have free will and the ability of overcome negative childhood experiences and go on to form happy and healthy adult relationships.

Impressive use of issues and debates to complete the discussion.

[~500 words]

Examiner style comments: *Mark band 4*

This is a very comprehensive and precise essay examining the effects of attachment on childhood and adult relationships. The use of specialist terminology including reference to determinism is impressive. The evaluation element is focused, thorough and effective. Overall, an inspiring account of the effects of attachment in later life.

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ATTACHMENT ESSAYS

1. With reference to reciprocity and interactional synchrony, discuss infant-caregiver interactions. (16 marks)
 2. Outline and evaluate the role of the father in the development of attachment. (16 marks)
 3. Discuss animal studies of attachment. (16 marks)
 4. Outline and evaluate Bowlby's explanation of attachment. (16 marks)
 5. Outline and evaluate learning theory as an explanation of attachment. (16 marks)
 6. Discuss the Strange Situation as a way of assessing type of attachment. (16 marks)
 7. Outline and evaluate research into cultural variations in attachment. (16 marks)
 8. Jo was taken away from his alcoholic parents at six months old and placed in institutional care. He was adopted when he was seven years old, but has a problematic relationship with his adoptive parents. He is violent towards his younger brothers and is often in trouble at school. His last school report said, 'Jo struggles with classwork and seems to have little regard for the feelings of others.'
- Discuss Bowlby's maternal deprivation theory. Refer to the experience of Jo as part of your discussion. (16 marks)
9. Psychologists have studied children who have lived in institutions such as orphanages. Outline and evaluate research into the effects of institutionalisation. (16 marks)
 10. Outline and evaluate research into the influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships. (16 marks)