3.7 The Influence of Early Attachment on Later Relationships: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Outline Bailey et al.'s finding on intergenerational transmission of attachment.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Identify and explain two criticisms of deterministic interpretations of the continuity hypothesis.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 Explain two practical implications for counselling or education from attachment continuity and transmission evidence.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Discuss the influence of early attachment on childhood and/or adult relationships.

(Total for Question 4 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.7 The Influence of Early Attachment on Later Relationships: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies the method or sample element: studied mothers and their infants, using the Adult Attachment Interview and the Strange Situation to classify attachment oe	**M1**
reports the key result: there was a significant association between mothers' attachment classifications and their infants' attachment classifications oe	**M1**
explains implication: mothers who reported insecure attachments to their own parents were more likely to have infants classified as insecure oe	**A1**
notes this suggests a possible intergenerational transmission of attachment patterns via caregiving behaviour or internal working models oe	**A1**

Answer: Bailey et al. found that mothers' adult attachment classifications were significantly associated with their infants' attachment classifications: mothers who reported insecure attachment histories were more likely to have infants classified as insecure, suggesting intergenerational transmission through caregiving or internal working models.

Question 2

identifies a criticism: deterministic interpretation may lead to stigma or fatalism about individuals labelled as insecurely attached oe	**M1**
explains consequence: parents or children might be blamed or resigned to poor relationship outcomes, reducing opportunities for intervention and support oe	**A1**
identifies conceptual criticism: ignores plasticity and later experiences that can modify internal working models oe	**M1**
explains consequence: deterministic claims overlook evidence that therapy, supportive relationships or life events can change attachment-related expectations and behaviour oe	**A1**

Answer: A deterministic reading risks stigma and fatalism, potentially blaming parents or making people resign themselves to poor relationships, and it ignores evidence for plasticity, for example that later supportive relationships or therapy can alter internal working models and improve outcomes.

Question 3

identifies implication 1: early parent support and parenting programmes could improve later relationship outcomes oe	**M1**
explains how: interventions that teach sensitive responsiveness or enhance parental mental health may alter caregiving patterns and infants' internal working models, reducing risk of insecure attachment oe	**A1**
identifies implication 2: counselling and relationship therapy can target internal working models and attachment-related expectations in adults oe	**M1**
explains how: therapeutic approaches that address attachment beliefs and provide corrective emotional experiences can help people form healthier adult relationships despite early insecurity oe	**A1**

Answer: Implications include offering parenting support programmes to promote sensitive caregiving and prevent insecure attachment, and using counselling or therapy to help adults revise maladaptive internal working models so they can form healthier relationships.

Question 4

Level 4 Knowledge of the influence of early attachment is accurate and detailed. Discussion is thorough and evaluative, integrating evidence from studies such as Hazan and Shaver and Bailey et al. Evaluation addresses methodological limitations and alternative explanations and is consistently applied to the evidence. Application to childhood and/or adult relationships is clear and developed. Specialist terminology is used accurately and the answer is coherent.	**13-16**
Level 3 Knowledge is clear with some detail. Discussion includes evaluation and some integration of evidence but may be less wide ranging or partly descriptive. Application to relationships is present but may be uneven. Terminology is used appropriately and the answer is organised.	**9-12**
Level 2 Knowledge is present but limited. Discussion/evaluation is superficial or one-sided. Application to relationships is attempted but not well developed. Use of terminology is inconsistent and answer may lack clear structure.	**5-8**
Level 1 Knowledge is minimal and answers are likely to be brief or fragmented. Discussion/evaluation is limited or absent. Little or no application is made to relationships and specialist terms are missing or used incorrectly.	**1-4**
Level 0 No creditable content.	**0**

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Indicative content:

- AO1: The continuity hypothesis predicts that early attachment patterns are generally stable and shape later relationships via internal working models which act as templates for expectations about self and others.
- AO1: Hazan and Shaver (1987) used the Love Quiz and reported associations between self-reported infant attachment type and adult romantic styles: secure linked to trust and longer relationships, avoidant to emotional distance, ambivalent to anxiety about relationships.
- AO1: Bailey et al. provide evidence for intergenerational transmission, finding associations between mothers' adult attachment classifications and their infants' Strange Situation classifications.
- AO2: Application could include examples where secure early attachment fosters positive peer friendships in childhood and more stable romantic relationships in adulthood, while insecure patterns can predict relationship difficulties such as avoidance or anxiety.
- AO3: Methodological evaluation: many studies are correlational or retrospective, so causation cannot be established; Hazan and Shaver used self-selected volunteers and retrospective recall, introducing sampling and recall biases; Bailey et al. are correlational and other factors could account for parent-child similarity.
- AO3: Further evaluation: strengths include use of standardised measures like the Strange Situation and Adult Attachment Interview, and longitudinal studies that do exist provide stronger evidence for stability over time.
- AO3: Alternative explanations include temperament and genetics, social learning from modelling, and current relationship experiences that can modify the internal working model, weakening deterministic continuity claims.
- AO3: Practical and ethical implications: supports parenting interventions and therapy targeting attachment beliefs, but deterministic interpretations risk stigma and underplay human resilience and change.
- AO3: Conclude by weighing evidence: overall there is reasonable support for an influence of early attachment on later relationships, but the size and causal nature of that influence is moderated by methodological limitations and subsequent life experiences.

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