

## THE EFFECT OF PRIMARY CAREGIVERS ON ATTACHEMENT IN INFANTS

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### ABSTRACT

Attachment theory is a joint work of Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. Bowlby established the basic principles of the theory based on the concepts of the child's attachment to the mother and the disruption of this attachment through separation, loss and death. Mary Ainsworth created the theory of attachment theory by conducting research and projects on attachment. Ainsworth formulated the concept of maternal sensitivity to the child's signals and its role in the development of child-mother attachment patterns and stated that the attachment figure is a safe base for the child to use while exploring the world. Parents' approach to their children and the way they raise them primarily affect the psychological structure of children. Children shape their relationships in other periods of their lives with the behavioral styles they see in their family. At this point, it also affects the social structure. In addition, it is thought that attachment patterns have an important place in determining the social-emotional competencies of individuals. In this study, it was tried to review how attachment patterns differ according to life stages, the continuity of attachment patterns formed in the first years of life and the relationships between attachment patterns and social-emotional competencies.

**Keywords:** Attachment, infancy, attachment process.

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## INTRODUCTION

The source of social behavior dates back to infancy. And accordingly, there are many theories that deal with the first experiences between the baby and its mother and that attachment theory is also influenced by. As in humans, a state of bonding has been observed in animal offspring in the process of adaptation to life. Since the maturation process of animals progresses faster than humans, attachment behaviors have also been studied in animals. In this way, the process of attachment formation and the factors affecting this process were observed through experiments.

## FREUD'S THEORY

With the work of Sigmund Freud, child development started with the classical psychoanalytic theory. Freud stated that the foundations of adult personality are formed during childhood and that the periods of psychological development have an important place in this process. He stated that each of them affects personality and relationships in adulthood. According to Freud, attachment stems from physiological needs. He stated that the attachment of the baby to be fed by his mother is a bonding process between the mother feeding him.

## ERIKSON'S THEORY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

It involves addressing the cognitive, emotional and social aspects of development throughout life and making connections between them. He defined the first period of life as insecurity against basic trust. Erikson defines the ego structure in terms of two structures: "wants" and "shoulds". On the other hand, he synthesizes internal wishes with external environmental influences, parental pressure and destructive wishes. The most important feature that distinguishes Erikson's developmental theory from Freud's is that Erikson defends the idea that a baby who cannot trust his environment can trust people if his development is followed and his care and wishes are met. With this idea, he conveys that a secure bond will be formed if the bond that has not been completed or started in the first stages of life is eliminated in the following processes (Soysal et al., 2005).

## HARLOW'S THEORY

It is considered to be the most important research on animals in this field. Harlow used replacement monkeys in his study. Immediately after birth, the baby monkeys were separated from their mothers and raised alone in comfortable cages prepared for them. In the cage of the baby monkeys, a cylindrical model made of wire, one with a wooden head, was placed. And a bottle was placed on the chest of the model. The other model mother was made of a wooden block and covered with soft, brown fabric. Light bulbs were placed on the back of both artificial mother monkeys. This allowed them to provide heat to the baby monkeys during contact. The researchers found that when the baby monkeys were scared or wanted to sleep, they went to the other monkey, which looked like the real one, rather than the model monkey with the bottle on its chest. As a result of the study, it was experimentally determined that bonding is not related to the establishment of physiological relationships. The other result of this experiment was that baby monkeys living separately from their mothers had difficulty in the mating process later in life, male monkeys could not mate, and female monkeys inflicted severe punishments on their offspring when they became mothers. Again, in this way, it was observed through experimentation that the attachment process does not remain in the first stage of life, but is effective in relationships and development in later stages. These findings also supported Bowlby's theory that maternal deprivation from the first attachment relationship will affect the quality of subsequent relationships (Kara and Çetinkaya, 2019).

## LORENZ'S THEORY IMPRINTING

The way some birds are attached to the first moving object they see around them when they first hatch is called imprinting. Konrad Lorenz, like Harlow, was also involved in an experimental project. He conducted this experiment on goslings. Lorenz started walking when the chicks first hatched and the goslings followed him. Although the chicks' mother came, the chicks did not stop following Lorenz and did not move away from him. During the three-hour period between 13-16 hours after hatching, the chicks perform the most efficient form of imprinting by not leaving the moving object. After this period, the rate of efficiency decreases. This period in the printing process is called the "critical

period". In these results from the Lorenz experiment, the presence of maternal deprivation in the first stage of attachment, that is, the bonding process does not progress mutually and the duration and quality of the deprivation of this experience affect the quality of later relationships. Again, this experiment supports Bowlby's attachment theory (Gökçener, 2010).

## BOWLBY'S ATTACHMENT THEORY

Based on his own life experiences and because of the children he encountered in his professional life, J. Bowlby focused his studies on children who experienced maternal deprivation and maternal separation. Based on this idea, he started to work to concretize his work. With the little budget she had, she shot the impressive, attention-grabbing film "One or Two Years Old Goes to the Hospital" without a hand-held camera and artificial lighting. Anticipating the potential impact of the film, Bowlby insisted on careful planning to ensure that no one would later be able to accuse Robertson of bias. The target child was chosen at random and used as evidence that the clock-time sampling on the hospital wall occurred at regular periods of the day. Another study of these processes is by Spitz. Spitz's 1947 study Grief: "A Peril in Childhood, made in 1947, along with Robertson's first film, first caused intense controversy among the medical establishment, but helped to improve the fate of hospitalized children throughout the western world. Bowlby felt that in the past, within the framework of the psychoanalytical view, the child's imagination was not given much attention. In this process, he believed that less attention was paid to the real life of the child and that this life process was ignored. Bowlby also opposed the inactivity of infants in their life stages. On the contrary, he believed that babies were curious and capable of investigating their environment. The people who will satisfy the curiosity of babies, discover their talents, and enable them to get to know and get used to the world and life are the parents who provide one-to-one care and are close to the baby. Later, while working at the London Child Advocacy Clinic, he became convinced that the interaction between parents played a role in the development of a child's personality. Bowlby, who established his own research unit in 1948, believed in the importance of maternal separation in child development and focused on this issue (Demirdağ, 2017).

Bowlby started two research studies with his research team. Six children were selected for the research. These children were separated from their mothers between the ages of one and four. The observation of the research was conducted by James Robertson, who had previously worked with Anna Freud during the war. Robertson started to apply the observation process in stages. First, he observed the interaction with their families and children at home about separation and then reunification. In this process, the reactions of families and children were analyzed. When the World Health Organization asked for Bowlby's help in examining the situation of children left without families after the Second World War, Bowlby conducted a third study. According to Bowlby, the child's anxiety, protest and detachment reactions to separation, such as crying, exploring, are the child's high-level adaptive reactions to separation from the main protector. The main reason for these reactions is that the child wants his/her mother or primary caregiver with him/her. If the child does not respond to these reactions, if the separation from his/her mother does not end, this process begins to affect the child physically. In this process, the child becomes hopeless and reacts with silence and inactivity. Robertson and Bowlby explained these theories in stages (Arslan and Teze, 2016).

**Protest:** When the baby screams and reacts angrily after being separated from the primary caregiver. The protest will end when the parent comes to the child.

**Despair:** The child's protesting after the separation begins to stop and in fact the reaction continues, although they are still upset, their reaction is not outward and they appear calm. The child will reject any attempt to be comfortable with others and will often act disinterested in everything.

**Separation** This is when mother and baby are constantly separated. The baby tries to communicate with different people during this period. When the primary caregiver- mother returns, the baby rejects her and reacts with a lot of anger.

He stated three characteristics of the functions of attachment relationships. The first one is being close to the caregiver (mother). The second is the use of the mother as a "safe base" from which the baby can

get support while exploring the environment and starting new things. If the mother is not there, the baby cannot progress socially and cannot engage in the process of exploration. Third, it is a refuge that enables the baby to rely on the mother for comfort, protection and support. As a result of the attachment formed between the caregiver and the child during childhood, it creates an organized working model within itself. According to Bowlby, psychoanalytic theory is insufficient to explain the child's reaction in the process of separation and reunion. And as a result, he adopted the ethological approach. He tried to explain the ethological approach with evolutionary theory, system theory and cognitive psychology. Bowlby's guide in this process was Robert Hinde. Robert started seminars at the Tavistock Clinic in 1954. Bowlby was influenced by animal research literature, including Harlow's work with infant monkeys in 1991, and adopted the view that the bond between the baby and its mother was related to physical contact beyond feeding. Bowlby emphasized that newborn babies and children need to establish a relationship with their caregivers-parents. He stated that this communication is as important as the physiological bond and that it is a bond that people need in life processes. The researcher stated that in babies who were separated from their mothers immediately after birth for various reasons; development slowed down or even stopped, these babies did not eat, had problems in socialization and had a sad expression on their faces (Kavlak, 2007).

#### MARY AINSWORTH'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ATTACHMENT THEORY

He left the Tavistock Clinic in late 1953. He agreed with Bowlby's way of thinking on ethology, but he thought it was lacking in some points. This was the case of mother-infant attachment. Ainsworth conducted research and studies on attachment. Again, with Bowlby's participation in the research group, she was influenced by the natural observations made by Robertson. She decided to repeat these observations. She then left the Tavistock Clinic and started working with Ugandan babies to determine individual differences in the quality of mother-infant interaction.

## AINSWORTH'S UGANDA PROJECT

She traveled to Uganda in 1953 for her husband Leonard Ainsworth's work at the East African Institute for Social Research in Kampala. Ainsworth wrote to Bowlby and asked him about the empirical validity of his views. Continuing her work, Ainsworth managed to raise funds for her observational study through the same institute. She started her research by first examining the weaning process of toddlers. She examined the development of attachment in 26 Ugandan infants. Unable to achieve the desired momentum in this study, Ainsworth changed the subject of the study to mother-infant attachment. For this study, she recruited 26 families and 26 unweaned (1-24 months old) infants. Ainsworth observed the infants and their families for two hours every two weeks for nine months. In this project, she had the chance to observe individual differences in mother-infant communication. She started visits in 1955 and was accompanied by an interpreter. During the observation process, Ganda hosted the women in their homes in the afternoon. For Ainsworth, this was a suitable environment for the natural observation she wanted. Ainsworth was interested in determining the onset of signals and behaviors that increase the closeness of infants to their mothers by carefully observing when these signals and behaviors were consciously directed towards the mother. As a result of her observations, she arrived at three different forms of attachment. Securely attached babies were happy to explore in the presence of their mothers, they explored the environment. They cried very little when their mothers left them. Insecurely attached babies explored very little, even with the help of mothers who did not explore, and cried a lot when their mothers left. This was associated with the mother's sensitivity to the baby and its needs. No reaction was observed in infants where attachment between mother and infant had not yet been established. Ainsworth stated that attachment between newborn and infant is not established immediately. She says that in case of separation, the baby will protest against maternal deprivation. While observing Ugandan babies, she followed the criteria of attachment and the initial events and processes that caused these criteria. As a result of these observations, she made a list of behavioral patterns. The items of the list are as follows; laughing differently, kissing and hugging, making different sounds, escaping to the safe harbor, crying when the mother leaves (separation protest), crying differently, banging hands when

greeting, climbing on the mother, burying the face in the mother's lap, approaching by moving, using the mother as a basis of trust for exploration. The behaviors in these items are explained as behaviors that enable the establishment of closeness between mother and infant in threatening or dangerous situations in the attachment process. Bowlby stated that with the healthy establishment of the attachment process, the child will feel safe and turn towards exploration. The child's being in an unfamiliar environment, being around unfamiliar people was generally disturbing and the child perceived this as a threat. If the primary caregiver - the mother - was not around, the child would postpone exploration and try to attract the mother's attention if the child's reactions to the threat were not reciprocated. In the other attachment process, when the child was in a strange environment and the mother was with her, the child focused on exploration. Ainsworth left Uganda in 1955. She moved to Baltimore where she could better direct her studies. She was first hired as a faculty member at John Hopkins University, where she later taught clinical and developmental courses. Due to the intensity of his work during this period, the data for the Ganda project was delayed (Dalgard et al., 2022).

### AINSWORTH'S BALTIMORE PROJECT

After returning from Africa in 1963, Ainsworth conducted a study called Baltimore. <sup>26</sup> She started to observe Baltimore families and babies before they were born. She tried to determine the relationship criteria of the bond between the baby and the mother. After the babies were born, they were visited at home for four hours a day. The reason for keeping the visits to four hours was to make the mothers feel more comfortable and continue their normal life processes. The first month started with 18 home visits and lasted 54 weeks. A 72-hour data collection period was determined for each family. The data were in the form of reports, which were then audio-recorded for protection. The recorded data was in the form of abbreviated personal data in 5 minute intervals. The process after birth was recorded in writing. The purpose of the behaviors was studied rather than their frequency. The roots of this approach lie in her expertise with the Rorschach test in her thesis on the classification of dependent and independent security patterns within and outside the family and in her Tavistock Institute studies with Bowlby and Robertson. In this study,



infant and mother behaviors were examined in detail. Characteristic features between mother and baby were examined for three months. In this process, the mother's greeting of the baby was analyzed on behaviors such as body contact, affection, crying in face-to-face interaction, commitment research balance, nutritional status, obedience, and approach. Individual differences were noted while observing behaviors. Striking individual differences were observed when mothers responded quickly and sensitively to the vital messages of infants. Some mothers had difficulty in adapting to the baby's cues. Choking and spitting up reactions were observed in infants when their mothers could not understand their mothers' requests. Some mothers, however, were attuned and cooperative with the infant. Similar distinctive features were observed between six weeks and 15 weeks of age when the infant and mother came face to face. Mothers were in harmony with the infants in their play, eliciting responses from the infants such as jumping, vocalizing and smiling. On the contrary, when the mothers entered into a silent, non-smiling expression while communicating with the babies, the babies likewise became silent and the interactions were short. In the study, it was determined that there was a significant difference in the duration of the baby's crying and how long the mother remained unresponsive to the baby's crying (Demir, 2019).

In opposition to those who argued that the mother's responsiveness caused "spoiling", Bell and Ainsworth (1972) explained the infant's mother's responsiveness as controlling and exploring itself while helping it achieve its goals. The mother's responsiveness to the infant was later associated with a more harmonious mother-infant relationship. In the first months, it was observed that the babies of mothers who were sensitive to their crying babies and met their needs immediately were observed to cry less, and to approach communication with facial expressions, gestures and voice more confidently. Similarly, babies who were offered tender hugs by their mothers sought less contact but showed more affectionate approaches when contact did occur. Ainsworth explained these behavioral results as the infant's behavioral response to satisfying or rejecting experiences between mother and infant. Later, when these babies were twelve months old, they were observed in a laboratory environment, known as a foreign environment, to see how they would behave in a new unfamiliar environment. This

observation laboratory was located at John Hopkins University. This initially very controversial laboratory procedure for 1 year olds was originally of interest to Harlow and Ainsworth at the Tavistock group meetings. But it was also designed to study attachment stability and explanatory behavior under conditions of low and high stress, a topic that reminded her of Arsenian's (1943) study of young children in an insecure situation and her own dissertation on security theory (Demirdağ, 2017).

During the observation process, children were centered on their mothers, whom they regarded as a safe base area. The Stranger Situation Test was developed to measure the reactions of infants when they encounter a stranger. In the study, the mother, the child and the researcher were conducted in a room with toys in periods of three minutes each. In this process, seven different situations were progressed. In the application, the mother and the infant were observed when a third person came into the room and the infant's reaction to this situation was observed.

- In the first stage, the mother lays the baby on the blanket.
- In the second stage, the researcher enters the room with the baby and the mother and starts to accompany them.
- In the third case, the mother leaves the room and the researcher gradually begins to communicate with the baby. First, she takes a position where the baby can see her. After taking this position, she makes eye contact with the baby but does not engage in any verbal communication. Then she smiles and talks to the baby but does not approach. In the third stage, she approaches the baby by smiling and talking.
- In the fourth stage, the researcher approaches and makes skin-to-skin contact, during which the researcher holds the baby's hand or strokes the baby's arm.
- In the fifth stage, she approaches and bends down to pick up the baby.
- In the sixth and final stage, she takes the baby in her arms and sits on her knees.

The subsequent processes of the research are inferred by scoring the infant's reactions to these behaviors. In the scoring of the scale, points are given for wailing, lip trembling, hiding the face, crying, whining, grimacing and fear. Scoring is done by decreasing one by one out of six.

At the fourth stage during the research, the researcher leaves the room and the mother enters the room. In the fifth stage, the mother leaves the room and the baby is left alone in the room. In the sixth and final stage, the researcher enters the room and approaches the baby, laughing and talking as in the third stage. In the seventh stage, the researcher leaves the room and the mother enters the room. In this process, if the infant reacts with fear, the next step is taken (Goldsmith and Alansky, 1987). As the procedures continue, the baby's reactions are recorded. The evaluation results are analyzed from the records made. Three types of attachment styles were observed during the examination process. The types of attachment developed by infants are as follows;

#### **INFANTS WHO DEVELOP SECURE ATTACHMENT (SECURELY ATTACHED INFANTS)**

When their mother - the primary caregiver - is not present, they continue to explore the environment. They continue to maintain closeness and have the ability to use the caregiver as a reassurance base. They react to maternal separation, but this protest behavior is replaced by relaxation and exploratory behaviors upon parental return. In home observations, it has been observed that the mothers of these babies are more sensitive to the needs of their babies in the first three months compared to other mothers. The presence of the mother who is immediately ready for the child's requests prepares a suitable environment for exploration. In home observations, Ainsworth observed that babies, who take the mother as the basis of trust, are very happy when the mother comes back after the mother's separation, smiling and greeting the mother.

#### **INFANTS WHO DEVELOP ANXIOUS-AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT (AVOIDANTLY ATTACHED INFANTS)**

When babies are with their mothers, they continue to explore and investigate. But they do not share their feelings. Even when they are in the same room with their mother, they continue to play with their toys and do not pay attention to her. When their mothers or caregivers were separated, they continued their behavior as if the separation had not occurred. Ainsworth analyzed these behaviors of infants through home observations. The behavior of the parents of babies with this behavior

was observed. It was observed that these parents were mothers who avoided physical contact, were insensitive to the needs of the babies, unresponsive and rejecting when the babies cried. Because of their mothers' behavior, infants could not see their mothers as a safe base.

INFANTS WHO DEVELOP ANXIOUS-  
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ATTACHMENT INFANTS AINSWORTH

In tense resistant attachment, infants are interested in other people and the environment when their mothers are around. In case of any situation such as separation from their mother, they want to be together with their mother immediately and also want to get away from her. On the other hand, these babies stated that they escape to their mothers as a safe harbor in a dangerous situation. It was stated that children with this type of attachment turn to their mothers as a safe base when they sense a dangerous situation. Since children with this type of attachment cannot establish a secure bond with their mothers, they are constantly busy with where their mothers are. Therefore, they cannot make discoveries. Infants with this attachment style were not interested in toys in the laboratory environment when their mothers were in the room. They reacted sadly when their mother left the room. Even when their mothers returned, they did not calm down, rejected their mothers even though they wanted to communicate, seemed very angry, and stayed away from their mothers. In Ainsworth home observations, it was observed that the mothers of these children were sometimes sensitive, sometimes insensitive, sometimes very interested and sometimes very indifferent towards their children. As a result of the studies, it was determined that the mothers of children with this attachment style were insensitive in meeting the needs of the children. Bowlby and Ainsworth formed the basis of attachment theory with the experiences and communication between the infant and his/her mother or primary caregiver (Gülaldı, 2021).

## MATERNAL ATTACHMENT AND ITS STAGES

In 1951, Bowlby defined maternal attachment as a warm, continuous, close relationship between mother and child and the satisfaction and pleasure of both parties. The attachment process is the relationship between the mother and the infant, which is influenced by many factors and external factors. According to Mercer and Ferketich, maternal attachment is the formation process of the bond of love that the mother develops with her child as a result of a satisfying and pleasurable interaction between mother and child. Muller argued that maternal attachment is based on love and that there is a priceless love relationship between the mother and her baby, which shows continuity over time, and that this love is an important part of adaptation to the role of motherhood. It starts with the planning of the pregnancy. This process continues during pregnancy and continues throughout life after birth. The period after birth is a very sensitive process for the mother and baby to establish and develop an emotional bond. The central point in the development of this bond is the mother. The sooner the mother understands the baby's needs and approaches the baby in a sincere and caring manner, the sooner and more secure the bond with the baby is established. During pregnancy, as the mother's body changes, the uterus expands and fetal movements are felt. Much research has been done on whether the attachment process begins before or after birth. Studies have found that the gestation period is important for mothers to adopt the role of motherhood and to establish a secure bond with their baby. As evidence that the attachment process begins before birth, the study request was stated as the observation of the mourning process of mothers who lost their babies during pregnancy. In the researches conducted, it has been determined that the mother has some responsibilities for a healthy pregnancy and birth. She has duties such as ensuring that both she and the baby have a healthy birth, staying in a safe place after the birth, the process of accepting the baby to other individuals after the baby is born, preparing for the care of the baby and taking care of the baby. These are the processes of maternal attachment. These processes take place in certain stages. The stages are; preparation, acquaintance, adoption and attachment stages (Tonkuş and Muslu, 2021).

## PREPARATION PHASE

Before the baby is born, it forms a bond with its mother during pregnancy and reacts to her emotional states. Scientifically, it has been determined that the fetus hears, perceives and reacts to sounds in the twenty-sixth week. It can feel and react to the emotions experienced by the mother in the womb. The mother's ability to accept the changes in her body in this process and to transfer her positive feelings to the baby is the formation of the bonding process between the baby and the baby. At this point, mothers enter the preparation stage to protect the baby and to have a healthy pregnancy and birth process. Informing the mother about pregnancy during the pregnancy process, informing her about the birth process and informing her about the postnatal process during the period will cause these phases to pass positively and the mother will be able to manage the process well. The correct and positive progression of these phases begins to form mother-baby attachment.

## INTRODUCTORY PHASE

The acquaintance phase covers the 48 hours of the mother-baby encounter after birth. This phase is also the first stage in the beginning of human relationships. The acquaintance process generally consists of individuals exchanging glances. Mutual eye contact is established with babies. Parents try to get to know their babies by touching them. In this process, parents' feelings and thoughts begin to form as the first impression about their babies.

## ADOPTION PHASE

During this period, parents establish a mutual emotional bond by establishing intimate warm communication with their babies. This phase, which starts 72 hours after birth and extends until the 6th week, is a long and comprehensive phase. In this phase, the baby is addressed by its name, if it has a name yet, and by its gender, if it does not yet have a name, in direct proportion to accepting and recognizing its existence. As communication becomes more pronounced, they begin to understand the baby's reactions and with this they begin to understand the needs of babies. This leads to a harmonious communication between parents and

the baby. Babies show reactions such as crying and rejection in line with their needs. In this process, it is very important for parents to read these need signals from the baby correctly in order to form and strengthen the bond.

## ATTACHMENT PHASE

In the attachment phase, the harmony established between parents and baby becomes more apparent. In terms of time, it covers 2-4 weeks after birth. As parents become more competent in understanding the needs of their babies, the bond between them and the baby becomes stronger. In this process, the bond of love between them also begins to form. At this point in the attachment process, we encounter the effects of maternal attachment. Maternal attachment starts before birth, i.e. during pregnancy, and continues during birth and the following period. The attachment between mother and baby is shaped in this process. The mother's attitude and behavior towards the baby is very important in strengthening this bond between mother and baby. The easiest effective method for bonding is to touch the baby, massage the baby and make eye contact with the baby. The mother's emotional reactions to the baby in the first year after birth are very important for establishing the bond between mother and baby. Mother-baby bonding is characterized by the mother's closeness to her baby, the calmness she shows, and the conditions related to the baby's health. Mothers who are more attached to their babies are more sensitive to their babies' needs. The sensitivity of mothers to respond to their babies' needs has a positive effect on the psychosocial status of the baby (Görgü, 2018).

The attachment formed in the first months of life affects childhood and adulthood behaviors in the following processes. If the bond is not established securely, it causes serious problems such as attachment disorder, developmental retardation, separation anxiety, educational problems, psychosocial weakness, crime, lack of personal relationships. Establishing and managing the bond between mother and baby in a positive way is an important factor for the healthy growth and development of the baby. This established bond will continue in the new relationships that the baby will establish in the process of becoming an individual. At this point, the bond established is very important for the living process of the individual in life and for the society to move

forward. Attachment has stages starting from infancy. In adolescence and adulthood, the effects of this bond established with the mother in infancy continue. The individual directs the relationships in his/her life with the way of bonding that he/she learned in infancy and saw from his/her mother (Bülez and Ekti, 2016).

## ATTACHMENT IN INFANCY

Attachment in infancy is the process of interaction between the baby and the mother or primary caregiver. Feeling the baby's skin through touching the mother's abdomen during pregnancy and adopting the baby is an important process for mother-infant attachment. Studies also show that mother-infant attachment starts during pregnancy and mothers who lose their babies experience a mourning process. It is also very important for the mother to accept the changes that occur in her body in the period before birth, to have positive emotions and to be able to transfer them to her baby. It is also important for the positive formation of mother-infant attachment and the development of the mother-infant relationship. On the other hand, it is stated that factors such as the planning of pregnancy, the desire for pregnancy, the mother's sense of trust, the socioeconomic and cultural status of the family, spousal relations, spousal support, the woman's relations with her family and social environment, the type of delivery, the anxiety experienced in the first days, the health status of the mother and the baby, knowledge of child care are effective. The mother continues to recognize her baby, whom she tried to get to know during pregnancy, after the birth process. She tries to recognize her baby's face, hand and physical characteristics. After recognition, she makes eye contact with her baby and takes the first step in communication. They start to observe the baby's movements and reactions and look for a way for mutual communication. In this way, their communication and the bond between them begin to develop. It is a stage of the maternal attachment process between mother and baby after the birth (Mutlu et al., 2015).

Maternal attachment is the intimate warm communication between mother and baby. In the attachment process, pregnancy and postpartum are important as well as the type of birth. There are two types of birth process: cesarean section and vaginal delivery (normal delivery).



Caesarean section has been found to negatively affect the attachment between mother and baby. Pregnant women should be informed about the birth process; they should be encouraged and supported to ask questions about the pros and cons, risks and curiosities of vaginal birth and cesarean section. Just as the mother bonds with her baby during pregnancy, the baby bonds with the mother. The mother's womb is the baby's refuge. With birth, it leaves the center of trust. This is the first separation for mother and baby and it is a traumatic situation for the baby. In normal childbirth, the mother recovers within a few hours after giving birth to her baby and continues her routine life. The recovering mother starts communicating with the baby through breastfeeding and accelerates the maternal attachment process. In caesarean section, the attachment between the mother and the baby is delayed due to reasons such as prolonged hospitalization, postpartum pain, exposure to anesthesia and the emergence of anesthesia-related complications. Therefore, the birth process is also an important point in attachment (Nacar and Gökkaya, 2019).

According to Bowlby, the attachment style that an individual acquires with his/her parents at an early age is related to the individual's relationships in adolescence and adulthood. The researcher stated that in babies who were separated from their mothers immediately after birth for various reasons and taken into special care; development slowed down or stopped, these babies did not eat, experienced social withdrawal and wore a sad expression on their faces. For this reason, Bowlby emphasized the importance of the bond between the infant and the primary caregiver. The primary attachment figure is usually the mother. She is the person who knows and meets the baby's needs as soon as he/she starts life. In addition, in some babies, this bond established with the mother also occurs with the father. In father-infant attachment, the way of attachment and the details of the relationship and the mother's attitude in this process are important. If the father, in addition to the mother, is in a stimulating position in communicating with the baby, the baby can form a secure bond with both mother and father. The baby's perception is also important in the formation process of this bond. Because mother and father are different as individuals and gender. The father has differences compared to the mother such as voice, clothing, smell and reactions. When a secure bond is formed with both parents, the baby first

perceives that his/her parents are two different people and when one is absent, the baby can perceive the presence of another parent and feel safe. In this period, babies prefer their mothers when they are hungry and tired and their fathers for active play. In the process of attachment with the baby, the satisfaction of the spouses with each other and their marriages affects the attachment status (Tüzün and Sayar, 2006).

Sensitivity in parents' communication with each other is important for the infant to understand the concept of relationship (Selimi, Saracevic, & Useini, 2020). Inconsistent relationships between parents lead to negative emotions in the baby. A baby who grows up witnessing consistent, sensitive relationships between parents is more likely to form positive bonds in social relationships in the future. If there are no existing ties between the parents as spouses or if they are not consistent, apart from that, if the baby has experienced the loss or separation of one of the parents in early childhood, the most sensitive periods of attachment, the baby encounters social, psychological negative situations in social relationships in adulthood or adolescence in the future and has difficulty in establishing a positive bond (Selim & Ali, 2022). Children raised in this way have been found to be anxious, insecure, hyper-committed, and show neurotic symptoms in times of stress in adulthood. On the other hand, infants who have established a bond with their parents and whose needs and requirements are met by their parents will establish a secure bond when they become individuals and will establish a positive attachment by trusting themselves and the other person (Akarsu, Tunca and Alsac, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

Attachment is an important process that starts with the first basic relationship, the mother-child relationship, but has an impact on attachments in subsequent life periods. While explaining human behavior, the process has been focused on attachment and progressed through it. Studies on the continuity of attachment patterns show that attachment patterns formed in the early stages of life are largely transferred to later periods of life through internal working models. The bond established with the mother in infancy is similar to the bond established with friends and spouses later in life, that is, in adolescence

and adulthood, through social relationships. The most important reason for this is that the study of the parent-child relationship has become increasingly important for both generations. The behaviors of the infant against the behaviors they see from their parents and the relationships they establish with their parents constitute the attachment style of the individual. From this bond, the individual establishes relationships with friends and spouses in later life. This is the importance of attachment in social terms. The attachment process that starts as an individual is transferred and becomes a social phenomenon. Supporting these phenomena and in fact all individuals during the period when they plan to have children, during pregnancy and while raising their children seems to be very important in terms of raising healthy generations. It was emphasized that mothers should be informed about their education, birth process, pregnancy, nutrition and postnatal processes. In addition to these, the importance of spouse support is also emphasized. It is also stated that socio-economic status, education, cultural facts are effective on attachment.

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