Attachment Security in Adulthood: A Systems Perspective Literary Review

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Introduction

Attachment studies were the primary work of Attachment theorists John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. According to Fraley (2019), infants' first attachment is with their primary caregivers. This attachment jumpstarts the kind of interaction that the growing individual will have with others. In John Bowlby's theory of attachment, he emphasized the importance of an individual's interpersonal experiences across childhood and adolescence, as it plays a role in shaping individual differences in adult attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Bretherton, 1992; Fraley et al., 2013). As children develop and shift their attachments from their parents to their peers, their attachment styles develop and may shift as well.

Attachment Theory continues to be an interesting topic for researchers because of its relatability and possible predictive quality. Over the years, several studies have either established its stability or susceptibility to change. Its translation to romantic attachment is also heavily researched due to its implications for family therapy and how it may affect their children, as well as pose some implications in intergenerational transmission. In romantic relationships, Attachment is correlated to Trust (Campbell & Stanton, 2019) and Attachment Security (Arriaga et al., 2018; Davila & Sargent, 2003). Attachment theory is a very broad subject that encompasses coping with bereavement as well. Attachment influences do not end at the quality and frequency of relationships, but it has influences on personality, characteristics, and behavior. These become people who contribute (*or do not*) to society, become parents, and become the next formators of the new generation. Because of this, attachment security seems to be a good root to be investigated and understood for its influences on human development.

In order to understand attachment styles and how this translates into attachment security, we must identify the surrounding factors that influence the individual's attachment development in different stages (or ages) of life. Most of the studies conducted were usually cross-sectional, focusing on one age group or life stage in order to understand the factors influencing attachment security at that particular time; however, in order to get a lifespan perspective, longitudinal studies would be beneficial in understanding the developmental trajectories of attachment security from infancy to adulthood.

It is believed that attachment security has a *dyadic affect regulation* suggesting that the human connection may even begin before birth (Burkhart & Borelli, 1970). A longitudinal study conducted by Fraley et al. (2013) identified factors that may play an important role in the interpersonal and genetic antecedents of adult attachment style. In a similar framework, Campbell & Stanton (2019) talked about the connection between attachment style and attachment security to one's psychological and physiological health.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, it is in the interest of this literature review to identify the developmental factors that influence secure attachment in adulthood through Bronfenbrenner's systems and PPCT theory, breaking it down into the following parts: person, process, context, and time. Through proximal processes, reciprocal interactions that become progressively complex as the human goes through life, several life events may influence the direction and strength of different behaviors and tendencies.

Specifically, this paper seeks to answer, "What factors in an adult's lifespan influence attachment security in adulthood?" The researchers also hypothesize that attachment security is not a linear projection of either a positive or negative influence from childhood, but rather a synergy of a multitude of experiences coming from different sources which may either contribute

to or buffer the formation of a secure attachment in adulthood. What these events are and how they might influence attachment security are listed and discussed in detail in the following sections.

Person

The "person" is an integral part of human development as an individual cannot escape the self. Personal characteristics influence human development from two domains: as an input and output (Navarro et al., 2022). These personal characteristics do not operate in isolation, but instead, influence the proximal processes that are available to the individual and also affect what would happen more frequently than the others.

Input. This domain pertains to the antecedents of proximal processes, in this case, these are the innate characteristics of an individual that are believed to be largely determined by their genetics and other biological factors (Navarro et al., 2022).

Recent studies on adult attachment genetics have been conducted based on the candidate gene approach and have mainly involved polymorphisms in the oxytocin receptor (OXTR) gene and in those involved in dopaminergic and serotonergic pathways (Erkoreka et al., 2021). Oxytocin is known to be the "bonding" hormone that facilitates attachment to occur. According to Erkoreka et al. (2021), several dozens of single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP) have been identified in the OXTR gene region, and among them, rs53576 and rs2254298 (located in intron 3), are the most extensively studied in relation to social behavior, including attachment styles and security. As a result, the GG genotype of rs53576 has been associated with greater anxiety in relation to self-administered questionnaires and was conversely associated with lower anxiety and avoidance (Erkoreka et. al, 2021), whereas the GG genotype of rs2254298 has been associated with greater avoidance and lower anxiety (Erkoreka et. al, 2021). However, Erkoreka

et. al (2021) stated that there was no significant association found between the aforementioned polymorphisms and attachment styles.

Similarly, genetically influenced personality traits have also been proposed to play an important role in attachment dynamics and close relationships in adulthood (Donnellan et al., 2008). It has been found by Noftle & Shaver (2006; Fraley et al., 2013) that self-report measures of adult attachment correlate with measures of heritable dispositional attributes, much like the Big Five personality traits (*extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness,* and *neuroticism)*. In this study, attachment-related anxiety was reported to have the strongest association with neuroticism, while attachment avoidance was correlated with the following personality traits respectively; extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Noftle & Shaver, 2006). In a similar study, 45% of the variance in attachment-related anxiety and 39% of the variance in attachment-related avoidance have been found to be heritable since genetic factors have been reported to account for the association of the relevant Big Five personality dimensions (such as neuroticism and extraversion, respectively) with attachment-related anxiety and avoidance, respectively (Donnellan et al., 2008).

These results suggest that there may be some overlap between certain personality traits and attachment styles because of the shared underlying genetic influences, which in turn shape our internal working models of attachment that affect the relationships we have and the experiences we seek out (Donnellan et al., 2008).

Output. This domain explains how a person's characteristics, behavior, thoughts, and emotions are influenced by their environment and the interactions they have with others over a period of time (Navarro et al., 2022). This shows the interaction between personal characteristics that are innate and that of proximal processes that has a bidirectional relationship with it.

According to Baumeister & Leary (1995; Stanton & Campbell, 2014), individuals have a basic need to feel connected to others and one way in doing so is the involvement of interpersonal relationships. Not only does a relationship satisfy the fundamental need to belong, but it is also an important predictor of one's physical health (Stanton & Campbell, 2014). In fact, researchers have established that the variety in an individual's health status depends on the satisfaction level of their interpersonal relationships (Berkman et al., 2000; Cohen, 2004; Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001; Loving & Slatcher, 2013; Uchino, 2006; Stanton & Campbell, 2014). Because of this, individuals who experience threats or stress in their relationships tend to engage in attachment system activation, hyperactivation, or deactivation (Stanton & Campbell, 2014).

According to Mikulincer & Shaver (2003, 2007; Stanton & Campbell, 2014), activating one's attachment system would mean that securely-attached individuals engage in proximity seeking or the act of drawing closer to attachment figures; whereas, insecurely-attached individuals would either make stronger attempts to seek proximity and gain more attention (hyperactivation) or completely deny their emotional needs and avoid their partners (deactivation) (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007; Stanton & Campbell, 2014).

Individuals who partake in hyperactivating strategies have been reported to engage in more risky behaviors (such as smoking), poorer sleep patterns (Scharfe & Eldredge, 2001; Stanton & Campbell, 2014), and are at greater risk for developing psychopathology such as affective disorders (Dozier, StovallMcClough, & Albus, 1999; Ward, Lee, & Polan, 2006; Stanton & Campbell, 2014). Consequently, they have a less healthy heart due to lower levels of cardiac vagal tone (Diamond & Hicks, 2005; Stanton & Campbell, 2014), and a suppressed

immune system over time due to frequent bodily stress responses (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 2005; Stanton & Campbell, 2014).

Meanwhile, individuals who engage in deactivating strategies report more depressive symptoms that are associated with their negative models of the self (Stanton & Campbell, 2014), have a greater chance of developing psychopathology (Dozier et al., 1999; Ward et al., 2006; Stanton & Campbell, 2014), and are more prone to age-related diseases due to the increasing proinflammatory cytokine response to relationship-related conflict (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 2005, 2010; Stanton & Campbell, 2014).

Due to the possible health implications that are brought on by attachment-related anxiety and avoidance, Oehler & Psouni (2019) suggested the use of security priming to increase the chances of attachment security (Lin et al., 2013; Oehler & Psouni, 2019). The participants were exposed to seven visualization themes and pictures, which relate to different life situations in order to increase the chance of priming effectiveness. Despite the individual differences among the participants, in a span of a week-long trial, the study found that the visualization tasks led to a decrease in attachment avoidance scores immediately after the priming procedure, but there was no change in self-reported attachment security (Oehler & Psouni, 2019). Furthermore, Oehler & Psouni (2019) suggested that reducing avoidant and anxious thoughts and feelings may be imperative to increase attachment security. Lastly, the effectiveness of different primes may also vary according to attachment styles (Oehler & Psouni, 2019).

Other than health, attachment security has also been linked with higher academic success (Kurland & Siegel, 2020). In a 4-year longitudinal study of 85 incoming first-year college students, it was revealed that secure students achieved higher GPAs compared to their insecure counterparts (Kurland & Siegel, 2020). Insecure anxiously attached individuals were reported to

prioritize their social needs over academic endeavors, which later on led to poor retention and longer graduation times (Kurland & Siegel, 2020). Additionally, Bucks & Van Wel (2008; Kurland & Siegel, 2020) pointed out that these individuals may be apprehensive about transitioning into adulthood and forming new connections, which may have contributed to delays in academic progress. Meanwhile, avoidant insecure students had a negative view of close relationships and socialization with others, which resulted in lower GPAs and/or the tendency to abruptly withdraw from university (Kurland & Siegel, 2020). Lastly, these individuals are also likely to take fewer subjects per semester in order to not only avoid social interactions but also to delay their transition into the real world (Kurland & Siegel, 2020).

Process

Recurring frequently and happening for an extended period of time, proximal processes tend to have an influence on a human's development as it grows together with the individual. It was initially believed by Bronfrenbrenner that proximal processes solely involve positive interactions which may either contribute to or buffer influences (Navarro et al., 2022); however, as more recent studies have discovered, proximal processes need not be positive to have a lasting effect on the individual. Much like "person," proximal processes never operate in a vacuum, it is conjoined with either person, context, or time, and sometimes even a combination of any or all of these.

Positive Proximal Processes. This type of process is viewed by Bronfenbrenner as having positive effects on development by increasing competency and buffering dysfunction (Navarro et al., 2022).

The accessibility and increasing popularity of social media has seemingly changed the way people connect. For instance, Sheldon (2008) and Shorter et al. (2022) have reported that

individuals who are highly anxious when it comes to socialization felt less lonely when they passively used Facebook. Similarly, Liu et al. (2019), and Shorter et al. (2022) reported that individuals with high attachment anxiety, entailing high feelings of loneliness, have been found to rely heavily on using their mobile devices for social networking. With that in mind, Shorter et al. (2022) conducted a study among 162 students from a university in San Diego, California, and found a positive correlation between increased use of social media and the motivation to use it to decrease feelings of loneliness. While there were no reported differences between securely attached and insecurely, specifically avoidant, participants, Shorter et al. (2022) found that people with anxious attachment styles were more likely to use social media to decrease feelings of loneliness. The findings of this study suggest that because of attachment insecurity, social media may be used as a tool to constantly alleviate feelings of loneliness, which may ultimately contribute to well-being.

In a similar study, Kowert & Oldmeadow (2015) investigated the associations between social skills and online video game involvement through the perspective of attachment theory. According to Kowert & Oldmeadow (2015), online video games, or OVGs, are likely suited to serve attachment needs for highly avoidant individuals for the following reasons; the presence of relative anonymity and invisibility could rid the player of any fear and consequences of social rejection, as well as stimulate intimate friendship bonds with co-players. Although there was a lack of direct relationships, mediation effects, and broad differences in attachment between online and non-online players, a positive correlation was observed between insecure attachment and 'playing for social comfort' (Kowert & Oldmeadow, 2015). The study indicated that users with high levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance report increased participation in OVG environments when feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, and loneliness arise (Kowert &

Oldmeadow, 2015). Lastly, Kowert & Oldmeadow (2015) expressed that OVG environments seem to be especially beneficial for individuals with high levels of attachment avoidance as the anonymity aspect and reduced social cues can help these individuals overcome their difficulties with self-disclosure.

In terms of managing interpersonal relationships with anxious/avoidant individuals, the ASEM suggests the use of different strategies to buffer insecurity in day-to-day interpersonal relationships, which can potentially provide the scaffolding for successful relationship development and secure attachments (Arriaga et al., 2017; Fraley, 2019). For anxious individuals, the ASEM suggests the use of safe strategies that include conveying a strong emotional bond or calming behavior when the aforementioned individual is distressed (Arriaga et al., 2017; Fraley, 2019). While the use of soft strategies is suggested for individuals with avoidant attachment (Arriaga et al., 2017; Fraley, 2019). These soft strategies entail respecting a person's need for independence and making intimacy seem less threatening, while also clearly communicating to these individuals why certain requests are normal or reasonable, without appearing manipulative or demanding (Arriaga et al., 2017; Fraley, 2019).

Inverse Proximal Processes. This process refers to the ability of higher-level interaction between organism and environment to produce dysfunction and reduce competency (Navarro et al., 2022).

One of the most important interactions in a child's life is one that starts at home. According to Bowlby (1982; Kerns & Brumariu, 2013), in the first year of life, all children form their first attachments to caregivers who provide them protection and care, and children, in turn, organize their behavior to use their parents as secure bases (Kerns & Brumariu, 2013). Typically,

children who perceive their mothers as a secure base display fewer tendencies toward disruptive and aggressive behaviors (Rossman & Rea, 2005; Agbaria et al., 2021).

According to Baumrind's concept of parenting styles, caregivers who provide adequate care and attention pertain to the authoritative parenting style which contributes to the development of a high level of self-regulation through the development of secure attachment (Zeinali et al., 2011). However, there are also some cases wherein children do not receive the proper care and attention they expect from their caregivers, and this may be due to the type of parenting style their caregivers engage in that may not necessarily be the best fit for their temperament and overall needs. Some examples of such parents are characterized by low levels of parental warmth, inconsistencies in parenting, embody rejection, and punitive parental beliefs, also known as authoritarian parents (Zeinali et al., 2011). According to Zeinali et al. (2011), this type of parenting fosters the development of insecure attachment (anxiety, avoidant, and fearful) in their children, resulting in low self-concept and poor emotional regulation which has been reported as an indicator of some problematic behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. Similarly, parents who show a neglectful parenting style with low levels of responsiveness also contribute to a child's insecure attachment style, which has been reported to low self-concept and a high correlation with smoking, alcohol, and drug use (Zeinali et al., 2011).

In the school setting, children with less involved parents have been reported to have increased chances of victimization than children with more involved parents (Williams, 2011). In relation to this, the study conducted by Williams (2011) showed that participants reporting higher anxiety with maternal relationships were more likely to report being a victim of peer aggression in childhood. When gender differences were accounted for, females were more likely to be linked to peer victimization, as no parental attachment predicted victimization for male

participants (Williams, 2011). Similarly, the aforementioned female participants were also reported to be more inclined to physical aggression when they scored higher on measures of attachment avoidance with their mothers and higher on measures of attachment anxiety with their fathers (Williams, 2011). These results can be explained through the common predictors of bullying and victimization; self-esteem, normative beliefs supporting bullying, and school climate (Guerra et al., 2011). For this review, only self-esteem will be used. According to Guerra et al. (2011), low self-esteem has been linked with peer victimization, while high but insecure self-esteem increases the likelihood of aggression and bullying. As previously mentioned, authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles have been reported to foster low self-esteem in their children, which may explain the tendency to get victimized or partake in bullying. In summary, the findings in this section suggest that an individual's relationship with their parents predicts their attachment styles, which may also have a significant impact on the school setting and possible problematic behaviors.

Interaction and Synergy with Person, Context, and Time. According to Simpson & Rholes (2017), Bowlby believed that the type of treatment that individuals receive across their lifespan shapes the expectations, attitudes, and beliefs they have about future partners and relationships. With that said, Edens & Cavell (1999) and as concluded again by Feeney et al. in 2007, proposed that infants who are adopted may be at greater risk of prenatal or birth complications and parental psychopathology, which in turn may increase the likelihood of difficult attachment behaviors.

Feeney et al. (2007) then addressed these issues by examining the impact of adoption and family experiences on adult attachment and how attachment predicts relationship outcomes. By conducting a 6-month study on a sample of adults who had been adopted as infants, as well

as a sample of adults from intact biological families, they have found that insecure attachment may be more widespread among adoptees than among non-adoptees (Feeney et al., 2007). This is due to the fact that the adopted participants scored higher than their counterparts on avoidance and anxiety. Another finding that was significant in the study was that the self-reports of parental bonding were more powerful predictors of the attachment dimensions than the adoptive status, and the patterns of prediction did not differ according to the group (Feeney et al., 2007). This shows the importance of and influence that sensitive and responsive caregiving may have on attachment security.

In a similar study, Despax et al. (2021) assessed the attachment, resilience, mental health, commitment, and dyadic adjustments of adopted and non-adopted individuals. They found no significant difference between the two groups on either dyadic adjustment or commitment. There was also no direct influence between the adoption pathway and the adopted participants' romantic relationships. Instead, they found that the adoptive parents' separation had an effect on attachment security for each group. This shows that parental separation remains a vulnerability factor for the security of attachment (Despax et al., 2021). Lastly, Despax et al. (2021) found that the contact established between adoptees and their biological families significantly predicted dyadic adjustment and commitment. Both of these are important outcomes since we know that satisfaction with one's interpersonal relationship, as well as the ability to acquire and maintain the stability of this relationship positively entails a securely-attached individual.

Context

A person's context directly influences a person's characteristics as well as become mutually reinforcing and have a multiplicative effect on the power of proximal processes in human development (Navarro et al., 2022). A person's context may also contribute to the

proximal processes that they are continuously exposed to. Usually, it is in "Context" that the different systems come into play and is seen to collectively influence a person's development.

Microsystem. This is the layer closest to the person. For a child, this would be their family, school, neighborhood, or childcare environment (Chen & Tomes, 2005) and the child is influenced by and also influences their microsystem as they find themselves completely submerged in and directly interacting with it. For example, a close family unit that fosters empathy can continuously provide good experiences in their attachment which leads a child to develop secure attachment (Feeney et al., 2007).

On the negative side, it is seen that childhood maltreatment may predict that they may develop insecure attachments in adulthood, which in turn, may result in narcissistic tendencies, all the way to becoming a narcissistic personality disorder. Specifically, an insecurely attached child due to childhood maltreatment is found likely to become a "vulnerable narcissist" showing signs of low self-esteem, having entitlement rage, and engaging in manipulative behaviors explained by the development of an insecure attachment (Wang, 2023).

Adverse childhood experiences are also seen to be drivers of low hope, but this is mediated by attachment security. If a child develops an insecure attachment due to their adverse childhood experiences then it is seen to be predictive of low hope in adolescent years or adulthood. On the other hand, if a child develops a secure attachment with any adult, even if it does not come from the direct family unit while experiencing adverse childhood experiences, then the child may still have normal levels of hope. This finding is similar to a study that found that a child who has already formed insecure attachments can be influenced to have a secure attachment if they are continuously exposed to empathy in their close relationships (Odgers, 2014). Studies also show that it is not just the immediate family or primary caregivers that

influence the child's development of attachment security, but rather it is the combination of immediate relationships that a child experiences that influence their development. These discoveries are important as it provides avenues for intervention to change the otherwise negative trajectories in attachment security.

Mesosystem interaction with microsystem. This layer provides a bridge between the person and their immediate environment or microsystem (Chen & Tomes, 2005). It usually refers to the connections or relationships that the person forms within the immediate circle. The result of this interaction provides the environment in which the child is enmeshed. Arriaga et al. (2017) have found changing attachment patterns and the influences on the attachment enhancement security model due to the following factors: transition to parenthood, relationship break-ups, the experience of war-related trauma, relationship conflict and support, meaning and construal of life events, stable and vulnerability factors, therapy, and age-related shifts in attachment. These common life events will contribute differently to the development of attachment security due to individual personal characteristic differences and the variation of the person's responses to these events. This is also the reason why, for example, a group of children who all experienced war-related trauma at the same time or even at the same age may develop to have varying personal characteristics, behaviors, and attachment security as they become adults. The interaction of their innate "person" predispositions, coupled with unique influences of their proximal processes may cause the effects of "context" to be very different for each individual.

Exosystem interaction with microsystem. This layer is the larger society where the child does not have any direct interactions but the people who the child has immediate contact with have direct interactions in this environment (Chen & Tomes, 2005). As often discussed, the parent's workplace is a common source of influence that may have effects on the quality and

frequency of interaction with the child. In a more non-normative context, other instances such as migration can influence the caregiver of the child and also simultaneously influence the microsystem of the child as well.

There are studies on migration by Narchal (2012) that looked at how moving to a different country and culture caused stresses in family relationships that shook up attachment styles and attachment security. Although the study was conducted on Indian migrating families, understanding this phenomenon can also help understand how Filipino attachment styles and security may similarly be affected by migration. Aside from migration, the impact of ethnicity, collectivism, and the country of origin can also cause a cultural variation in adult attachment style and security (Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013). As this is a larger force, it leads to the last and final layer.

Macrosystem interaction with microsystem. This layer is the outermost but contains the overarching institutions that seem to not have any direct interaction with the child or with the people who immediately connect with the child, and yet have lasting influences on human development (Chen & Tomes, 2005). A literature review by Agishtein & Brumbaugh (2013) looked at the varying influences of ethnicity, collectivism, and country of origin on attachment security during Obama's presidency.

Some cultures like the Asian countries, Africa, and the middle east have been found to have different attachment scores than the global norm (Sagi et al., 2002; Tomlinson et al., 2005; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). The Japanese, in particular, have a higher rate of insecure attachment, particularly anxious attachment over avoidant attachment (Takashi, 1986; Behrens et al., 2007). South Asian people have generally lower attachment anxiety while higher attachment anxiety was associated with Asian ethnicity, collectivism, and east asian origin (Agishtein &

Burmbaugh, 2013). Consequently, they have also found that religious denomination does not have an impact on attachment patterns, though religion as a moderator or mediator in the influences of culture on attachment security has not yet been looked at.

The link between attachment security and ethnicity seemed to be collectivism as it was found to have a positive relationship, indicating that as people become more invested in their immediate group they are also more likely to be fearful of rejection. Culture, religion, ethnicity, and government regulations surrounding these contribute to the proximal processes experienced by the child. All of these factors may trickle down to have an effect on the immediate environment of the child and thus influence their development of attachment security.

Time

As theorized by Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget, people go through different life stages based on age and cognitive development. Studies by Karakurt et al. (2019) and Bryant et al. (2017) show how differently aged people react to their environment and have consequent influences on their attachment security. Karakurt et al. (2019) looked at the different adult attachment security and victimization among college-aged couples, and Bryant et al. (2017) looked at attachment security predicted by adverse childhood experiences. Holland (2010) also studied young adult relationships over time to see the differences in a shorter span of time.

Childhood. The life events experienced by a person in their different stages of life also impact them differently. Children are more vulnerable to their interactions with their immediate family unit such as separation from their parents (Bryant et al., 2017) and experiencing childhood trauma or adverse childhood experiences (Munoz et al., 2022). At the same time and as was mentioned earlier, good family relationships during childhood foster empathy and are predictive of a secure attachment style in adulthood (Odgers, 2014). Peer play and positive

mother-to-child interactions during infancy and early childhood are also indicative of a secure

attachment in adulthood (Shim & Lim, 2019) provided that they do not have negating proximal

processes in their teenage or young adulthood years.

Adolescence. Most of the life events that contribute to or buffer the influences from

childhood are peer relationships during the teen or adolescent years (Hong et al., 2022) and

romantic relationships for young adulthood (Holland & Roisman, 2010; Karakurt et al., 2019).

This finding is logical as it is correlated with the models of human development that we are

familiar with. Specifically, neighborhood social cohesion influences adolescents to have better

social skills, and the relationships formed during these years have a positive effect on their

attachment security (Hong et al., 2022).

Young Adulthood. Adult attachment security is severely influenced by the experience of

violence and victimization in relationships formed during their college-age years (Karakurt et al.,

2019) while young adult dating relationships over time influence their schema of the self and

relating with others, which in turn predicts their attachment security in adulthood (Holland &

Roisman, 2010).

Reflections

At the beginning of this literature review, it was one of the goals of the researchers to

break down the different factors that may influence the development of an individual's

attachment security. We had hoped to see clear cut factors that will indicate or predict a certain

development trajectory. For example, will a child experiencing adverse childhood experiences

continue to have an insecure attachment despite having been exposed to one healthy attachment

peer relationship in their teenage years? Will this change if the experience is more than one? Will

this trajectory change if the experience was during their young adulthood and was with romantic

relationships rather than peer relationships? We sought to weigh the factors and see where is best to provide an intervention to counteract the possible effects of events in an individual's childhood that we can no longer change. Instead, what we found was a more eye-opening discovery and most especially an update of Bronfrenbrenner's systems theory and PPCT theory.

Attachment security in adulthood is suggested to be shaped by a range of factors, including personal characteristics, genetics, and continuous exposure to the same environment. These factors do not solely happen by chance but are also influenced by the choices that the individual made and continuously makes.

Studies in this review have shown that attachment styles and personality traits are heritable, with genetics playing a significant role in their development. These, with the addition of one's age, are part of the things that an individual cannot change, and yet influence the environment that they become exposed to. Environmental factors, on the other hand, including interpersonal relationships, can activate or deactivate the attachment system. These events may happen as a coincidence and as a matter of choice. Positive proximal processes contribute to well-being and increase competency, while inverse proximal processes can produce dysfunction and reduce competency. To effectively intervene and promote positive attachment trajectories, it is crucial to understand a person's environment at various levels, such as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

Childhood experiences also play a vital role in the development of attachment styles in adulthood. Adverse childhood experiences and trauma can negatively affect attachment security, while positive family relationships and interactions can promote secure attachment. Positive peer relationships during adolescence and neighborhood social cohesion also contribute to attachment security during this life stage. Additionally, dating relationships during young adulthood can

influence an individual's self-schema and how they relate to others, ultimately predicting attachment security in adulthood. Even when knowing all of these, there is no one clear answer with which one has a stronger influence on attachment security. The relationship between these factors and attachment security depends on the individual, their context, and the timing of it all.

In summary, the development of attachment security in adulthood is a complex interplay between personal characteristics, genetics, and the environment. This is why interventions are not simply written in a manual for each psychologist to diagnose and provide a solution to. A person who has an insecure attachment style cannot just be given a good relationship in their young adulthood to "heal" their past wounds. This may be effective if the person places prime importance on romantic relationships, but if their focus is elsewhere, or the timing of it all is shaky, then that form of intervention may not produce the desired effect. Some people do not even need a conscious intervention to develop a secure attachment from an insecure attachment, some people are lucky enough to just find peace when it is convenient and when their psyche is more accepting of it. Consequently, there are some people who by chance had the best possible scenarios in childhood (immediate family or primary caregiver attachment) and in adolescence (peer relationships) and then suddenly get overturned by a bad breakup.

The researchers of this paper can therefore conclude that a person's uniqueness is a product of a specific mix of person, process, context, and time; and that the effectiveness of the intervention relies on the synergy of all these four as well.

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