

The study on the attachment style of the mother: Six types

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The study on the attachment style of the mother —Six types—

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ABSTRACT

In this study, attachment style in the childhood and present attachment style which based on the attachment style in the childhood (internal working model : IWM) were investigated in order to clarify the attachment style of the mother. A total of 6135 working mothers (98.6% effective response rate) of nursery school children from 82 different areas nationwide were investigated. Six attachment styles were identified. Three of the classifications are already described by established attachment theory : "secure", "insecure" and "avoidant". In addition, this study proposed three newly styles of attachment : "insecure/avoidant", "mixed" and "uncertain". These newly proposed types are the types in which "secure", "insecure" and "avoidant" were mixed, and it became clear that two or three attachment styles exist in the individual compound. The degree of the intensity was also confirmed attachment in the childhood and IWM on five attachment styles except for the type of "uncertain".

KEY WORDS

Attachment in the childhood, Internal working model, Attachment style

INTRODUCTION

The attachment is "bond of the mind" formed by the care that the child has daily and repeatedly been done from the parent (or, significant others who replaces the parent), and especially, the quality of the responsibility between period and 1 year old decides the quality of the attachment^{1)~4)}. By strange situation procedure (SSP)⁵⁾, attachment research of infant and toddler is rapidly advancing, since the method for judging the action of the child in experiment is established. Through this research, the attachment styles of the child are classified into following three categories. In the laboratory, the infant suddenly experienced the separation from the mother, and he (or she) lamented deeply, and the type which took that it immediately settles down, when the mother returns afterwards, was named to be "secure". Similarly, the type which the infant was confused and remained confused for a long time, even after the mother returned was named to be

"insecure". Finally, the type in which the infant did not show the interest for sudden separation and reunion with the mother was named to be "avoidant". This is called the attachment behavior, and it is a result of internalizing image for the other and image on the self by the children through the daily relationship with their parent (or significant others).

Therefore, the relationship with their parent which was formed in the infancy forms a base of the human relationships with others, and it affects relationships of the person throughout the lifetime, it was conceptualized as an internal working model (IWM)^{1)~2)}. IWM is called the attachment in adults, which is attachment for others in present based on childhood attachment, and it is studied by many researchers⁶⁾. There is the important relation between IWM of the mother and feeding attitude to the child⁷⁾. And how the mother had been raised, affects her caring behavior⁸⁾. This is called the linkage between genera-

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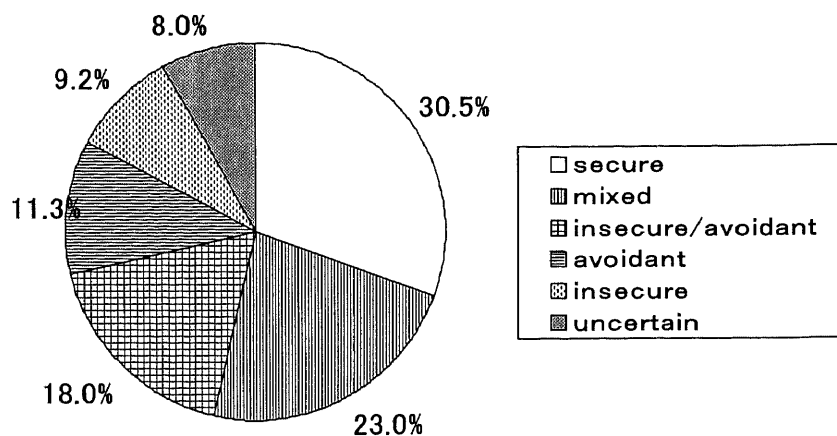


Figure. 1 The proportion of six attachment styles in the childhood.

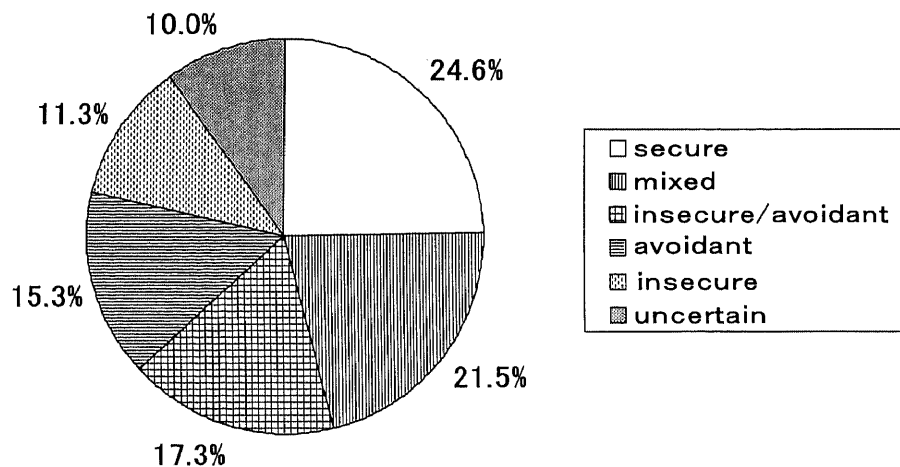


Figure. 2 The proportion of six attachment styles in adults.

tion of the attachment⁹⁾, and it is one of the problems of the child care of modern society. IWM changes by the quality of the supporting relationships with significant others, and IWM for the attachment object is also affected, as well as IWM for the self by the fact¹⁰⁾⁻¹¹⁾.

There are many problems on the feeding attitude of the parent for the child care in this country. Therefore, an attachment style of the modern parents to their children was confirmed in order to consider what child care support should be.

METHODS

Participants and procedure

This investigation was performed, after the preliminary research for 554 mothers in Ishikawa Prefecture. Objects are 6135 (98.6% of effective responses) working mothers who have nursery school children from 82 different areas nationwide. The average age of the mothers are 33-year-old. The average age at birth child is 27-year-old, and the average number of children is 2. The investigation period is six months from September 2001 to February 2002. The investigation is attachment during their childhood and present IWM of the mother.

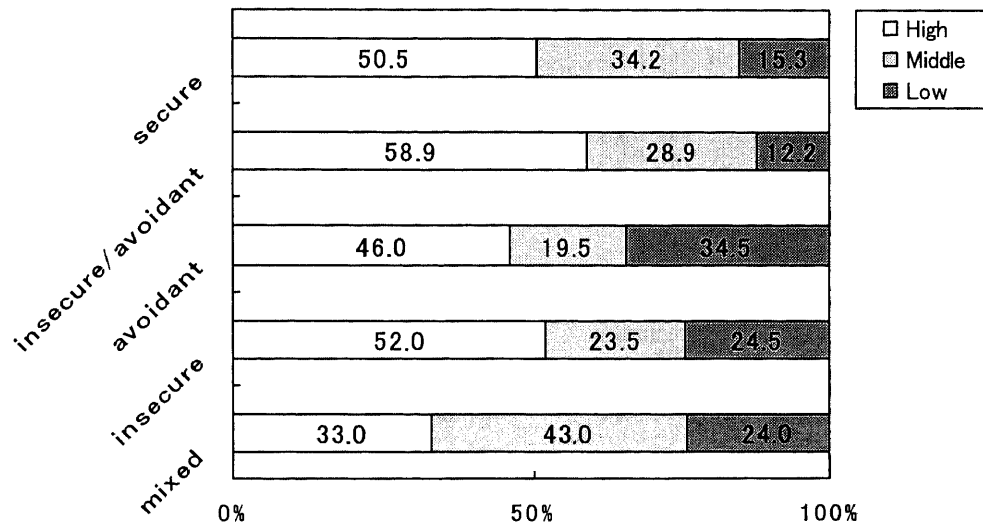


Figure. 3 The Proportion of the degree of the intensity of five attachment styles in the childhood.

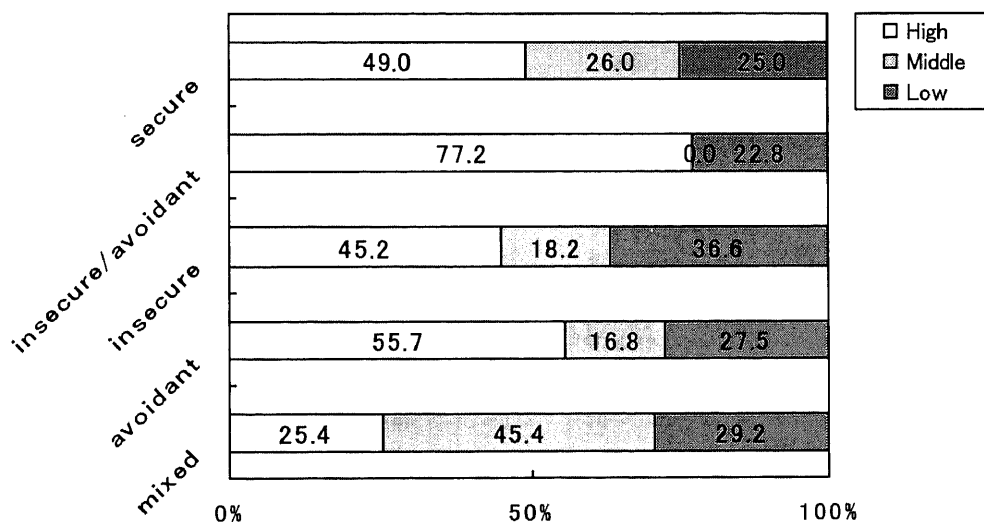


Figure.4 The Proportion of the degree of the intensity of five attachment styles in adults.

Measures

Attachment in childhood

Attachment in childhood was measured using the scale developed by Aoyagi, H. et al.¹²⁾ based on the SSP⁵⁾ for the university students. Therefore, this research was performed, after the item was examined by the preliminary research to the mother. The questionnaire was composed of 3 factors of “secure”, “insecure” and “avoidant”. There is a question of 3 items at each factor, and there is an evaluation criterion of 5 stages from the 1 point to 5 points for the

purpose of calculating the score. The questionnaire is the method which was answered by the mother recollecting what the mother formed the relationship with her parent in the childhood.

Attachment in adults

Attachment in adults was measured using “the attachment style scale for the adult” developed by Hazan, C. et al.¹³⁾ and improved by Takuma, T, et al.¹⁴⁾ for Japanese subjects. The questionnaire is composed of 3 factors of “secure”, “insecure” and

“avoidant”. The questionnaire consisted 6 items for each factor, with evaluation criterion of 5 stages (from 1 point to 5 points), for the purpose of calculating the score. This scale was also used following the preliminary research on personal relationship which the mother has formed for the others.

RESULTS

As a result of the investigation of both attachment in the childhood and IWM, same six attachment styles were identified. The proportion of respondents with a “secure” childhood attachment style was highest at 30.5%, followed by “mixed” at 23.0%, “insecure/avoidant” at 18.0%, “avoidant” at 11.3%, “insecure” at 9.2% and “uncertain” at 8.0% (Fig1).

Based on the assessment using IWM, “secure” was the highest at 24.6%, followed by “mixed” at 21.5%, “insecure/avoidant” at 17.3%, “avoidant” at 15.3%, “insecure” at 11.3% and “uncertain” at 10.0% (Fig2).

The degree of the intensity was confirmed from attachment in the childhood and IWM for five attachment styles exclude “uncertain”. The degree of the intensity of five attachment styles was designed as “high”, “middle” and “low” based on the scores. The highest proportion in the childhood attachment style were “high score” for four attachment styles except for “mixed” : “secure” at 50.5%, “insecure/avoidant” at 58.9% “avoidant” at 46.0% and “insecure” at 52.0%. The highest proportion (43.0%) of the score was in the “middle score” for the “mixed” style (Fig3).

In IWM assessment, the highest proportion were “high score” for “secure” at 49.0%, “insecure/avoidant” at 77.2%, “avoidant” at 55.7% and “insecure” at 45.2%. The highest proportion was “middle score” for the “mixed” at 45.4% (Fig 4).

DISCUSSION

As explained in the working model by Bowlby, J.²⁾ the attachment style of a person forms gradually in childhood and tends to remain unchanged for the duration of the lifetime. Hazan, C. et al.¹³⁾ was noticed in this report. They assumed the attachment style of adult which was similar to the attachment style of children classified by Ainsworth, M.D.S. et al.⁵⁾ and developed the attachment style scale of

adult. However, it was difficult to explain individual features in detail using this scale since there were no intermediate alternatives. Therefore, the determination of attachment style to clarify individual features more in detail was tried in this study.

As the result, two or three attachment styles were founded to be composed in the individual, and it became clear that there were three types : “insecure/avoidant”, “mixed” and “uncertain”. The type “insecure/avoidant” has features of both “insecure” and “avoidant”. The type “mixed” has features of “insecure/avoidant”, including “secure”. The type “uncertain” has all features but this type is indistinct since it’s all scores are “low”.

Differences in the scores tended to reflect the intensity of each of the five attachment style types. The intensity of the score were higher for the four types with characteristic features : “secure”, “insecure”, “avoidant” and “insecure/avoidant”.

In the study of attachment styles of mothers (average age, 36-year-old, child average age 10) by Hazan, C. et al.¹³⁾, the style was divided into “secure” at 56.0%, “insecure” at 19.0% and “avoidant” at 25.0%. However, the attachment style was classified compulsorily into three types since lack of intermediate alternatives. Therefore, it is not possible to directly compare this result and ours. Afterwards, Takuma, T. et al.¹⁴⁾ investigated attachment style of the adolescence Japanese woman using attachment style (IWM) scale for the adult developed by Hazan et al.¹³⁾ and reported the following proportions of attachment styles : “secure” at 42.6%, “insecure” at 14.7%, “avoidant” at 10.9% and “impossible classification” at 31.8%. The proportion of “insecure” and “avoidant” were similar to those in our study. However, it is not possible to simply compare the proportion of “secure” with our result, because “secure” is included in “mixed” in our classification. Takuma et al.¹⁴⁾ reported the fact that over 70.0% of the type judged “impossible classification” existed two or three types.

Therefore, our research indicated that different attachment styles can be combined in the individual, based on evidence of the three newly identified attachment styles existing in the individual compound.

For the childcare support, it is necessary to clarify features of six attachment style types based on the

relationships between family background, parent-child relationship, and childcare anxiety in future.

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母親のアタッチメントスタイルの研究 - 6タイプについて -

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要 旨

本研究では、母親のアタッチメントスタイルを明らかにするために、幼少期のアタッチメントスタイルと、それを基礎に現在他者に対して形成している母親のアタッチメントスタイル (Internal Working Model : IWM) を明らかにした。対象は、全国82箇所の保育園に、子どもをあずけて働いている母親6135名である。その結果、従来のアタッチメント理論による「安定型」「不安定型」「回避型」に加え、新たに「不安定回避型」「混合型」「判定不能型」の3タイプが抽出された。新たに確認されたタイプはいずれも「安定型」「不安定型」「回避型」の混在したタイプであり、これは個人の中に2つあるいは3つのタイプが複合して存在することを示すものである。また、幼少期のアタッチメントにおいても IWM においても「判定不能型」を除くタイプには強さの程度がみられた。