

3.6 Social-Emotional Development Across the Lifespan

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 18 marks**

KEY WORDS attachment 依恋 • avoidant 回避型 • contact comfort 接触安慰
• strange situation 陌生情境 • authoritative 权威型

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **attachment** 依恋 and social development.

You must be able to:

- describe the attachment styles identified in the **strange situation** 陌生情境
- state what research on contact comfort demonstrated
- describe the main **parenting styles** 教养方式 and their associations
- state what a **psychosocial stage** account proposes

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Attachment styles

In the strange situation, infants are observed through separations and reunions. **Secure** infants explore, are distressed by separation and are comforted on reunion. **Insecure** patterns include avoiding the caregiver or being anxious and hard to soothe.

■ Contact comfort

Classic primate research showed infants preferring a soft surrogate to a wire one that supplied food, indicating that attachment depends on comfort and contact rather than feeding alone.

■ Parenting styles

Authoritative: high demands with high responsiveness; associated with the best outcomes. **Authoritarian:** high demands, low responsiveness. **Permissive:** low demands, high responsiveness. These are correlational associations, not proven causes.

■ Psychosocial stages

Development is described as a sequence of social tasks, each posing a conflict — trust, identity, generativity — whose resolution shapes later functioning. The value of the account is the framework, not a fixed timetable.

2 Practice

2.1 Describe the behaviour of a securely attached infant in the strange situation. [2]

2.2 State what contact comfort research demonstrated. [2]

2.3 A parent sets clear rules and explains them, and responds warmly to the child.

(a) Name the parenting style. [1]

(b) State one caution about inferring its effects. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 An infant who ignores the caregiver on reunion shows [1]

- **A** secure attachment
- **B** an insecure-avoidant pattern
- **C** contact comfort
- **D** generativity

3.2 Parenting-style findings are correlational, which means they cannot establish [1]

- **A** that an association exists
- **B** that the style causes the outcome
- **C** the direction of the association
- **D** the sample size

3.3 A study finds that children of authoritative parents have better school outcomes.

- (a) State one alternative explanation for the association. [1]
(b) Explain what evidence would be needed for a causal claim. [2]

3.4 Applied research task. In the Strange Situation, one-year-olds are observed as a caregiver leaves and returns. Child **A** is distressed at the separation and is quickly comforted on reunion. Child **B** shows little distress and ignores the caregiver on return. Child **C** is very distressed and, on reunion, both clings and pushes the caregiver away.

- (a) Name the attachment type shown by each child. [3]

- (b) Explain what Harlow's monkey studies showed about the basis of attachment, and why the result was surprising. [2]

- (c) Explain **one** limitation of using the Strange Situation across different cultures. [1]

- (d) Erikson would describe the first year as a psychosocial crisis. Name it, and state what its favourable resolution produces. [1]

Solutions

2.1 explores while the caregiver is present; is distressed by separation and comforted on reunion.

2.2 infants preferred a soft surrogate to a wire one that provided food, showing attachment depends on comfort and contact rather than feeding alone.

2.3 (a) authoritative. (b) the association is correlational, so the style may not be the cause.

3.1 B. avoiding the caregiver on reunion defines the insecure-avoidant pattern.

3.2 B. correlation cannot establish causation.

3.3 (a) an underlying factor such as family resources may produce both. (b) an experimental or longitudinal design with controls for confounding variables that shows the outcome changing when parenting changes.

3.4 (a) **A** secure (1); **B** avoidant, or insecure-avoidant (1); **C** anxious/ambivalent, or insecure-resistant (1). (Disorganised is a fourth category, shown by contradictory behaviour with no consistent strategy.)

(b) Infant monkeys given a wire mother that provided milk and a cloth mother that provided none spent almost all their time clinging to the **cloth** mother and returned to her when frightened (1). This was surprising because attachment had been explained by the feeding drive — the finding showed that **contact comfort**, not food, is the basis of attachment (1).

(c) Child-rearing practices differ: in cultures where infants are rarely separated from the mother, apparently “resistant” distress may be normal, and in cultures that encourage early independence, low distress may be misread as avoidance — so the categories may not mean the same thing everywhere (1).

(d) **Trust versus mistrust** (1); resolved favourably it produces a basic sense that the world is dependable — hope.