

CEE-PaAtt: Popular science abstract

Attachment is a kind of an emotional bond which one maintains with the close other. This bond has a soothing effect on humans independently of their age, especially in times of stress, threat or illness. The quality of attachment affects well-being and social adjustment of every individual. Early childhood mother-child relation is evidenced to be the most important experience priming neuronal circuits which are activated later in life serving as the matrix for the way in which an individual maintains and functions in his/her close relations. Secure attachment in mother-child relation is crucial for optimal child development, while maternal sensitivity (e.g., acceptance vs. rejection) is focal for development of secure attachment in children. Few attachment-based intervention programs were developed so far in Western cultures to increase maternal sensitivity in her relation with own children.

Two hypotheses are core in attachment theory. The *normativity hypothesis*, assumes that secure (versus insecure) attachment pattern is universal and dominant in all cultures. The *sensitivity hypothesis* stresses that maternal sensitivity in caregiving and parenting explains child attachment security universally across cultures. Yet, there are studies undermining both hypotheses and weakening attachment theory. Giving the example, Lubiewska and colleagues (2015) in the study including 14 cultures from 4 continents found that maternal acceptance, related with sensitivity in adolescence, explained high security of adolescent children in Western cultures, insecurity in two non-Western cultures, and was not related with child attachment in post-communistic countries (including Poland).

These research, inconsistent with the theory and other research findings, were the starting point in the development of the CEE-PaAtt project. Based on previous studies we formulated two complementing hypotheses in the present Project. First, we assume and aim to test the extent to which culture moderates the maternal parenting- and maternal attachment-child attachment relation (culture dependent effects hypothesis). However, based on previous studies we also assume that the meaning of attachment-related (e.g., closeness, dependence) and parenting-related (e.g., acceptance or overinvolvement) constructs differ across cultures (culture dependent meanings hypothesis). Two dimensions of culture were used for selection of countries in which we plan to test formulated hypotheses: individualism-collectivism and indulgence-restraint of culture (as indicated by national denomination of respondents). Countries chosen for our study differed by crossing of these dimensions and included 250 mother-child dyads living in the Netherlands, East Turkey and Poland. Children were in the age between 8 and 12 year of age. Two types of instruments will be used in the project. The *emic* type scales will be developed based on qualitative interviews (local scales in each country). The *etic* type scales used in the study will be commonly used in psychological research (state-of-art) self-report parenting and attachment scales (developed in Western cultures). The main results of the study will be analyzed regarding: (1) cross-cultural differences between *emic* type scales; (2) differences between *emic* and *etic* type scales; (3) cross-cultural differences in effects of maternal parenting on child attachment security. Goals of the Project aim to disentangle universal and culture specific factors and mechanisms in attachment development. Results of the study will be helpful in the future for development of culture-tailored intervention programs or modification of existing programs in countries under the scrutiny.