|  |
| --- |
| **Learning Table 2: The Development of Attachment: Schaffer’s Stages of Attachment** |
| **AO1** | **AO3** |
| **Schaffer and Emerson (1964)** investigated the formation of attachment within the first year of a child’s life. They visited 60 babies based in the Glasgow area every month and measured various behaviours including separation protest and stranger anxiety. From their findings they proposed that attachments develop in 4 stages. **Stage 1: Birth – Two Months: *Asocial Stage*** – * The baby is recognising and forming bonds with its carers but its behaviour towards human and non-human objects is quite similar.
* Baby’s show some preference for the familiar adults in that those individuals find it easier to calm them.
* Babies are also happier when in the presence of other humans as opposed to being alone.

**Stage 2: Two – Seven Months: *Indiscriminate Attachment* -** * Babies display more observable social behaviour.
* Show a preference for humans rather than inanimate objects and prefer familiar adults.
* Accept comfort and cuddles from any adult
* Do not show separation protest or stranger anxiety

**Stage 3: Seven Months: *Specific Attachment**** Start to display anxiety towards strangers (stranger anxiety) and separation protest.
* The baby has formed specific attachments, the adult is termed the primary attachment figure,
* This person is not necessarily the person they spend the most time with but the one who offers the most interaction and response to the baby’s ‘signals’ with the most skill.

**Stage 4: Seven Plus Months *- Multiple Attachments**** Babies start to show attachment behaviour towards other adults with whom they regularly spend time. These are called secondary attachments.
* By the age of one year, 33% of children in Schaffer and Emerson’s study have formed multiple attachments.
 | **High External Validity**One strength of Schaffer and Emerson’s (1964) research into the development of attachment is that is has high external validity.For example, the study was carried out in the families’ own homes and most of the observation was actually done by the parents during ordinary activities and reported to researchers later, This is a strength because it means the behaviour of the babies was unlikely to be affected by the presence of observers. This increases the chances of the babies behaving naturally in their own environments. As a consequence, this increases the credibility of the research that discovered the stages of attachment theory. **Low Population Validity**One weakness of Schaffer and Emerson’s (1964) research into the development of attachment is that it is low in population validity.For example, the sample was made up of 60 babies from the working class population of Glasgow. This is an issue because we cannot generalise the findings that attachment develops in stages to other social groups. It may be that babies from more privileged background develop attachments in a different way as a result of being cared for by a nanny or other privileges they would experience. As a consequence, this reduces the explanatory power of Schaffer’s stage theory of attachment as the findings that support this theory are not representative of the whole population. **Low Temporal Validity**One weakness of Schaffer and Emerson’s (1964) study into the development of attachment is that is has low temporal validity.This is because it was conducted in 1964, over 50 years ago.This is an issue because parental care of children has changed considerably since that time. More women go out to work so many children are cared for outside the home, or fathers stay at home and become the main carer. Research shows that the number of dad who choose to stay at home and care for their children has quadrupled over the past 25 years (Cohn et al, 2014). It is likely that if a similar study were conducted today, the findings might be different. As a consequence, this reduces the explanatory power of Schaffer’s stage theory of attachment as the study that supports this theory cannot be endured over time.  |