

### **Sample Abstract: Psychology**

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#### **The Influence of Childhood Poverty on Attachment Styles**

Childhood poverty has many potential long-term effects, one of which might be a reluctance to get close to others in adult relationships. The idea that childhood experiences can affect behavior in adulthood can be traced back to the works of Freud and Erik Erikson. Erik Erikson (1950) theorized that trust (or mistrust) develops very early in life. The purpose of the current research is to examine whether living in poverty as a child can affect a child's attachment towards others later on in his or her life. Participants ( $n = 130$ ) completed the Hazan and Shaver Attachment Scale, the Vulnerable Attachment Scale Questionnaire (VASQ), and several retrospective questions that were designed by the author to measure childhood poverty. Results of the VASQ indicated that participants who grew up in poverty were significantly more likely to have a vulnerable attachment style than participants who did not grow up in poverty. Marginally significant trends indicated that participants who grew up in poverty were more likely to have higher scores on the insecurity/mistrust subscale of the vulnerable attachment scale than participants who did not grow up in poverty. Based on responses to the Hazan and Shaver Attachment Scale, a greater percentage of participants who grew up in poverty reported having an insecure attachment than did those who did not grow up in poverty. However, this difference was not statistically significant. Some limitations of the research and possible directions for future research will be discussed.