

Final PhD Oral Examination

Chiaki Konishi

(Human Development, Learning and Culture)

Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at 12:30 pm

Room 200, Graduate Student Centre

Title: An Investigation of Anger Among Adolescents: An Attachment Perspective

Research Supervisor: Dr. Shelley Hymel (ECPS)

Supervisory Committee: Dr. Bruno D. Zumbo (ECPS), Dr. Sheila Marshall (SOWK)

University Examiners: Dr. Charlotte Johnston (PSYC), Dr. Grant Charles (SOWK)

External Examiner: Professor Duane Buhrmester (University of Texas at Dallas, USA)

Abstract:

The present study investigated the relationship between attachment and anger among adolescents, examining a hypothesis initially proposed by Bowlby (1973) regarding the effects of adolescents' attachments to parents on anger experience. Extending Bowlby's hypothesis with another critical anger component, anger expression, a theoretically-refined model was developed and tested. Participants included 776 students (379 boys, 397 girls) in grades 8-12. As predicted by attachment theory, results of structural equation modeling analyses indicated that adolescents' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance toward both mother and father figures were positively related to the adolescents' greater levels of anger intensity. In turn, the increases in the intensity of anger feelings were associated with increases in both anger-in (internalizing) and anger-out (externalizing) expressions. In addition, there was a direct effect of attachment anxiety on anger-in expression but no direct effects of attachment anxiety and avoidance on anger-out expression. This study highlights the importance of differentiating anger dimensions and the critical role of anger intensity as a mediator of the relationship between insecure attachment and anger expressions. Implications of the findings are further discussed.