

Thesis Title:

**Attachment style and symptoms of psychopathology in
Children in Care: An investigation of the mediating role of
Early Maladaptive Schemas**

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Declaration: The thesis titled 'Attachment style and symptoms of psychopathology in Children in Care: An investigation of the mediating role of Early Maladaptive Schemas' has not been not been submitted to for any other degree or to any other institution.

Structure and Word Counts

Section 1: Stand Alone Literature Review

‘The Origins of Early Maladaptive Schemas: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Evidence’

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Abstract

The first part of this thesis is written in the form of a literature review and aims to review the empirical literature that underpins Jeff Young's conceptual theory of early maladaptive schema development. Links are made between schema development and forms of childhood adversity, retrospective parenting experiences and attachment style. The review highlights a gap between Young's widely accepted conceptual theory of EMS and the empirical evidence base. However, the apparent relevance of EMS to a wide range of psychopathologies and forms of childhood adversity provides a rationale to continue future research in this area. Theoretical, Clinical and research implications are discussed.

The second, more substantive part of the thesis explores whether EMS have a mediating role in the association between attachment style and psychopathology in children in care. 42 children in care (aged 13 to 21) completed measures of attachment style, schemas and psychopathology. Total schema severity mediated the relationship between avoidant attachment style and psychopathology.

Conclusions: Findings support the relevance of EMS to understanding the link between attachment style and psychopathology in children in care.

Practitioner points:

- Schema theory may provide a useful contribution to understanding the mental health needs of children in care.
- Replication in a larger sample group is required.

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