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Attachment & Hope of Institutionalized and Reunified Children in Ghana

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Attachment & Hope of Institutionalized and Reunified Children in Ghana

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Research Questions

Does attachment influence hope?

- There are over two million children living in orphanage care worldwide.
- Research consistently shows that living in institutions negatively affects children's ability to create secure attachments.
- Increased hope is related to decreased feelings of depression, anxiety, and loneliness and increased academic achievement, adaptive coping styles, and even improved athletic performance.

How does hope differ between institutionalized and reunified children?

- Many countries have adopted policies which favor family care over institutional care for children.
- Child neglect, most often a feature of many orphanages, has resulted in "significant cognitive delays, increased risk of psychological disorders, and stunted physical growth" in comparison to children in home settings.
- A child's level of hope may be influenced by the setting in which they grow up, be it orphanage or with their family.

Data & Methods

- Sample: 152 institutionalized children (IC) from 13 orphanages and 30 reunified children (RC) aged 8-18
- Social attachment was measured with 14 hypothetical situations asking about attachment figures.
- Hope was measured with the six-item Children's Hope Scale (CHS)

Results

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2
Attachment	0.196 (0.112)	0.234* (0.108)
Gender		-1.847 (1.126)
Age		0.261 (0.199)
Siblings in Orphanage		-1.303 (0.722)
Constant	14.386*** (1.238)	11.807*** (2.657)
Observations	131	131
R-squared	0.018	0.058
Adjusted R-squared	0.010	0.029
Robust standard errors in parentheses		
*** p<0.001, * p<0.05		

Dependent variable: CHS score (6-36)

*OLS regression and t-test analysis conducted with Stata

Results (Cont.)

Group	Observations	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Int.	
I C	152	15.22	0.506338	6.242556	14.22	16.22
R C	31	22.58	1.036718	5.772199	20.46	24.7
Combined	183	16.47	0.498529	6.743978	15.49	17.45
Difference		7.35696	1.215352		4.959	9.755
Mean Difference					t = 6.0534	
Ho: diff = 0					degrees of freedom = 181	
Ha: diff < 0		Ha: diff != 0		Ha: diff > 0		
Pr(T < t) = 1.0000		Pr(T > t) = 0.0000		Pr(T > t) = 0.0000		

Limitations

- Small sample size, especially in the reunified group.
- Data for reunified group still being collected and analyzed.
- Inability to make cross-cultural applications.

Conclusion

- Higher levels of hope are related to increased number of attachment figures in an individuals life.
- Living in an institution is related to significantly lower levels of hope than living in a family setting.
- More research is needed to explore factors contributing to hope differences between institutional and family settings.