

Developmental Psychology Paper.

- a) Ainsworth invented the strange situation experiment to determine how securely attached infants are to their caregiver. He categorised infants into three groups:
- Group B also known as secure attachment was a confident infant who would leave its mother to play and explore. It will be subdued when mother leaves the room and greet her positively on her return. Secure infants have been with a caregiver who is emotionally available, sensitive and supportive. They have a positive working model of themselves.
  - Group A is an insecure infant known as an avoidant infant. They do not orientate to the mother while investigating the toys and room, they do not seem concerned by her absence, and show little interest in her when she returns. Infants have a caregiver who is rejecting. The infant has a working model of themselves that is unacceptable and unworthy.
  - Group C is also an insecurely attached infant, known as a resistant infant. This infant often shows intense distress particularly when the mother is absent, but they reject the mother by pushing her away, often this occurs when the mother returns. Infants have an inconsistent caregiver. They have a negative self-image and exaggerate their emotional responses to gain attention.
- b) Ainsworth study of “the strange situation” is an experiment that shows individual differences in attachment. Structured observation was carried out in a laboratory setting. Attractive toys and furniture was arranged in a room to simulate an interesting home or day care explorative room. Infants behaviour was assessed using the categories:
- Separation anxiety
  - Exploration by the infant
  - Stranger anxiety
  - Reunion behaviour

The mother and child are introduced to the room and left alone together so that the infant can explore the toys. The stranger enters the room and talks to the mother approaching the infant slowly with a toy. The mother leaves the room leaving the infant with the stranger. The mother returns to greet and comfort the infant. The mother again leaves the infant with the stranger who tries interacts with the infant. Then the mother returns to the child. Psychologists sit behind a one way screen to observe the Childs reactions to the mother and stranger throughout the experiment.

The results showed that 70% of the infants studied had a secure attachment. 20% had an avoidant attachment and 10% a resistant

attachment. Therefore 30% of infants studied had an insecure attachment with their mothers.

- c) Freud disagreed with Bowlby's theory that attachment behaviour was instinctive. He believed that it was your Id that drove you to seek food, warmth. Freud thought that you learnt that your mother provided both warmth and food therefore you attached to her, as she satisfies the need for food and comfort. Evaluating this showed that Bowlby's theory was more likely to be correct. Freud's theory uses abstract, untestable ideas that are not able to be measured and are therefore difficult to study scientifically. Many people also believe that Freud overemphasised the importance of biological drives in determining behaviour.

The Behaviourists theory "Tabular Rasa" was that attachment was due to conditioning. Classical conditioning was shown by Skinner who showed that a rat could be conditioned to press a lever by rewarding it for approaching, touching and pressing the lever. It associated a click with food just like the sight of the mother is conditioned to an infant with food and comfort. An infant is born with a reflex response. This is the bases of the attachment bond. Dollard and Miller adapted this theory, to include a drive state. The infant howls and learns that this produces a reward which is then linked with the mother. Behaviourists were widely criticised for being reductionist, reducing the complexities of human behaviour to learned responses. The theory excludes the possibility of any innate factors. It was criticised as cupboard love theories. Only Schaffer and Emerson and Harlow support this theory research does not.