

Developmental Psychology – Why does the Attachment Relationship Happen?

Behaviourism

- Through learning
- Child learns to become attached through conditioning
- It is the person who feeds the child who becomes the attachment figure
- Food is the reinforcer for attachment behaviour

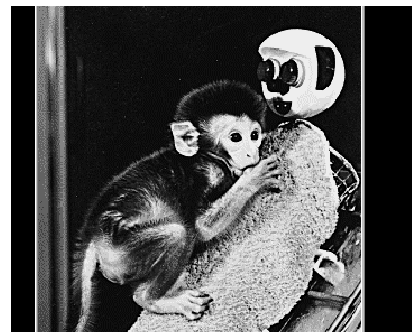
Harlow's Monkeys

Aim

To determine whether food or the close comfort of a blanket was more important in attachments

Procedures

Harlow placed infant rhesus monkeys in cages with two surrogate mothers. In one experiment, one of the mothers was made of wire and had a feeding bottle attached to her. The other was made from soft and cuddly terry cloth but did not have a bottle attached.



Findings

The infants spent most of their time clinging to the cloth mother, even though she provided no nourishment.

Psychodynamic

- Receiving sexual pleasure through oral stimulation – feeding
- Become attached to "feeder"

Evolutionary – John Bowlby

- Infants are born with a drive to become attached
- Bowlby's adaptive value – see Ainsworth, proximity seeking and exploratory behaviour
- Infants elicit caregiving
- Adults respond to social releasers
- Infants form one special relationship – monotropy
- Infants that form attachments are more likely to survive and reproduce – evolution

It was Bowlby who first suggested that the attachment relationship provided a template or prototype relationship for all other relationships in an individual's life. This is mirrored by psychodynamic theories of personality development, such as Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development. Within this theory, development occurs through dealing with a succession of crises or issues. The first crisis is trust. Unless trust is established within the first couple of years through family relationships there is a profound effect on the individual's adult relationships.

Analysis

	For	Against
Behaviourism	~ It has been proven that children do learn through association	~ Says food is a reinforcer ~ It is not always the feeder who is the attachment figure – Shaffer & Emerson, Harlow's Monkeys BUT... generalisation a problem here?
Psychodynamic		~ Lacks falsifiability ~ Shaffer & Emerson ~ Harlow's monkeys BUT... generalisation a problem here?
Evolutionary	~ Adaptive value, visible behaviours ~ Studies show those without secure attachments develop problems later on in life ~ 20cm focal length, from breast to mother's eyes ~ Children appear to have social releasers	~ Individual differences? ~ Temperament hypothesis ~ Premature babies ~ Developmental disorders ~ Personality of Primary Caregiver