

Whatever happened to little albert

Psychology



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What Happened to Little Albert al Affiliation) Introduction. In the year 1920, there was a case study referred to as the Little Albert Experiment that was done at the Johns Hopkins University. The study showed empirical or practical evidence of classical conditioning among humans. It was conducted by John B. Watson and alongside was his assistant Rosalie Rayner. The study was similarly an illustration of stimulus generalization (Watson and Rayner, 1920).

After making an observation of children who were out in the field, John B. Watson was interested in discovering support for his ideas. He had the notion that the reaction of children when they heard loud noises were due to fear (Watson and Rayner, 1920). In addition, he reasoned that the fear was innate, or it was due to a response that was unconditioned. He was of the belief that by observing the classical conditioning principles, he could condition a child a child to have feared as regard another stimulus that was distinctive which ordinarily the child would not fear (Watson and Rayner, 1920). The paper will look into the review of literature that followed the studies by Watson.

Whatever Happened to Little Albert?

It is necessary to bear in mind the findings and more importantly the methods of the Little Albert study in the context of its time and early history of psychological experiments. According to Harris, the repeated recounting of the study on Little Albert may have affected the accuracy of the study adversely. Much later research may have been in the tendency of reconciling findings in a bid to unify support for some other theories. In addition, Harris argues that the studies, as well as its results, have been the subject of misrepresentation and distortion over the years. This is true as can be <https://assignbuster.com/whatever-happened-to-little-albert/>

observed in Bartlett's article (Harris, 1979).

The works of Watson inspired other studies. For instance in the article by Jones, the study involved a boy who was two years old. The case study of the boy was modeled after the study on Little Albert. It was centered on whether it was possible and achievable to uncondition (p. 310) a response of fear to an animal in this instance a rabbit as well as to make a determination whether that unconditioning (p. 310) would extend devoid of further action to any other stimuli (Jones, 1924).

The studies by Watson were not without criticisms. For instance, some text books reveal that Albert's mother was a worker in that same building that Watson was and that she had no idea that the tests were being carried out. When she became aware of the same, it is alleged that she moved away and did not inform anyone where she and her child were going. In a report, in 2009, it is reported that none of the events, as well as the fanciful stories concerning Little Albert, were factual (Beck, Levinson and Irons, 2009).

Bartlett, in his online article, stated that a paper that was published in January in the journal *History of Psychology* made a compelling case that Little Albert was not healthy and normal (Bartlett, 2012) as Watson had insisted. It is claimed that the child was probably impaired. It is also alleged that if indeed the baby had cognitive deficit that was severe, it would follow then that his reactions to the dog, the monkey or the white rat may not have been certainly arriving at universal conclusions about human nature grounded on Albert's reactions and hence would not make sense at all. It would then mean that the entire experiment would be one where a researcher terrifying a sick baby for no justifiable scientific reason. The author continues to state that what makes the situation worse is the fact that <https://assignbuster.com/whatever-happened-to-little-albert/>

the authors of the article bring out the arguments that Watson must have had prior knowledge that Little Albert has some impairment. This would then convert an experiment that was cruel to begin with and of values that are questionable into a blatant fraud in academia (Bartlett, 2012).

Conclusion.

The contribution on Watson was mostly on Phobias. He was of the view that Phobias were responses that were conditioned. He believed strongly just like Sigmund Freud that experiences of a person during early childhood years influenced the personality of an adult. Thus, despite the criticisms surrounding Watson study the Little Albert Experiments remain an extremely significant study in psychology as well as in other disciplines. His work lives on until today, and the implications of the study have had quite a profound effect on the world at that time as well as today. In modern times, his findings continue to influence the field of psychology particularly in therapy.

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