

Little albert experiment

Psychology



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Conditioned emotional reactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 3, 1-14. In this journal article, Jhon B. Watson and his assistant Rosalie Rayner performed one of the most influential experiments in psychology to prove that emotional responses could be conditioned or learned vs Sigmund Freud's theories of sexual and life-preservation to be solely the shaping of behavior and personality distortion from child to adult life. In the article, Watson and Rayner go on to prove that in fact there is many more innate instincts than those claimed by Freud.

Of course backed by many other experiments performed in other occasions, but in this case alone, Watson and Rayner did prove that conditioned stimuli and environmental factors do in fact produce a learned emotional response of fear or rage in behavior. The experiment consisted of a healthy baby "Little Albert" that had been raised in the hospital environment since birth because his mother was a nurse, loud noise produced by a steel rod and a hammer, a white rat, a rabbit, a dog, a monkey, masks with and without hair, cotton wool, a burning newspaper and a few other things.

Watson and Rayner first began the experiment by testing Albert's emotional wellness at the age of eight months. Seeing that Albert was in stable condition they began with introducing each stimuli alone, which began with the loud noise produced by the hammer hitting the steel bar over little Albert's head. With each attempt, his reaction went from mild to extreme causing little Albert to go from being startled to ending up in emotional outbreak and tears.

After more tests, at age of nine months, Albert was introduced to the rest of the stimuli which were the animals and other objects. Not showing any signs

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of fear or rage from Albert, Watson then proceeded to discover if pairing the loud noise with the touch of the animals and sight of the other objects could condition the emotional response of fear or rage, he wanted know if this fear transferred and how long the fear lasted.

Watson and Rayner then experimented with little Albert joining the two stimuli together, the loud noise with the touch or sight of the animals and objects spacing each experiment a few days, weeks and towards the end he spaced the experiment up to a month. Each time showing that little Albert associated and generalized fear with the sound and anything with fur on it . In Watson's findings, it showed that even though the intensity level of the reaction/response decreased over longer spaced time in between experiments.

In other words, the recovery from the extinction was just as intense as was the first time after conditioning took first took place. Our class read of this when learning of Jhon B. Watson from our textbook, although it doesn't go into further detail beyond generalization, it does give insight of the general idea behind the concept of conditioning stimuli and learning behaviors. Even though the information from the journal and the book compliment each other, I have to say that the journal article did go more into detail over the subject therefore, helping me understand it better.

I learned that Watson's theory over Sigmund's sex and survival was much more accurate as far as research goes, Watson is able to prove against Sigmund's theory by experiment and measuring that environment and conditioning can affect the shaping of ones inner fears and rage. I like how this article dissects the experiment altogether to help understand the <https://assignbuster.com/little-albert-experiment/>

process of it all. I would highly recommend it to anyone taking introduction to psychology or anyone else interested in this subject.