Big Five Personality and Romantic Attachment

BENJAMIN MANNINGS & ALICE LEONARD
Believed that mental health and behavioral problems could be attributed to early childhood.

https://www.simplypsychology.org/bowlby.html
Evolutionary Theory of Attachment

* SUGGESTS THAT CHILDREN COME INTO THE WORLD BIOLOGICALLY PRE-PROGRAMMED TO FORM ATTACHMENTS WITH OTHERS, AS THIS WILL HELP THEM SURVIVE.

*ATTACHMENT BEHAVIORS ARE INSTINCTIVE AND WILL BE ACTIVATED BY ANY CONDITIONS THAT SEEM TO THREATEN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PROXIMITY, SUCH AS SEPARATION, INSECURITY, AND FEAR.

*BABIES ARE BORN WITH THE TENDENCY TO DISPLAY CERTAIN INNATE BEHAVIORS (SOCIAL RELEASERS) SUCH AS CRYING, SMILING, AND CRAWLING. THESE BEHAVIORS HELP ENSURE PROXIMITY AND CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER OR ATTACHMENT FIGURE.
* His idea was that during the evolution of humans, it would have been those babies who were close to their mothers and attachment figures that would have survived.

* Bowlby hypothesized that both infants and mothers have evolved a biological need to stay in contact with one another.

* This attachment relationship acts as a prototype for all future social relationships so disrupting it can have severe consequences.

* Bowlby claimed mothering is useless if delayed until after 2-3 years
According to Bowlby, if the attachment figure is broken or disrupted during the critical two year period, the child will suffer irreversible long-term consequences of this maternal deprivation. This risk continues until the age of 5.

* MATERNAL DEPRIVATION IS THE CONTINUAL DISRUPTION OF THE ATTACHMENT BETWEEN INFANT AND PRIMARY CAREGIVER, WHICH COULD RESULT IN LONG TERM COGNITIVE, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THAT INFANT.

* LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES MAY INCLUDE:
  - DELINQUENCY
  - REDUCED INTELLIGENCE
  - INCREASED AGGRESSION
  - DEPRESSION
  - AFFECTIONLESS PSYCHOPATHY (INABILITY TO SHOW AFFECTION OR CONCERN FOR OTHERS)
Mary Ainsworth

Where Bowlby thought that attachment was an all or nothing process, Ainsworth saw that there were individual differences in attachment quality.

“It’s easy enough to know when you are attached to someone because you know how you feel when you are apart from that person, and, being an adult, you can put your feelings into words and describe how it feels.”

https://www.simplypsychology.org/mary-ainsworth.html
Mary Ainsworth devised a technique called the “Strange Situation Classification.”

1. After a mother and infant have settled, a stranger enters and sits quietly on the free chair.
2. After an interval, the stranger starts talking with the mother and, after a while, starts to play with the child.
3. Then a little later, the mother gets up and leaves the room.
4. The stranger stays and tries to interact with the child.
5. After a period, the mother then re-enters. The stranger leaves.
6. After a further interval, the mother leaves again, leaving the child alone.
7. After a period, the stranger enters, offers comfort to the child if necessary, and tries to play with the child.
8. The mother returns, the stranger leaves, and the mother and child remain in the room for a few more minutes.
Scoring was based off of 5 observations for each episode and scored 1-7

* PROXIMITY AND CONTACT SEEKING
* CONTACT MAINTAINING
* PROXIMITY AND INTERACTION AVOIDING
* PROXIMITY AND INTERACTION RESISTING
* SEARCHING
Results: Ainsworth identified three main attachment styles, Secure (Type B), insecure avoidant (Type A), and Insecure ambivalent/resistant (Type C)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Secure Attachment</th>
<th>Ambivalent Attachment</th>
<th>Avoidant Attachment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation Anxiety</td>
<td>Distressed when mother leaves.</td>
<td>Infant shows signs of intense distress when mother leaves.</td>
<td>Infant shows no sign of distress when mother leaves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stranger Anxiety</td>
<td>Avoidant of stranger when alone, but friendly when mother present.</td>
<td>Infant avoids the stranger - shows fear of stranger.</td>
<td>Infant is okay with the stranger and plays normally when the stranger is present.</td>
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<td>Reunion behavior</td>
<td>Positive and happy when mother returns.</td>
<td>Child approaches mother, but resists contact, may even push her away.</td>
<td>Infant shows little interest when mother returns.</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>Will use the mother as a safe base to explore their environment.</td>
<td>Infant cries more and explores less than the other 2 types.</td>
<td>Mother and stranger are able to comfort the infant equally well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of infants</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
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It was not until the 1980’s that researchers began to take seriously the possibility that attachment processes may play out in adulthood.

Hazan and Shaver were the first researchers to explore Bowlby’s ideas in the context of romantic relationships.

Hypothesized that the emotional bond that develops between adult romantic partners, is similar to the attachment behavioral system that gives rise to the emotional bond between infants and caregivers.
Adults attachments share following features

- Both feel safe when the other is nearby and responsive
- Both engage in close, intimate, bodily contact
- Both feel insecure when the other is inaccessible
- Both share discoveries with one another
- Both play with one another’s facial features and exhibit a mutual fascination and preoccupation with one another
Attachment Styles of Hazan and Shaver

*Avoidant*- Characterized as being afraid of intimacy, experiencing emotional highs and lows during relationships, along with much jealousy.

*Anxious/Ambivalent*- View love in an obsessive way, with strong need for constant reciprocation and validation, along with emotional highs and lows, and feelings of jealousy and strong sexual attraction.

*Secure*- Describe their romantic relationships as friendly, trusting, and happy. They accept their partners regardless of faults. The tend to have long and fulfilling relationships.
Big Five Personality

- **Extraversion**
  - Characterized by: Excitability, sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness, and high emotional expression

- **Agreeableness**
  - Characterized by: Kindness, affection, cooperation

- **Openness**
  - Characterized by: Imagination, insight, broad range of interests, creativeness

- **Conscientiousness**
  - Characterized by: Thoughtfulness, good impulse control, goal directed, organized, mindful of details

- **Neuroticism**
  - Characterized by: Sadness, moodiness, emotional instability, mood swings, anxiety
Our Research

- Hypothesis: Personality will have an affect on what style of romantic attachment someone places themselves within.

- How did we test this?
  - Total of 40 Participants
  - Questionnaires
    - Big Five Personality Test
    - Hazan and Shaver Three-Category Romantic Attachment Questionnaire
Scale:

These questions are concerned with your experiences in romantic love relationships. Take a moment to think about these experiences and answer the following questions with them in mind.

Read each of the three self-descriptions below (A, B, and C) and then place a checkmark next to the single alternative that best describes how you feel in romantic relationships or is nearest to the way you feel. (Note: The terms "close" and "intimate" refer to psychological or emotional closeness, not necessarily to sexual intimacy.)

A. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, others want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

B. I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

C. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to get very close to my partner, and this sometimes scares people away.
Comparison in numbers of people in each attachment style
Results: Attachment A. 21 Participants
Results: Attachment B. 12 Participants
Results: Attachment C. 7 Participants
According to the results of the personality test and attachment questionnaire, those who exhibit a Type A Attachment, Avoidant, have high levels of extroversion and agreeableness with low levels of neuroticism. As this attachment style is characterized with emotional highs and lows, and a lot of jealousy.

Similarly, Type B Attachment, who describe their relationships as friendly, trusting, and happy. Also demonstrated high levels of extroversion and agreeableness with low levels of neuroticism. With both attachment types sharing the same high and low personality traits, there appears to be no real correlation between the attachment type and the personality type. There is some absent factor that determines whether the individual engages in secure or avoidant attachments.
However, the participants who exhibited high levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness and, again, low levels of neuroticism, showed Type C Attachment. Type C being characterized by viewing love in an obsessive way, needing constant reciprocation and validation, along with emotional highs and lows. Type C Attachment also express strong feelings of jealousy and sexual attraction. By having high levels of conscientiousness, the Type C participants show a correlation between being aware of surroundings and needing validation because they are sensitive to what is being done for them in comparison to what they do for their partner.