

Musical Sensitivity in the Personality and Behavior of Infants

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Abstract

Personality is the psychological characteristics that make each and every individual unique. Personality is related to both traits and states, where traits are considered to be the characteristics which are there for longer period of time like temperament and states are the characteristics which are considered to be changeable like mood. Both states and traits in personality are considered to be developed at early stages in life where the hereditary psychological and social influences are the most responsible causes for the formation of the personality. This research paper will give the broad overview of how music affects to the personality and behaviour of infants.

Keywords

Behaviour, Development, Emotions, Infants, Music, Personality

1. Introduction

Infants are typically egoistical and are mainly concerned with satisfying their physical desires such as hunger. Sigmund Freud viewed this focus on physical gratification as a form of self pleasuring, because infants are particularly interested in activities involving mouth (sucking and biting for example). Freud labeled first year of life as the Oral Stage of Psychosexual development (Misra & Shastr, 2014).

Dr. T. Berry Brazetton has told most types of babies as:

- 1) The mellow or laid back
- 2) Slow to develop baby
- 3) The even tempered baby: who develops according to the plans'
- 4) The hyper active or intense baby: who may hit some milestone ahead of time.

The three main traits found in infants are:

a) Colicky Baby:

Though we don't know that if infantile colic is inherited, we can say these babies seem to have a certain personality from early on. These babies are very sensitive to the environmental stimuli: loud noises, sudden movement, or tension from caretakers, which seem to agitate these babies. They hate to be naked. They are slightly hypertonic which means their muscles are tense. These babies sometimes tend to be tense and anxious as they grow older.

b) Mellow and Relaxed:

Nothing bothers them. They are always ready for a smile and seem to enjoy all sorts of stimuli such as new faces and handles loud music and new environment and they love being naked. Many of these babies grow up to be individuals who seem to go with the flow. The pretty grievances of life do not seem to be bothering them. They may develop at normal pace or may be slow to perform gross motor milestone such as rolling over crawling. They are just not in a hurry to get anywhere.

c) Shy Babies:

They are shy from the beginning. They notice new caretakers and show signs of stranger phobia early on. They may end up being kindergartener who is in the corner peering anxiously at her peers. Many times parents will say in the same way. Sometimes, the personality traits that child develops depend more on the environment he is being brought up. If a child senses that a parent is anxious about strangers, shots, new places, blood, drawing etc., the child is more likely to be apprehensive about those things. If a child grows up in a warm and welcoming homely environment, then he is more likely to be open to new people and experiences. Families that travel together often have children who welcome new experiences and adventure, and embrace people from different cultures (Misra & Shastr, 2014).

Theorists have different perspectives on the personality development of infants. Most important development is Melaine Kleins—Object Relation Theory where object is considered here is as infants because babies at such tender age are unable to understand things fully and their limited understanding of things may process on evolving the perception of what a passion is. According to Klein the inner core of personality stems from the early relationship with mother (Misra & Shastr, 2014).

While according to Freud—The child's fear of a powerful father determines personality, but Klein theorized that; the child's need for powerful mother is more important as the first relationship that child establishes is with mother. The infant interacts with the mother mostly during time of eye contact and breast feeding and during this the infant internalizes an image of the mother—good or bad that may or may not be representative of how the mother truly is.

Views over Infants Development—by the Theorists & Psychologists:

Theorist John Piaget was the first one to note that children play an active role in gaining knowledge of the world. According to his theory children can be thought as little scientist, who actually constructs their knowledge and understanding of the world.

John Bowlby, believed that early relationships with care givers play a major role in child's development and continue to influence social relationships throughout life.

According to Albert Bandura, infants learn new behaviors from observing that external reinforcement was not the only way that people learned new things. Instead intrinsic reinforcement such as a sense of pride, satisfaction, and accomplishment could also lead to learning. By observing the actions of others including parents and peers, children develops new skills and acquire new information.

Another psychologists Lev Vygotsky, believed that children learn actively and through hands on experiences. He also said those parents, caregivers, peers and the culture at large were responsible for the development of higher order functions.

The following traits when taken together build up the baby's personality and temperament:

1) Calm or Active—More active babies may be tougher to parents, day to day. They don't sleep as much, they become restless when they are supposed to be eating and then parents have to watch them like hawks. But at the same time they are curious, alert, and quick to pick up new skills.

2) Happy or Sad—Some babies are smiley, giggly and sunny and some just aren't. That doesn't mean they are not just the way they are weird.

3) Predictable or Not—The regular baby does you the favor of setting her schedule all on her own, walking, sleeping, eating, playing at the same time in the same way each day.

4) Adaptable and Cautious—When faced with a new person place or even playing, baby carries on as if nothing is changed.

5) Intense or Easygoing—Babies who are sensitive to sensory stimulation may react strongly to loud noise, bright lights and even to pungent smell. Other babies may be oblivious. Knowing what upsets you infant goes a long way towards helping avoid the troubling triggers.

Traits Temperaments, As Each Baby Is Unique:

Parenting is very important, but these components of temperament and behavior have lot to do with nature rather than nurture. There are nine components of temperament that are common in showing how each baby is unique. Key component of baby's behavior is how they handle new situations like some babies will refuse new food time and again fuss at any change in routine. Other babies are not as fazed by new caregivers and love playing with new toys and exploring a new environment. Babies have varying degrees of energy levels as well. Low energy babies are often content to sit and watch and barely moves a muscles during diaper changes. Higher energy babies are next to impossible to change or

strap into a car seat due to squirming and kicking and flipping and always want to be on the move. Each baby is unique in the range of intensity as well (Misra & Shastri, 2016a).

Some little ones rarely makes a peep and when they do it, it is usually more like fussing than all out crying or screaming. These babies will usually smile than all out laugh. On the other hand of the spectrum are the high intensity babies who sound off loudly (very loudly) regularly. When these babies are happy they are squeaking and giggling and when they are upset they are screaming at the top of their lungs. Sensitivity is another trait with low and high ends of the spectrum. A high intensity baby will not necessarily be highly sensitive though. Babies who are highly sensitive may react to new smells or sounds, wet diapers and temperature changes, and just because they don't sound off loudly about them does not mean that they are not sensitive to it (Misra & Shastri, 2014a).

Each infant cries differently, smiles differently and develops differently. There are some common traits in infant's behavior. I will discuss some traits which I think is interesting to see how infant's behavior and personalities are made up of a mixture of these traits.

Distractibility: is a personality trait. Every infant and toddler has a pretty higher tendency to be distracted easily however at young age you can see a difference in this trait. On the extreme low end of this spectrum are the babies who become completely immersed in playing with a toy. These babies will notice if you walk out of the room and they will play with one thing for a long time. Highly distractible babies on the other hand will quickly toss aside the toy they are playing with for a new object.

You can set a watch to some babies routine while other is unpredictable and have low irregularity. Babies with high regularity don't need to work into a schedule or routine because they do it for you. Babies with low regularity can be difficult to run because there is no knowing when they are going to be hungry tired or have dirty diapers (Misra & Shastr, 2014).

Having a baby with higher adaptability can make things lot easier, in today's world of quick changes. These babies are fine to jump from task to task in and out of the stroller, the car seat, and the playgrounds. Babies with low adaptability often struggle when switching to a new activity even if it is an activity that they enjoy (Richard & Gary, 2011).

And finally there is an infant behavior trait of persistence. Babies who are lower on this scale do not care to figure out a new toy or master a new skill and will often report to infant cries quickly. Babies who are more persistence will work at a new skill like rolling over until they figure it out.

2. Effects of Classical Music in Infants

Music is a powerful stimulant. It can completely sway our emotions. A soft gentle song can make you hum in pleasure, an inspirational song can fill up with positive vibes and give you the courage to move on, a relaxing soothing sound

can help you in your sleeping and curing insomnia where as an energetic orchestra can fill you up with excitement and enthusiasm. In recent past many studies have been conducted on the impact of music on mind and brain. During my research I have believed and have firm belief that music can defiantly change the thinking process of our mind and brain particularly in developing years. It could be concluded as well that music is one way that even charms up our language skills and mood as well (Misra & Shastri, 2016a).

During my research I found that listening to classical music during infancy will even have impact on the functioning of neurons apart from the fact that classical music even makes infants smarter. As we age number of neurons that used by us depletes and the exposing babies to the music like classical can improve the functioning of neurons which results in ready acceptance of knowledge and talent. That s why some children who start playing organ or starts learning singing at early age do that really well and remembers the pieces of music, including the ability to retain the process to remember any other information they were exposed to while listening to classical music (Misra & Shastri, 2014a).

The American Heritage Dictionary defines classical music as traditional genre music conforming to an established form and appealing to critical interest and developed musical taste. This can either be instrumental, vocal, folk music styles etc. (Misra & Shastri, 2016a).

Classical music can actually improves your spatial abilities and aid your language learning skills. During my research I found that babies who were exposed to classical music tend to have much higher spatial IQs compared to babies were not made to listen classical music.

Also their ability to learn and understand language much better, which also helped them to understand and differentiates between complex sounds. Classical music can also have a huge effect on baby s health. It has been observed that listening to classical music can help to calm the mind of an infant and alleviate pain, especially in babies who are born premature.

New parents who want to ensure that your baby benefits a lot, then you can introduce your child to classical music at an early age by playing music for them. Ensure to control volume. Some kids choose to sing which can often develop and help them not only understand and recognize your voice but also help them develop their language skills.

Along with these the impact of classical music is also on the following as well:

- Intelligence: Classical music during infancy helps building passage ways in the brain.

Babies are born with billions of neurons in the brain and these neurons are easily and quickly lost if unused. According to the doctors more stimuli infants are exposed to, the more neuron functions in the brain with which babies will learn things more easily and develop new talents more readily (Misra & Shastri, 2014b).

- **Memory:** Infants can actually remember pieces of classical music they have heard at 3 months of age. Listening to music can also help them to remember how to do new things. When an infant is learning new information while listening to music he will remember it better. If a baby is learning how to feed him and classical music is playing in background, he can remember the task more easily the next time he hears that piece of music (Misra & Shastri, 2016b).
- **Understanding:** Spatial understanding and language are greatly aided by the ability to process information more quickly. Babies who listen to classical music on regular basis have much higher spatial says, Dr Bales. The ability to understand and process the languages is accompanied by the understanding the various sounds created by speech. Babies who have been exposed to classical music are already accustomed to listening to different and complex sounds which help them with language.
- **Mood:** adult moods and emotions are directly tied to music. It is difficult to feel happy during a sad song and hard to stay depress when uplifting music is playing in the background. Babies feel the same thing. Soothing music not only helps a baby calm down or falls asleep, music also builds emotional intelligence. In London, experiment was conducted in which for 6 months, classical music was played on the speaker in the subway. The study found out that in some of the more dangerous neighborhoods, robberies decrease 33%, assaults decreased 25% and vandalism decreased to 37%—all believed to be the direct result of the classical music. A supermarket tried similar experiment outside the store and found that the music led to less vandalism and fewer youth s loitering (Misra & Shastri, 2014b).
- **Health:** Music can have a powerful impact on health. According to Mariah Snyder and Linda Chlan—listening to music plays a vital role in good health. Music helps in restoring healthy breathing which calms the psyche and aids with blood pressure and heart rate. Music even has effects that relieve pain and promote healing premature babies are often plays music to aid their recoveries.
- **Decision Making and Thinking Skills:** According to the babyclassroom.com infants who listen to music are stimulated to develop decision making and thinking skills.

Encouraging infants to sing play or move while listening to classical music also helps those skills.

- **Emotional Development:** Soothing songs calms fussy children. According to Dr. Diane Bales', music has a powerful effect on emotions. Child who grows up listening to music and is regularly exposed to classical music develops strong music related connections and has a great understanding of emotions.
- **Musical Knowledge:** Infants who are exposed to music are able to notice difference in rhythm, changes in pitch and hear melodies and recognize songs. For an infant screeching and noises are ways use to express themselves along

with experimenting with making sounds and noises. Encouraging them to sing or make sounds along birth music helps develop musical knowledge and understanding (Misra & Shastri, 2014a).

According to Dr. Gordan Shaw, university of California, infants who listens to classical music scores higher in mathematics.

- **Calming Physical Effect**—Classical music affects babies physical well being. Listening to slow soft classical music will help babies to relax. His breathing will become deeper and slower, allowing him to relax and rest. Babies heart rate will also be positively be affected. According to the study cited in Circulation—Journal of American (heart Association, the heart rate will increase or decrease depending upon the tempo of music. Therefore listening to a slow piece of classical music will help to slow his heart rate and reduce tension, which can be beneficial at the bed time.
- **Uplifting Effects**—Listening to certain types of classical music can lift your baby s mood. Listening to such music helps the body to secrete endorphins, which are natural relaxants that are released in the brain, improves mood, relax the body and even reduce pain. According to the American Music Therapy Association AMTA—Classical music can reduce pain, improves mood and promote healing.
- **Reduction in Birth Traumas:** the experience of being born can be both frightening and stressful for a new born baby. Dr. Slavka Viragouva of the Kosiea Hospital believes that classical music can reduce this trauma. While the baby is in utero she listens to the mother s heart beat. The sound of the heart beat is familiar and comforting to the baby.

In western countries doctors use Mozart to comfort infants during and after the birth experience. The newborn babies listen to Mozart for ten minutes at a time, six times per day.

- **Emotional Responses to Music:** Music is an important evolutionary adaptation comes from the developmental perspective. Caregivers around the world sing to infants and young infants are responsive to such music. Singing directed at infants is rendered in a style that is distinct from other types of singing and infants prefer to listen to infant directed over non infant directed renditions of the same song. The function of infant directed singing remains somewhat elusive. However one of the main theories is that caregivers use infant directed singing to express emotional information, and to regulate their infant s state. Young infants are of course not good at state regulation and require intervention in order to calm down when upset. Mother s sing in two distinct styles:

- 1) Lullaby style
- 2) Play song style

Adults can discriminate play songs and lullaby styles easily, and they rate play songs more rhythmic, brilliant, clipped and smiling in character and less soothing and airy then lullabies. Furthermore infants react differently when exposed

to lullabies and play songs, focusing their attention inward during the former and outward during the latter (Misra & Shastri, 2016b).

Thus music has the power to affect an infant's state on the basis of the evidence that music is universally used in caretaking contexts for emotional expression and state regulation, and that infants react differently to different musical styles; it is possible that singing to infants serves an important adaptive function in development. Specifically music can provide one route into learning about social interaction and self regulation before infants understand any language. Children are also able to distinguish different emotions in music. Cunningham and Sterling showed that 4 - 6 years old could discriminate happy, sad, angry and fearful musical excerpts. Trainor and Trehub found that children as young as years could reliably associate excerpts from Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf and Saint-Saëns' Carnival of the Animals with the pictures of the animals, giving emotion laden justifications for their responses such as that the wolf excerpt sounded scary. The bases for early emotional reactions to music have not been investigated widely, but they likely involve interpretations based on pitch, tempo, and timbre characteristics of the music. One aspect of pitch structure has been investigated (Misra & Shastri, 2014b).

The consonant intervals are associated with positive emotion and dissonant intervals with negative emotion. Using a visual looking paradigm in which infants control how long they listen to consonant vs. dissonant chords by how long they fixate on a visual target. On the studies it has been found that infants as young as two months prefer listening to consonant over dissonant musical intervals and same goes with the older infants as well.

An Experiment with Music According to infant's personality psychologists have come to an aid of those who believed that human ear, is biologically attuned to appreciate harmonious music.

3. Experiment

An experiment was conducted over few infants as per their personality to see the effect of music on them. There were 32 participants who were infants between 3 - 5 months of age, out of which 16 were girls and 16 boys. All participants were healthy, full term infants who were free of colds, on the test day and had no family history of hearing impairment. An additional 14 infants were excluded from the final sample, because of fussing or parental interference. Most infants lived and had family of multilingual language, English as well as Hindi. These children were from Lucknow, and nearby places like Barabanki, Kanpur and Banaras.

4. Conclusion

Experiment was conducted on the casual and naturalistic bases. It was found that the infants seemed calmer and more content when harmonious sounds were played. They were the ones who were stubborn and were feeling very uneasy. But when the Out of Tune sound was produced for the personality type, the calmer

ones and the cry baby, both looked disgust, and cried all the more, and not even looked at the speaker or even their parents. Hence the infants' responses are entirely consistent with dominance of musical scales with simple frequency ratio throughout the history and across the culture.

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