16 marks: describe and evaluate stages of attachment identified by Schaffer

AO1

Stages of attachments.

Schaffer and Emerson conducted a longitudinal case study in Scotland on attachments between caregiver and infant. They discovered that the early steps of infant attachments come in four stages. Stage one is indiscriminate attachments. This is when the infant show a similar response to both animate and inanimate objects. However, they will start to prefer more social stimuli such as smiling but can still be comforted by anyone. The second stage is the beginning of attachment. This is when the infant becomes more socials and will start to prefer inanimate company over animate. They can now distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar faces and do not yet show Stanger anxiety. Stage three is discriminate attachment. At this stage of attachment, the infant will begin to show separation anxiety when the primary caregiver puts them down and will show the same jot when reunited. The last stage of attachment is multiple attachments; this is when the infant develops a wider circle of attachments with other people. This is also the template of building future attachments.

AO3

Good External validity.

The experiment was taken place in the participants own homes. Other than stranger anxiety, the observation was actually done by parents during ordinary activity and reported to researchers later. This means that their behaviours were unlikely to be affected by the presence of the observers. Therefore, the experiment conducted has a good external validity.

Longitudinal design

Strength of this case study is the fact that it was carried out over a long period of time (longitudinally). This means that the same children were followed-up and observed regularly. Longitudinal designs have better internal validity than cross-sectional design. This is because they do not have the confounding variables. Therefore, the case study has a high internal validity.

Limited sample characteristics

The case study has a very small sample size. The case study only includes 60 babies and their caregivers from the same district and social class. In addition, this case study was conducted about 50 years ago meaning that attachments could’ve changed in the present day. Therefore, the results cannot be germanised to the whole population.