

Applied behaviour analysis - behaviour change project (introduction and discussio...

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Applied Behaviour Analysis - Behaviour Change project (Introduction & Discussion/Conclusion only)

Applied Behaviour Analysis A study of the effect of behavioural modification to promote a gym going culture in an individual Introduction

According to Kearney (2008), Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a behavior modification approach that aims at addressing social problems in a society and assist in achieving personal and communal sustainability programs. In order to maintain a daily gym schedule, behavior modification has to be invoked so as to fuel the body with its internal motivation. This can be achieved through assessing the environmental conditions that might affect the desired behavior.

The antecedent characteristics are the determinants of the correctional strategic approach that will be instilled so as to affect correctional measures in the subject. In this research, the antecedent behavior was not going to the gym. The environmental factors affecting the participant's ability to initiate the correct behavior was determined as the bad weather. The baseline behavior, also known as the free operant level is the normal behavior that occurs prior to the introduction of an intervention (Luiselli and Reed, 2011). The baseline behavior showed a normal reluctant gym going pattern from the participant.

The study is therefore aimed at coming up with a combined approach that would aid in producing a response mechanism (consequence) that would be deemed as the correct behavior. This was made possible by the use of Experiential Analysis of Behavior (EAB). The use of EAB enabled the application of operant conditioning and classical conditioning (Fisher, Piazza

and Roane, 2011).

Hypothesis

It is hypothesised that the antecedent (not going to the gym), which is the incorrect behaviour, will reduce hence the correct behaviour will be achieved, which is increasing the numbers of going to the gym.

Method

Participants

The participant was a XX year's old male psychology undergraduate at the University, who was studying the Applied Behaviour Analysis module.

Setting

The research was conducted in XXX city. The participant lived in the XXX Street and went to the fitness club on XXX Road. The participants went to the gym on foot and it took approximately forty minutes to make a return journey from his home.

Design

A single-case AB design was used in this research.

Measure

The goal was to increase the number of going to the gym and it was measured on a weekly basis. The correct and incorrect behaviours were recorded on an ABC chart with the antecedents and consequences, in order to aid the intervention. The baseline data was analysed and concluded to create an effective intervention.

On the ABC chart, antecedent recorded as ' bad weather' if the weather was bad (for example, raining, windy, and so on), ' tired' if had a busy day or did not have enough sleep, ' lazy' if lazy to go to the gym, and ' time

management issue' if did not have enough time to go to the gym, and so forth.

Procedure

Two weeks of baseline data (A) and nine weeks of intervention data (B) were recorded from 13th February to 1st May. Examination of the baseline data after two weeks suggested that the participant did not go to the gym usually because the bad weather conditions and the laziness to take a twenty minute-walk to the gym (plus a twenty minute-walk to return home after working out).

According to the baseline data, the intervention aimed to remind and encourage the participant to go to the fitness centre more often. Therefore, a raincoat was bought and a bright sign with the word ' Beat laziness, go to the gym!' was placed in an area (beside the laptop) visible to the participant for a total of nine weeks. ABC data was recorded daily during this period.

Results (with a suitable graph)

Figure 1 shows the gym sessions attended per week were greater in number during the intervention ($M = 2.5$) than the baseline ($M = 4.22$). The occurrence of incorrect behaviours (not going to the fitness centre or staying at home) was more prevalent in the baseline, compared to the intervention. It illustrates a progressive increase of 1.72 times of going to the gym per week during the time frame. Although the number of gym session per week seemed to be a bit erratic, it did follow an overall upward trend.

Figure 1. Numbers of going to the fitness center per week across a two weeks baseline and nine weeks intervention.

Discussion

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In this study, the findings were consistent with the hypothesis.

The effect of the correctional measure on the participant ignited the resolve to increase the number of going to the gym. The effect of placing the jacket near the participant's laptop and the writings on the jacket relinquished the antecedent behavior from the participant hence initiating the correct behavior.

The combination of the classical conditioning and operant condition achieved the required results. The sight of the jacket conditioned the participant classically hence it would help the participant to beat procrastination (Kreider et al., 2009). This would be seen as an involuntary response over time because the bad weather conditions would always require the participant to wear a jacket before stepping out. The use of operant conditioning on the other hand helped the participant to think of the benefits of going to the gym (Simons-Morton, McLeroy and Wendel, 2012). This was achieved by the use of the words " Beat laziness, go to the gym."

Determining the baseline behavior normally aids the researcher to recognize the best approach that will be effective if it is applied to work as the operant conditioning.

The number of going to the gym increased after the introduction of an intervention method.

As much as there is a fluctuating graph showing the frequency of gym attendance, the overall result shows an increase in the number of going to the gym, with the same weather condition.

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