

Basic principles of classical and operant conditioning essay samples

[Business](#), [Company](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [Question 1](#) \n \t

2. [Question 2](#) \n \t

3. [Question 3](#) \n \t

4. [Question 4](#) \n \t

5. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Question 1

There are two ways that help explain how animals learn and these two ways are classical conditioning and operant conditioning. The two share a variety of basic principles just as they share a number of principles in their differences. Operant conditioning, a theory that was propagated by B. F Skinner seeks to explain the leaning of behavior through reward and punishment (Nevida 2011). Voluntary responses begin to be controlled by their consequences in operant conditioning. Classical conditioning on the other hand was propagated by Pavlov and furthered by Watson and in their view, details that behavior is as a result of stimulus and responses.

According to classical conditioning, the differences experienced in behavior are as a result of the different experiences that organisms are subjected to. According to Watson, new behavior is learned through the process of association. In as much as both result in learning, their concepts of learning differ greatly.

The differences between classical and operant conditioning come by way of

distinguishing whether the behavior is voluntary or not. In the scenario of classical conditioning, an association is made between an involuntary response and a stimulus. But in the case of operant conditioning, an association is made between a voluntary behavior and the consequence it elicits (Koekemoer 2004)). Another difference is seen where in operant conditioning the learner is given incentives but in classical conditioning no incentives are given. The learner is expected to actively participate and take part in some action in order for them to be rewarded or punished in operant conditioning. Classical conditioning does not require the learner to participate or be involved actively because they are passive.

Question 2

Classical conditioning concepts can be found in everyday living, more especially in the media through advertising. When companies use these advertisements, they are keen on eliciting a severe response from the consumers, who are supposed to change their minds and go on to buy the companies' products. The products that are advertised therefore become the conditioned stimuli. The intention of using advertisements is to make the viewers to associate a certain feeling they may have had before to the product, and influence their decisions about having it (Nevida 2011). It turns out that the product is tied to a certain emotions that are supposed to influence decisions and actions by the consumers.

When one visits any website or print media, they come across an advertisement which elicits some thought or behavior in them. Most food companies have perfected the art of making people salivate or even want to

have their meal just at the sight of their advertisements. Two of these companies are Coca- Cola and MacDonald. At the mere sight of letter M, one can go angry or crave for fries or burgers. The advertisement pairs up the thought and urge of having a meal at McDonald and hunger or craving. The burgers in the advertisement or even letter M are the conditioned stimulant and the craving of it is the unconditioned response. The same can be said about Coca- Cola, because after consumers see a bottle of an ice cold coke, whether on the billboards or on the televisions, the next thing a consumer will want to do is get one for themselves, especially on a hot summer afternoon.

Question 3

Operant conditioning can be used by a coach to change behavior in a person, especially in situations where they have a behavior they would want to stop but have difficulty in doing so (Nevida 2011). As a life coach, if I attend to a client who has issues in biting their finger nails and the client would want to stop her habit, I will employ the operant conditioning concepts in order to ensure they succeed in doing so. I will introduce the reinforcements which are rewards and punishment. I will reward the patient when they succeed in not biting their fingernails and punish them when they do so. If the client is a teenager, I can give him an extra one hour of watching television if they do not bite their fingernails. If they bite them, then one hour will be gone from their daily routine of television watching. As for the client who would like to get into better physical condition and get into the habit of engaging in physical exercise at least for thirty minutes

every day, similarly the reward program will work. As a way of rewarding every day physical activity, I will offer praises to the client as this will help in boosting their ego and make them feel good about their efforts. Also, I can give an exercises plan that the client likes for example, selecting a set of exercises that they love doing especially when the response is good. But then when the client goes against the agreed code of conduct or fails to show up at an agreed time for the exercises, or fails to do them at all, I will employ a punishment such as giving the client more extensive exercises especially those that they do not like.

Question 4

Classical and operant conditioning often comes into play in everyday living of all people. Operant conditioning comes into play almost in every aspect of life. People wake up very early in the morning to go to work because they know they will get a pay at the end of the day. The salary in this case reinforces the actions, otherwise people will not go to the office if there was no reward for their sacrifices and hard work. When going to work, everyone is expected to drive at the expected speed limit depending on where they are driving. If they exceed the expected limit they will get a speeding ticket and everyone does not like it. They will be forced to behave as expected because they do not want to be punished.

Classical conditioning also plays a very vital role in the everyday life of everyone. it is natural that in many homes where there are children, whenever someone tries to open the gate at a certain time, the children will automatically know that it is their parents who are at the door and run

towards it. Also, at the sight of an advertisement of one's favorite meal or snack, even by the mere mention of it, a person will feel as if they are hungry and hence go for the meal. Many of the phobias that people have develop as a result of classical conditioning. For instance, when a person fears heights or bridges, they will get the feeling of fear whenever they see a tall building, get into lifts or whenever they are crossing bridges. Phobia in this case is conditioned fear that automatically engulfs a person when they get close to something that elicits fear in them.

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