

Written assignment: the matching law

Psychology



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The Matching Law The Matching Law The matching law attempts to justify the choice of behavior. It is descriptive in nature as opposed to being mechanistic. This law regards choice as the rate of events that are observed in a given period of time. It disregards a choice as having been made based on a single event or as an internal process. According to Cooper, Heron and Heward (2013), behavior is described by this law as a reaction reinforced on an interval schedule. Free will is put into question by this law as mathematical equations are used to predict the kind of choice that can be made.

There are a number of reinforcements that are reacted to under this law. Continuous Reinforcement is one of them where there is provision of reinforcement for every occurrence of a behavior. This type of reinforcement is considered to be very beneficial when one wants to acquire a particular skill. Proven behaviors gain strength from intermittent schedules of reinforcement (Cooper, Heron & Heward, 2013). Where reinforcement has naturally occurred, this reinforcement is vital for its progress.

Reinforcements have two basic schedule ratio and interval. Interval schedule takes a period of time before any reinforcement is produced by a response. On the other hand, ratio will produce reinforcement after a number of responses have taken place.

For example, a young man enters into a train and seats next to a lady. He compliments the lady " you have a nice dress." The lady responds sarcastically " keep your comments to yourself!" The next time that this young man will board any means of public transport and seats next to a lady, he will avoid giving a compliment. This is because, according to the Matching Law, the relative response rate matches the relative reinforcement rate.

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Proper understanding of the matching law enlightens and gives a deeper understanding of how choices are made.

Reference

Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. E. (2013). Applied Behavior Analysis: Pearson New International Edition Always learning. 316 – 322.