

Good example of conditioning essay

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Conditioning in Psychology refers to the processes by which repeated stimulus produce predictable and frequent response. There are two types of conditioning namely classical and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning was discovered by Ivan Pavlov during his digestive system research (Kalat, 2011). Pavlov noticed that the dogs salivated whenever they sighted attendants dressed in lab coats. He attributed this behavior to the repeated exposure of both food and lab coats to the dogs. Pavlov investigated the behavior by ringing a bell whenever he was presenting food to dog. After repeated occurrences, he observed that the dogs could salivate when the bell was sounded despite absence of food. In Pavlov experiment, the ringing bell was previously a neutral stimulus that did not evoke any response from dogs. On the other hand, food was the unconditioned stimulus that evoked salivation that is a conditioned response that naturally occurs without learning. The repeated pairing of food and ringing bell made the dogs associate ringing bell with food through conditioning (Coon, Mitterer, Talbot & Vanchella, 2010). Consequently, the ringing bell which was previously a neutral stimulus became a conditioned stimulus evoking salivation. The salivation evoked by the ringing bell became the conditioned response. While classical conditioning is attributed to Pavlov, operant conditioning was first put forward by BF skinner. The conditioning emphasizes on the use of reinforcement and punishment to strengthen or weaken behavior (Parrish, 2009). Skinner conducted experiment with rats and pigeons in a small apartment commonly referred to as Skinner box. This box had button or lever system that the rat or pigeon could be manipulated by the either the pigeon or rats in order to obtain food. He observed that the

animas repeated pressing the lever system because of the favorable response of getting food. He called these responses reinforcement and the phenomenon operant conditioning. There are three fundamental concepts in operant conditioning. These are neutral operant, reinforcement, and punishment. Neutral operant is responses or outcomes that neither strengthen nor weaken behavior. Reinforcers, on the other hand, are outcomes or responses that increase the likelihood that a behavior shall be strengthen and repeated. Positive reinforcement involves presentation of favorable response after behavior to strengthen it while negative reinforcement entails withdrawing unfavorable response to strengthen behavior. Punishers refer to responses that elevate the chances that a behavior shall be repeated (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2013). Positive punishment involves the application of unfavorable responses to weaken a behavior while negative punishment entails the removing favorable outcomes to weaken behavior. Both classical and operant conditioning are methods of learning that involved reinforcement to attain desired behavior. Besides, the desired responses in both operant and classical conditioning fade away when conditioned stimulus or reinforcement is withdrawn. However, there are fundamental differences between the two conditioning theories. In classical conditioning, the neutral stimulus is accompanied by unconditioned stimulus before a desired response is produced (Weiten, 200). This is not the case for operant conditioning as the behavior is followed d by response. Moreover, classical conditioning focuses on conditioning involuntary responses while operant conditioning entails the use of reinforcement and punishment to increase or reduce the likelihood of repeated voluntary behavior. There are

many examples of classical conditioning in the real world. Both test aversion and phobia can be explained using classical condition. Test aversion is the dislike of palatable things such as food because of associated responses. For instance, a test aversion for a particular food would be developed if an individual repeatedly experiences some discomfort whenever he or she ingest the food. In this case, the food shall be paired with discomfort to produce dislike of the food. The food becomes the conditioned stimulus while the dislike is the conditioned response. On the other hand, the relationship between phobia and classical conditioning was demonstrated by Watson and Rayner. In their experiment, the eleven months baby developed fear for white rat because repeated pairing of the rat and loud gong. The principles of operant conditions can be used to solve real behavioral problems. For instance, they can be applied by a coach to stop a client from biting. To stop the behavior, a bitter yet harmless substance such as pepper could be applied on his finger so, that every time, he bites the finger he experiences the bitter taste. The pepper could be applied to his fingers during greetings or trainings. The bitter taste is the punishment that follows client's actions. The unfavorable experiences would discourage the person from biting his fingers. For lazy client who wants to do exercises for about 30 minutes at least five times a week, negative reinforcement could be used to produce the desired behavior. The client could be told that his life is at risk because of his weight gain and he has to exercise daily to save himself from heart diseases. Classical and operant conditioning have wide application in real life especially education and health sectors. The principles of these two theories are used to shape

behavior of learners in various schools. Besides, they are used the management of drug abusers. The distinctive principle of conditioning is that the desired response could produce through repeated stimulus or outcomes.

References

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