

# Classical and operant conditioning case study assignment

[Psychology](#)



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On the other hand, classical conditioning is a type of learning where an organism associates a certain stimulus and the response to it with a different stimulus. A neutral stimulus is associated with an unconditioned response to an unconditioned stimulus (Pavlov). In this experiment, the concepts of classical and operant conditioning will be applied to a seventeen-year-old girl. The girl continually slouches and exhibits bad posture. Posture is important. Good posture correctly aligns the body so as to prevent strain throughout the body. Bad posture results in worn-down joints and pain.

The girl is a dancer and violinist, and so good posture is very important for her. As the girl constantly maintains bad posture, stimuli that encourage the girl to have better posture will be recorded. The first two days of the experiment were spent observing the girl's behaviors, namely what environmental stimuli encouraged her to stop slouching and to determine whether she had been classically conditioned to have good or bad posture. The next three days involved operant conditioning to attempt to train the girl to no longer engage in poor posture.

This tested the hypothesis that rewarding good posture and punishing bad posture is an effective way to improve the girl's posture. Method The experiment lasted for five days. Before the experiment was started, the participant chose a behavior that she wished to get rid of. She decided to try to maintain better posture. On day 1, her posture was recorded. As her bad posture was constant, stimuli that encouraged her to straighten up were recorded as opposed to stimuli that made her slouch. Her location, people near her, and her emotions were also noted. This procedure was repeated for day 2.

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One day 3, the girl's posture was noted. If she managed to have good posture for the majority of the hour, she received a check mark for the hour. If she had bad posture for half an hour or more, than she did not receive a check mark. The girl decided that if she received eight check marks or more, she could eat frozen yogurt. The girl also decided to flick herself whenever she noticed bad posture, as a reminder to improve her posture. Results The data tables from all five days are attached on pages a through e. On the first two days of the experiment, the girl had poor posture for most of the day.

However, there were certain things that made the girl sit up. Most notable was when she was in the presence of an authoritative figure. It should also be noted that her posture automatically Improved when seen was engaged In an actively Tanat required good posture, such as playing the violin, walking, or dancing. On the first day, she exhibited good posture three times (as the subject walks all over campus and has good posture while walking, good posture while walking will not be counted). The first was when she engaged in conversation with the veterinarian with whom she interns.

The second time is when she visited the resident director of her dormitory. The last time she maintained proper posture was while practicing the violin. On the second day, the girl only had proper posture once. She stood with good posture while practicing the violin. She did not interact with any authority figures. On the third day, operant conditioning began. The girl decided that if she maintained good posture for approximately eight hours, she would be rewarded with ice cream that night. She also decided that if she realized that she had bad posture, she would flick herself.

However, the girl struggled on the first day, maintaining good posture for approximately seven hours out of the 15 hours she was awake. After not receiving a reward, and flicking herself several times, improvement was noted the following day. She maintained good posture for nine hours, and was rewarded at dinner. On the last day, she maintained good posture for twelve hours. Discussion The behavior that the girl was trying to minimize is a problem that many people suffer from. However, like the girl, many people also change their behavior in certain circumstances.

The girl has learned to stand up straight through classical conditioning.

When the girl was younger, the girl was complimented by her parents when she sat up straight. The praise of her good posture was the unconditioned stimulus, and the pleasure that she felt at this praise was the unconditioned response. As the girl grew older, she would notice that her parents would praise her even more when she had good posture and impressed an authoritative figure, such as a teacher or principal. The authoritative figures that she associated praise with were the conditioned stimuli.

As such, her conditioned response was to sit up straighter when talking to an adult of authority. So, when she is with an authoritative guru, she modifies her posture in an attempt to impress them. If nobody cared whether someone had good or bad posture, then the action of straightening up would go extinct. Extinction is when a conditioned response disappears after the conditioned stimulus is no longer associated with the unconditioned stimuli. In this case, if the girl no longer received praise for good posture around

authority figures. Then, operant conditioning was used on the girl to try to change her bad habit.

If she exhibited proper posture for more than eight hours, she would get to eat ice cream. This ice cream was a positive reinforce. It made her feel good, and she associated it with straightening up. Likewise, when she flicked herself, she was exhibiting positive punishment. That is, when she noticed that she was not behaving properly, she would flick herself to remind herself to sit up straighter. These rewards and punishments were chosen to help her want to improve her posture. Ice cream was chosen as it is a special treat that she rarely indulges in. She chose flicking because she finds it very irritating.

This reward and punishment did work for the girl. As can be observed in the tables, the girl's posture improved every day. She reported finding it easier to have good posture as she did it more. However, it should also be noted that the girl was aware of a deadline, and thus, thought of the behavior more as it got closer to ten anemone. In girl 010 note Tanat as it got closer to ten Ana AT ten experiment, she thought about the experiment more. This could have impacted the result. However, the results do support the original hypothesis. Rewards and punishments did encourage the girl to adjust her posture.

It is believed that the artificial is not going to maintain this change. The girl's poor posture is a lifelong habit, and has only manifested through the years. Thus, her posture needs to be treated for a much longer time, and done in a much more serious manner with more serious rewards and punishments. It is

important to understand how someone learns by using both classical and operant conditioning. In this case, classical conditioning was useful in explaining why the girl improves her posture in a seemingly random way, and operant conditioning provided a way to change her posture.