

Student's Name

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Course

Date

Behavioral Conditioning in Psychology

Scholars have developed various theories to explain changes in human and animal behaviors. Operant conditioning and classical conditioning hold that experiences are instrumental in shaping behavioral patterns based on their consequences. Self-fulfilling prophecies and highlighting bias explain the impact of individuals' perceptions on outcomes.

Operant Conditioning

Operant conditioning employs rewards and punishments to encourage positive behavior and discourage negative behavior, respectively. I have used operant conditioning to train my dog Zinky to develop specific behavior patterns while discouraging it from doing certain things. When my family first adopted Zinky, he had no training on what/when to eat or on how to behave around people. He would scratch children and eat food from the dustbin. However, I trained him by scolding him every time he scratched or acted aggressively towards someone within the compound and would praise him for being a good dog if he was friendly to people, especially visitors. He eventually started only playing safe and friendly games. Also, we would put pepper on meat before placing it in the dustbin or any other surface within his reach. After several times, he stopped eating from anything other than his plate. His behavioral changes are associated with the negative consequences of playing aggressive games or eating from places he shouldn't.

Classical Conditioning

Psychology has helped in understanding how individuals' experiences shape their behavioral patterns. Classical conditioning theory has made me understand why I did not

particularly appreciate going to school at the elementary level. I learned the effects of conditioned and unconditioned stimuli on behavioral outcome (Wade et al. 304). For example, I grew up as a skinny child, and people would often throw mean comments my way. Some would tell me to wear more clothes to avoid getting blown away by the wind. The comments were demeaning, and I started struggling with low self-esteem from a young age. Despite being a sharp student, I was not too fond of school and would fake sickness or blatantly refuse to attend. I have learned from classical conditioning that I associated school with bullying and an uncomfortable environment, hence my preference for staying home.

Self-fulfilling Prophecy

The concept explains how an individual's expectations of someone, either positive or negative, influence their behavior in a way that results in the expected outcome. For instance, as a kid, I struggled with social anxiety disorder, and most of the time, I assumed new people would reject me or have a bad attitude towards me. As a result, I would come off as rude or disinterested in making new friends. Consequently, people would be hesitant to interact or make further contact with me, and I would feel lonely the entire time. I thought I had a problem that would make people automatically dislike me. However, I understood the problem upon reading about self-fulfilling prophecies, and I intend to change my mindset and other people's perceptions of myself.

Highlighting Bias

This occurs when one believes that they have correctly predicted the outcome of a specific event. For instance, as a child, every time the clouds appeared heavy with rain and then a rainbow appeared, we believed that it would not rain, even if it would do so anyway on rare occasions. However, after learning the scientific explanation behind rainbow formation, I stopped believing in this prediction.

Conclusion

Psychological theories explain human behavioral conditioning. Operant conditioning and classical conditioning are based on the impact of experiences and their outcomes on shaping behavioral patterns. At the same time, self-fulfilling prophecies and highlighting bias explain the impact of individuals' perceptions on outcomes. Highlighting bias results from someone's overconfidence that their prediction of a specific event was right and can mislead and impair their judgment. The conditioning concepts are useful in evaluating one's judgment in making informed decisions.

Work Cited

Wade, Carole, et al. *Invitation to Psychology*. Pearson, 2021.