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**Operant Conditioning**

Operant learning is defined as the methodology of the learning process that occurs via multiple punishments and rewards for certain behaviors. It is the operant conditioning that forces an individual to link a certain behavior and also the consequence or aftermath of the behavior. According to operant conditioning, some specific consequences are associated with voluntary behavior. The rewards resulted from a specific behavior will increase the behavior while the punishment will result in a decrease or reduction of the behavior. Operant conditioning is also known as instrumental conditioning which normally takes place in day to day life in a natural setting as well as in structured settings like a classroom. In classroom to teach the students the teachers have some strategies when the student behaves well then there are rewards for them and when the students misbehave then the teachers punish them. By doing so, they teach the students that their actions have consequences and it is completely dependent on their behavior that they can either have rewards or punishments (Engel et al., 1974).

Operant conditioning was first introduced by the B.F.Skinner which is why it is also called as Skinnerian conditioning. Skinner himself was a behaviorist therefore he believed to explain behavior, it is not always essential to look at inner feelings and motivation. Instead, he said that one should also look at the visible exterior reasons of behavior. Throughout the initial half of the 20th century, this particular concept became an internal part of human psychology. Basically, Skinner used this terminology of operant to refer to any active behavior that is used to describe any active behavior that operates upon the atmosphere to produce results. In other words, he explained how individual possess a range of learned behaviors which they display with each passing day (Flor et al., 2002).

In the operant conditioning, Skinner proposed three different types of operant that go after the behavior. Neutral operant is the response from the atmosphere that neither raises nor reduces the likelihood of a specific action that is repetitive. Reinforcers are responses from the atmosphere that will raise the possibility of a particular behavior being repeated. It can either be negative or it can be positive. The responses of an atmosphere that decreases the likelihood of a certain behavior being repeated are the punishers.

There are many advantages and disadvantages of operant conditioning. The advantages are that this is the most natural way of learning something. In the case of animals as well this is one of the best ways to train them. There are certain animals like dogs and pigs that have a tendency to learn things which are based on punishment or rewards. When an animal is rewarded for doing something, then you are conditioning it to associate a given action with something positive. When teaching some forms of this theory can be of great help to control the student's behavior. When the students are misbehaving, then there are punishments which are given to them. While when they are behaving in a good way, then certain rewards are given to them which help them to understand the consequence of their behavior so that they improve their behavior. Having said that there are certain weaknesses or disadvantages of operant conditioning as well. Certain issues are quite difficult to trace outside of the given locality. While having some complicated problems, it should be kept in consideration that operant conditioning is quite easy to teach the complicated problems (Staddon & Cerutti 2003). Therefore when someone is trying to communicate a complex and in-depth thing to someone, then he/she must prepare themselves to face a lot of issues. If there are certain problems while giving training to certain animals or even human beings, then it is the operant conditioning to blame. This method of instruction is one of the best methods but to implement it effectively one must get familiar with it and must know all about it from top to bottom. The other weakness of this theory is that it strictly deals with good and bad behaviors and there is no in between for this theory. Another thing is after a few times being a teacher or parent one cannot always reinforce the child's good behavior. So the child should be addicted to going for good behavior even after the reinforcement stops. If a child is given a reward for his or her good behavior that reward should not be permanent, it has to stop. Once the reward is stopped that means the child can also stop behaving positively (Peter & Nord, 1982).

Although the operant conditioning has its own positive and negative sides, the positive sides are overweighing the negative aspects. For teachers or parents this can motivate the children to adopt positive behavior by giving them different rewards but at the same time the rewards should stop, and the child should start behaving positively without getting any reward. So the beauty of this behavairiol principal is that it takes into account the typical thinking of the humans. It is human nature that human behavior in a certain way after gets rewarded, so this basic nature is taken into consideration in this operant conditioning.

References

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