



Variables Related to Punishment Administration

Psychology 390

Psychology of Learning

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Severity or Intensity of the Stimulus

- Intensity refers to the physical parameters of the stimulus.
- Severity refers to the degree of suppression achieved.
- Very intense punisher that produces minimal suppression is a mild punisher.
- Low intensity stimuli that produce complete suppression are severe punishers.

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Manner of Introduction

- Sudden introduction of punishment produces much greater response suppression than if the punishment intensity is gradually increased.
 - Don't begin with mild punishers and make more intense.
- If use gradual small punishers and increase the intensity, it takes a more intense punisher to suppress the unwanted behavior than if had given the full amount immediately.
- Is problematic for Human Rights Organizations and Criminal Justice System.

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Manner of Introduction

- If you give intense punisher first, often times milder punishers that had no effect before now become effective.
- Gradual low intensity punishers lead to temporary suppression.
- Moderate intensity punishers lead to partial suppression.
- Intense punishers lead to total suppression.

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Intensity can differ amongst individuals

- E.g., \$200 ticket for speeding
Bill Gates
You
It will impact you more.
- Public Whipping,
May affect you both the same.

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Immediacy of Punishment

- In general, the longer the delay between the response and the punisher, the less effective the punisher becomes.
- Immediate punishment is no more effective than stimulus delivery within the first hour.
- After the first hour, effectiveness continues to decrease.

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Punishment Certainty

- Can have high intensity.
- Can have good immediacy.
- But will be ineffective if there is low certainty.

- The greater the certainty of receiving the punishing stimulus, the greater the response suppression.

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Example

- If have high intensity but low certainty of apprehension, you will usually perform the behavior.

- Rob a Bank get 10 million dollars.
- Get caught you get executed.
- 1/10 million chance of apprehension.
- Vs 1/1000 chance of apprehension.

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Relates to Concept of Deterrence

- What is the probability of being caught if I do a behavior.

- The higher the odds of success, the more likely the probability of engaging in the behavior.

Occurs even when severity is high.

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Two Types of Deterrence

- General Deterrence
 - Prevents you from engaging in the act in the first place.

- Specific Deterrence
 - Relates to preventing you from repeating the behavior after being caught.

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Availability of Unpunished Responses

- Even low intensity punishers can be effective when an alternative unpunished behavior is available that produces reinforcement.

- With no alternatives, need higher intensity.

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- Punishers are more effective when punished behavior is no longer reinforced.

- The more reinforcement for the behavior, the less effective the punisher becomes.
Also, depends on the intensity.

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Examples

- Kid in class shoots a spit wad.
- Teacher – Stand in the corner
- Kid gets lots of attention from other kids
- Behavior increases
- Drug selling behavior by juveniles
- Get caught – slap on the wrist
- Also, kid gets lots of attention.

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Is the Punisher Delivered Before the Reinforcer

- Punishment is more effective when it is delivered before the behavior is reinforced.
- Early studies found it was more effective.
- Today it is not so clear cut.

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Self Control / Self Management

- Relates to immediacy vs. delayed consequences for a behavior.
- Several Types

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Self Control / Self Management

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| • Small Immed. Pos | Delayed Lg. Neg |
| • Smoke Cig | Cancer, Death |
| • Small Immed. Neg | Delayed Lg. Neg |
| • See Dentist | Get Root Canal |
| • Small Immed. Pos | Delayed Lg. Pos |
| • Save Money | Buy a boat or car |
| • Small Immed. Neg | Delayed Lg. Pos |
| • Meet new People | Fall in love |
- Generally, immediate consequences have a greater impact than delayed consequences.

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Classic Mistakes and Inappropriate use of Punishment

- Ignore behaviors that should be punished.
 - Puts persons on a random schedule
- Don't start early.
 - Usually wait until misbehavior persists or becomes more severe
- Delay.
 - Wait until class is over before sending to principal's office
- Don't reinforce alternative "good" behavior.

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Side Effects of Punishment

- May be a general decrease in all behavior
 - Kids who are punished may not talk as much – can become withdrawn.
- May cause emotional outbursts. Yelling, acting out, fear
- May generate hostility toward the source or the person giving the punisher.

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Punishment

- Physical punishment is highly correlated with aggressive behavior in kids.
- Lots of physical punishment increases aggression in kids.

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Best Procedure

- MONITOR BEHAVIOR
- IMPLEMENT A INTERVENTION
- Use Reinforcement Techniques.
- Reinforce good behavior and extinguish or punish bad behavior

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