

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

CASE – I

Operant conditioning utilizes key ideas from the work of B.F. Skinner, who theorized that learning occurs through a series of rewards or punishments. According to Skinner, rewards increase the likelihood that behaviours will be repeated, while punishments decrease the likelihood of repetition. While Skinner believed that all learning could occur this way, operant conditioning is most commonly utilized in classrooms today as a tool for behaviour management.

For instance– A teacher in her classroom is working with one of her students, Paridhi to help her with some challenging attention-span issues. She gives her a sticker whenever she sees her completing her assignment. To increase the number of students who turn in their homework each day, she announces that if the class completes all the assignment on Thursday, they won't have any homework on Friday, so that they can enjoy the weekend.

1. **“According to Skinner, rewards increase the likelihood that behaviours will be repeated while punishments decrease the likelihood of repetition.” What technical term did Skinner use to refer to rewards in the above statement? In the given example identify the rewards being used.**
2. **Apart from types of rewards, what are the other determinants of operant conditioning? Explain any one.**

CASE – II

In the classic study by Watson and Rayner (1928), a 9-month-old infant called Albert was exposed to multiple stimuli like a white rabbit, a rat, cotton wool and various masks to see if he responded to them in any way. Since he did not show any signs of fear these were neutral stimuli. Separately, when the researchers made a loud noise by striking a steel bar with a hammer behind Albert's head, it scared him and made him cry. When Albert was 11 months old, the researchers brought him into the laboratory. The white rat was presented and within seconds the hammer was struck on the steel bar creating the loud noise. Albert burst into tears. This pairing of the presentation of the white rat and the loud noise was repeated across two sessions a week apart. Now, little Albert showed all the signs of fear (crying and avoidance behaviour) every time the rat was shown even when no sound was made.

1. **Which phenomena was demonstrated in the above study? Name the US, UR, CS and CR in the above study?**
2. **This study happened before ethical guidelines were implemented in psychology. Discuss any one violation of ethics by the researcher.**

Answers

Case-I

1. Skinner used the term “Reinforcement” to refer to rewards in the above statement. In the given example, reward (reinforcement) is the sticker.
2. The other determinants of operant conditioning are:
 - Number or frequency of reinforcement,
 - Quality (superior or inferior) of reinforcement,
 - Schedules of reinforcement, and
 - Delayed reinforcement.