Higher Order Conditioning

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Higher order conditioning is a type of classical conditioning in which a conditioned stimulus is paired with another conditioned stimulus to create a new conditioned stimulus. This new conditioned stimulus can then elicit the same response as the original conditioned stimulus.

Higher Order Conditioning (also known as Second Order Conditioning) is a classical conditioning term that refers to a situation in which a stimulus that was previously neutral (e.g., a light) is paired with a conditioned stimulus (e.g., a tone that has been conditioning with food to produce salivating) to produce the same conditioned response as the conditioned stimulus. Wow...if you understand how a neutral stimulus becomes a conditioned stimulus (conditioning), you understand higher order conditioning because this is really just extending the conditioning one more level...the conditioning is happening not by pairing the stimulus with something that naturally produces a response, but with something that has been conditioned to produce a response.

Description

In classical conditioning, an unconditioned stimulus (UCS) naturally and automatically elicits an unconditioned response (UCR). For example, food is an unconditioned stimulus that naturally and automatically elicits salivation (an unconditioned response). A conditioned stimulus (CS) is a stimulus that does not naturally elicit a response, but that comes to do so after it is paired repeatedly with an unconditioned stimulus. For example, a bell might be a conditioned stimulus if it is repeatedly paired with food. After a number of pairings, the bell will come to elicit salivation, even though it does not naturally do so.

In higher order conditioning, a conditioned stimulus is paired with another conditioned stimulus to create a new conditioned stimulus. This new conditioned stimulus can then elicit the same response as the original conditioned stimulus. For example, let's say that a dog is conditioned to salivate when it hears a bell. The bell is the conditioned stimulus, and salivation is the conditioned response. Now, let's say that we start pairing the bell with a light. After a few pairings, the light will also come to elicit salivation, even though it was not originally associated with food. The light is now a second-order conditioned stimulus.

Definition

Higher order conditioning is a type of classical conditioning in which a conditioned stimulus is paired with another conditioned stimulus to create a new conditioned stimulus. This new conditioned stimulus can then elicit the same response as the original conditioned stimulus.

History

Higher order conditioning was first demonstrated by Ivan Pavlov in his experiments with dogs. Pavlov was studying the digestive system of dogs when he noticed that the dogs would start to salivate before he even gave them food. He realized that the dogs were learning to associate the sound of his footsteps with the arrival of food. Pavlov then began to pair a neutral stimulus, such as a bell, with the presentation of food. After a number of pairings, the dogs would start to salivate when they heard the bell, even though the bell had never been paired with food directly.

Characteristics

Higher order conditioning is a type of classical conditioning.
In higher order conditioning, a conditioned stimulus is paired with another conditioned stimulus to create a new conditioned stimulus.
This new conditioned stimulus can then elicit the same response as the original conditioned stimulus.
Higher order conditioning can be used to train animals to perform a variety of tasks.
It can also be used to explain some human behaviors, such as phobias and preferences.

References

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