

Article Critique 2: Handbook of applied behavior analysis Chapter 11

PSYC 531

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Functional behavior assessment has three components; they are indirect assessment, descriptive assessment and experimental functional analysis (p. 182). The author evaluates the effectiveness of direct assessment and indirect behavior assessment in chapter 11. Direct assessment is observing behaviors in a naturalistic setting, which allows a behavior analyst to gain firsthand information. However, in reality, the assessors have a little chance to observe in naturalistic environments. Even more, the direct assessment takes up to several months to complete, which leads to delayed treatment. The indirect assessment contains an interview with the caregivers (FAI), rating scales and questionnaires. Although those approaches have different levels of disadvantages in reliability and validity, they can accelerate the assessment and gain ABC (antecedent, behavior, consequence) information from varied perspectives. Therefore, the author suggests that a qualified assessment package should “contains a structured interview, at least one rating scale, direct observation and experimental manipulation of environmental variables” (p.189).

Popular questionnaires used in assessment are also discussed in the chapter. The reliability and validity of all questionnaires (Problem Behavior Questionnaire, Functional Analysis Screening Tool, Motivation Assessment Scale and Questions about Behavioral Function) remain controversial. For example, Sigafos(1994) “found lower reliability of the MAS when applied to aggression” (p. 187). Aggression is one of the most common factors in the target behavior, the MAS can not address this part in the questions would significantly influence the accuracy of the assessment. Therefore, more replication researches about improving assessment questionnaires should be conducted in the future. We can work on eliminating repetitive and ambiguous questions.

References

Fisher, W. W., C.C., & Roanne, H. S. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of applied behavior analysis*.