

PSYC 531

Article Critique 1 : Dixon, Vogel, & Tarbox (2012)

Zhen Lin

3093843780

The article is about the development and key points of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) (p. 3-24). The beginning of the article introduces a brief history of ABA. Watson(1913) was the pioneer of bridging the relationship between “environmental stimuli and behavior response”(S-R) (p.4). B.F. Skinner (1953) then suspected that the stimulus-response process is insufficient to explain the behavior without antecedent, so he developed a “stimulus-response-stimulus” diagram to better understand behaviors. Start from this point, many early behavior science researchers did experiments related to positive, negative, and automatic reinforcement, the “three possible functions of challenging behaviors” (p.11). Researchers used to do experiments in animals, gradually they found out that the same rules also functioned in humans. After two decades, the functional behaviors study expanded to different age groups, and was no longer limited to developmental disabilities (p.14). ABA was studied across population, settings and other functions of behaviors(p.14-16). The future direction of ABA was discussed in the article(p. 20). The future experiments should emphasize linking natural environmental settings and lab settings. Researchers are required to try our best to avoid and eliminate artificial situations(p. 24).

In the section of negative reinforcement introduction, Carr(1977) and colleagues analyzed the relationship of antecedence stimulus and SIB, by presenting verbal prompts of “O.K., let’s go” and “The sky is blue” (pg. 9). Although the study provided an early explanation of the negative reinforcement function, it has some limitations. First, the neural vocal stimulus in the study is not

a rational conversation under the participants' demand. In this case, SIB remained high for sure and is foreseeable. The participants might be confused and scared by the reaction of the researchers. Thus, the verbal prompt in the study was lack of validity. Secondly, the control group is not set up in the study. None of the verbal prompt represents the responses under the natural environment (the guardians and their children's daily interaction). Lastly, the intensity of the participants' SIB is not valued in the study. Some SIB behaviors of the participants might be merely tentative, while others might be life-threatening. The tentative self-injured behaviors may only happened for getting attention, but the intensive behaviors might happened because of other serious reasons. Above all, the study has rooms for improvement and I believe the future studies will complete the missing parts.

Reference

Dixon, D. R., Tarbox, J., & Vogel, T. (2012). A brief history of functional analysis and applied behavior analysis. In J. L. Matson (Ed.), *Autism and child psychopathology series. Functional assessment for challenging behaviors* (pp. 3-24). New York, NY, US: Springer Science + Business Media.