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PSYC 532

Article Critique 4: FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOR: A REVIEW

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The study uses four steps to review the functional analysis, “a) a pretreatment assessment based on (b) direct observation and measurement of problem behavior was conducted under (c) at least two conditions involving manipulation of some environmental variable in an attempt (d) to demonstrate a relation between the environmental event and behavior.”(p.151-152).

Two kinds of functional analyses were analyzed: Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) model and Antecedent-Behavior(AB) model. The ABC is a model with a “more rigorous demonstration of causation”. While the AB model focuses on the relationship between environmental event and problem behavior (p.168). Without analysis of the “consequence”, the AB model may “lead to an erroneous conclusion about behavior function (p. 168)”. A tricky point is that it is hard to use the ABC model to distinguish the “consequence” of putative automatic reinforcement. However, the “extinction” technique may be automatically implemented when the function of a behavior is “attention”, and the problem behavior will be maintained. Therefore, both functional analyses “place the client at a similar risk of harm”(p. 169), but the risk can be prevented in future observation. The article also mentions the future research should establish guidelines for testing natural environments for idiosyncratic reinforcers that are related to problem behavior (p. 176). In the confusion session, the authors provide 10 ways to avoid unclear function assessment (p. 178).

When applying the functional analyses to our future client, we should keep philosophy doubt and skeptical mind, and do ongoing reexamination after a period of treatment. Although we can be overconfident with all the results, we should acknowledge that both ABC and AB

models are examined by voluminous research and they have been proved to be the most comprehensive ways to distinguish the function of challenge behaviors so far.

Reference

Hanley, G. P., Iwata, B. A., & McCord, B. E. (2003). Functional analysis of problem behavior: a review. *Journal of applied behavior analysis*, 36(2), 147–185. doi:10.1901/jaba.2003.36-147