**PS360: Applied Behavior Analysis I**

**Discussion Board Lecture: Unit 5**

**Introduction to Unit 5: Punishment: Positive and Negative**

Welcome, students! This lecture will focus on the difference between positive and negative punishment and the behavior change strategies derived from them, such as:

* + Response Cost
  + Timeout
  + Overcorrection

Let’s jump in!

Just as reinforcement has two broad forms, i.e., positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement, so too does punishment. Positive reinforcement requires the presentation of a preferred stimulus and negative reinforcement requires the removal of an aversive stimulus. Both increase the future probability of the behaviors they follow. The behaviors produce desired results.

*Positive punishment* is the contingent presentation of an aversive stimulus that serves to reduce or remove the response it follows. *Negative punishment* is the contingent removal of a desirable stimulus that serves to reduce or remove the behavior it follows. The behaviors result in undesirable consequences.

Let’s examine these broad approaches more closely.

Positive punishment *presents* something that is undesirable upon the expression of a behavior.

* For example, a child that does not comply with the demand to take out the trash is presented with the requirement to not only take out the trash but to also roll the trash can down to the curb in preparation for trash pick-up the next morning.
  + This increased demand is called, “overcorrection.” This is a process in which an increase in aversive stimuli is presented.

Negative punishment requires the removal of something desirable. The individual already possesses the tangible or has been given certain privileges and one or many tangibles or privileges can be removed contingent upon the expression of a behavioral response.

If an individual engages in a prohibited or unwanted behavior, items can be removed contingent upon that unwanted response.

* For example, tokens, food, money, points, etc., are tangibles that can be removed. This removal of tangibles is called, “Response Cost.”

Negative punishment can also entail removal of privileges or activities contingent on a behavioral response.

Timeout is a negative punishment procedure in which the individual loses access to the opportunity to gain reinforcement.

There are two broad categories of timeout, i.e., exclusionary and non-exclusionary.

* + Exclusionary timeout requires that the individual be excluded from the setting contingent upon a behavioral response.
  + Non-exclusionary timeout has the individual stay in the setting – but away from the regular activities. Participation in current activities are prevented and, thus, the individual has no opportunity to gain access to reinforcement associated with the activities.

Punishment, whether positive or negative, results in the decreased occurrence of the behavior it follows.

* Behavior analysts work to avoid the use of punishment because it can create covert behaviors in which the response it is supposed to diminish occurs covertly – when the “enforcer” cannot catch the perpetrator.
* Side effects of punishment include emotional behaviors as well.

However, there are times that warrant punishment procedures, specifically when the behaviors are dangerous to the individual or to others. Reinforcement procedures may work in both situations, but they may not work quickly enough. Sometimes, using punishment procedures with reinforcement – or punishment alone – can facilitate a rapid reduction in the unwanted behavior (Malott & Shane, 2016).

Thank you for viewing your Unit 5 Lecture!

**References**

Malott, R. W., & Shane, J. T. (2016). *Principles of behavior* (7th ed.). New

York, NY: Routledge.