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Behavioral learning theory has been generally overlooked in the development of marketing thought. The central concept states that behavior that is positively reinforced is more likely to recur than nonreinforced behavior. This runs parallel to the marketing concept and may be a sufficient model for dealing with most low involvement purchase situations. Its greatest value may be in the development of promotional strategies. This paper extends some of the ideas presented in an earlier paper in this journal.

BEHAVIORAL LEARNING THEORY: ITS RELEVANCE TO MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

IN his 1977 presidential address to the Association for Consumer Research, Kassirjian (1978) called for a return to simpler models of consumer behavior. He felt that most consumer decisions were "unimportant, uninvolved, insignificant (and) minor," and for these "we do not need a grand theory of behavior." Kassirjian felt that a theory that could contribute some degree of parsimony might be behaviorism, also known as behavioral learning theory, instrumental conditioning, behavior modification, or operant conditioning deriving from the work of Skinner (1953) and Thorndike (1911).

Nord and Peter (1980) have recently presented an explication of several such behavioral concepts under the general rubric of a "Behavior Modification Perspective on Marketing." They are to be commended for introducing this paradigm into the marketing literature, and for covering a broad range of materials in a basic exposition. This paper will take the opposite approach and will examine one

aspect of behaviorism (and the Nord and Peter paper) in greater depth. The topic dealt with herein is behavioral learning theory. It has been selected because of its philosophical similarity to the marketing concept and because of its strong potential as a contributor to marketing thought.

An Expanded View of Behavioral Learning Theory

Behavioral learning theory is the paradigm generally referred to when a layperson speaks of "behavior modification." A review of some of its basic concepts can be found in Nord and Peter and will not be reviewed here. Nord and Peter correctly state that behavioral learning occurs when a response behavior precipitates the appearance of a stimulus. This paradigm is not new to marketers; the marketing concept is an example of its principles in that a transaction occurs when purchase behavior (response) takes place and a product (stimulus) is received by the consumer. If the product is pleasing (e.g., meets needs), the probability of repeat behavior will increase. Additionally, one can enhance the

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pleasingness of the product through appropriate manipulation of price, distribution, and promotional variables. Since the key to successful marketing is closely tied to repeat purchase behavior, the notion of providing positive reinforcement for desired behavior is crucial; therefore, positive reinforcement must be the ultimate goal of the marketer. A more rigorous examination of the principles of behavioral learning theory will allow marketers to take advantage of what behaviorists have learned. Such an examination follows.

Figure 1 shows an overview of the relationships between various common stimuli and responses in marketing. S_1 (advertising) is felt to lead to the responses of awareness and knowledge (R_1). This paradigm is based on the verbal learning model and the power of a repetitive S_1 . The concepts of vicarious learning and modeling discussed by Nord and Peter are relevant here.

S_2 (product attribute) is felt to reinforce R_2 (purchase behavior). If S_2 is viewed positively, then the probability of future purchase behavior ($R_{2...n}$) is increased. If the goal of marketing is to elicit certain long run behaviors, the reinforcement of a good product will be much more powerful than the preceding commercial stimulus. S_1 can promise a benefit and establish a manufacturer's implicit contract with consumers; S_2 must deliver the perceived benefit. Behavioral learning is primarily concerned with the relationship between S_1 , R_2 and $R_{2...n}$.

The present discussion will focus upon five components of the behavioral learning paradigm that are relevant to marketing—shaping, extinction, reinforcement schedules, immediate versus delayed reinforcement, primary versus secondary rein-

forcers. Of these, shaping and reinforcement schedules were introduced by Nord and Peter and are expanded here. The others represent concepts that have proven to be useful in other fields, would seem to have potential for marketing, and were not discussed by Nord and Peter.

Shaping Procedures

Shaping may be the single most potentially useful concept for marketers. Nord and Peter, though, gave a relatively weak example of shaping; they have reduced what is generally regarded as a multi-step process to a one-step process in their illustration.

Shaping is an essential process in deriving new and complex behavior because a behavior cannot be rewarded unless it first occurs; a stimulus can only reinforce acts that already occur. New, complex behaviors rarely occur by chance in nature. If the only behavior to be rewarded were the final complex sought behavior, one would probably have to wait a long time for this to occur by chance. Instead, one can reward simpler existing behaviors; over time, more complex patterns evolve and these are rewarded. Thus, the shaping process occurs by a method of successive approximations.

Shaping is important to marketers since the initial purchase of any new product involves a complex set of behaviors. To elicit repeat purchase behavior is even more complex. One way to reach this final behavior is through a series of successive approximations. Such a series might begin with the use of a free sample (for a frequently purchased low priced product). A coupon would be included in this sample for a large discount on the first purchase, and in the first purchase the consumer would find a coupon for a smaller discount on later purchases. As these incentives are reduced, the behavior approximates repeat purchase of the product at its full retail price. Soon no artificial reinforcers may be necessary. After the approximate responses have been evoked and firmly established, the arbitrary stimulus supports are "faded" or gradually withdrawn as control is transferred to stimuli likely to function as the major elicitors under naturalistic conditions.

In the above example the sample was given to allow perusal and trial of the product. The trial was reinforced by a good product and a coupon toward the next purchase. The coupon reinforced consideration of product purchase. Each ensuing purchase was reinforced by the product and the enclosed coupon. Each coupon had a lesser value; ultimately, the product was sufficient reinforcement, repeat behavior was achieved, and the

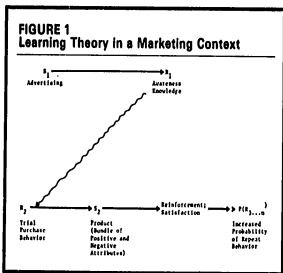
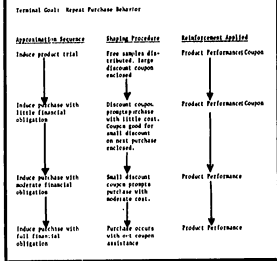


FIGURE 2
Application of Shaping Procedures to Marketing



coupons (contingent reinforcers) were faded out. In a series of successive approximations, behavior has gone from nothing, to trial without financial obligation, to usage with slight obligation, to repeat usage with financial obligation. Figure 2 summarizes this process. Not only has the desired behavior been accomplished, but the desired behavior is ultimately reinforced by the product itself and not by promotional incentives. A common error in the use of promotional tools for shaping purposes may be the improper fading out of the ancillary incentives. When the incentives are eventually dropped without gradual shaping of approximate behavior and gradual fading out of incentives, sales may drop as consumers revert to the brand used before the incentives were employed.

A second common error may be the tendency to overuse these aids; as a result, purchase may become contingent upon the presence of a promotional tool. Removal of the promotion may lead to the extinction of purchase behavior. If long-term behavior toward the product is desired, promotional tools should not overshadow the product. In a marketing situation, it is paramount that reinforcement for purchase be derived primarily from the product, lest purchase become contingent upon a never ending succession of consumer deals.

As seen from the above, shaping can be a valuable concept in developing strategies concerning promotional tools. Given that expenditures on these tools is now greater than expenditures on advertising in the U.S. marketplace (Strang 1976), a set of

guidelines for the use of promotional tools is certainly called for. Shaping procedures may form the basis for such guidelines.

Extinction

Extinction is the removal of a correlation between a response and a reward. This is generally done by removal of the reward or by introduction of rewards not correlated with the response. Since most products attempt to reinforce continuously, lack of reinforcement (poor product performance) will lead to rapid extinction of behavior. This would be especially pronounced in a competitive situation.

In the case of promotional incentives, behavior towards a product may be based primarily on reinforcement caused by the incentive. If this is the case, then removal of the incentive will lead to extinction of behavior. It is important, then, to build behavior towards the product and not towards the promotional incentive. Conversely, the role of the incentive should be to shape appropriate behavior toward the product. Extinction, then, may be the result of improper shaping techniques and an overreliance on incentives that are later removed.

Reinforcement Schedules and Locus of Power

Nord and Peter note that appropriate behavior can be reinforced on a continuous basis or on a variety of intermittent schedules; most of these scheduling notions, though, have limited value for marketing. The concepts of intermittent scheduling work very well in situations where there is an imbalance of power and/or lack of competition. For example, when pigeons are starved to 80% of their normal body weight, they work very hard on an intermittent schedule; factory piece workers work hard on an intermittent schedule in part because they do not perceive themselves as having much power in their employer relationships. (Strong unions do not allow their members to be caught up in a piece work situation.)

In a simultaneous choice situation (such as generally exists in marketing), it is incumbent upon a marketer to maintain continuous reinforcement. If reinforcement becomes intermittent, consumers will shift behavior to the purchase of a competitive product providing continuous reinforcement. Intermittent reinforcement in such a situation may be seen as punishment by the consumer.

Not acknowledging this situational difference may lead, in turn, to the development of an inappropriate reinforcement strategy. For behavioral learning to work most effectively, one party must control the situation. This implies a lack of competition, an imbalance of power, and a closed system. Private

sector marketing in competitive situations, therefore, may require reinforcement procedures very different from the noncompetitive examples commonly used in discussions of reinforcement schedules. While there may be few opportunities to use noncontinuous schedules in relation to the product itself, there are many opportunities to use the notions of scheduling with regard to promotional tools.

Immediate Versus Delayed Reinforcers

In almost all cases, a delayed reinforcement is worth less than immediate reinforcement during acquisition of a behavior; delayed reinforcement inhibits learning and will lead to a lower probability of a future occurrence. If the reinforcement is delayed, then irrelevant behaviors will occur between the desired behavior and the reinforcement. As a result, the most recent behavior will be more strongly reinforced than will the desired behavior.

For example, if a consumer collects proof-of-purchase coupons and then mails them to the manufacturer for a premium, the typical time to reinforcement is four to six weeks. When the premium arrives it may strongly reinforce the behavior of opening one's mailbox rather than the behavior of making multiple purchases of the product. If the premium has the qualities of a good reinforcer, it will likely lead to the pursuit of other mail premiums. The goal of the manufacturer, though, is reinforcement of the purchase rather than the pursuit of premiums. Mail premiums are theoretically weak reinforcers of purchase behavior due to this delay in reinforcement.

If purchase behavior is to be reinforced (other than through a quality product), the reinforcing premium should be in or on the package. If repeat purchase behavior is to be reinforced, a multipart premium may need to be included in or on the package.

Primary Versus Secondary Reinforcers

The notion of delayed reinforcement can be extended by considering primary versus secondary reinforcers. Primary reinforcers, loosely defined, have intrinsic utility (the product) while secondary reinforcers (tokens, coupons, trading stamps) have no such utility and must be converted. When, for example, trading stamps are given as reinforcers, delayed gratification results; when they must be collected before redemption (delayed secondary reinforcers), the potential for success of the promotion may be further eroded. Secondary reinforcers have taken on value over time because individuals have learned that they can be converted for primary

reinforcers; they are still, theoretically, less powerful than primary reinforcers. Given this relationship, perhaps marketers should concentrate on deals giving more product per unit of price. This focuses on the primary reinforcer (product) and gives immediate reinforcement.

A Review of Some Promotions Literature

Given the above discussion of behavioral learning concepts, it becomes clear that much of the value of these concepts lies in their relationship to promotional tools. A review of relevant literature shows very little work done concerning promotions and none relating promotions to operant conditioning.¹

Two recent papers considered promotions from the point of view of self perception theory. Scott (1976) found weak repeat behavior in response to a number of different one-time incentives, although some (a discounted trial) did better than others (free trial, free trial plus premium). From a behavioral learning perspective the results are also weak, but serve as a case to support the notion presented earlier that shaping procedures are generally poorly used. In Scott's experiment the treatments were all single incentives where consumers received savings and/or gifts ranging in value from 25¢ to \$1 on a 50¢ item.

Since the item (a community newspaper) was a low involvement item,² there was low prior awareness, low subscriber level after introduction, and low cost of product; there would be no behavioral reason to suspect a one-time incentive to alter long run behavior. Given a low involvement product, behavior would need to be shaped slowly over time, otherwise any behavior would be due merely to the more highly involving financial incentive. When the high involvement incentive was removed, behavior would be expected to extinguish. This was, indeed, the case.

In Scott's case, the incentive, and not the product, was the primary reward for purchase behavior. When it was withdrawn, the behavior was extinguished. In contrast, if initial purchase were accompanied by a small premium, the product and not the premium would be the primary reward for purchase behavior. When the premium is then

¹There is a large body of work outside the traditional marketing literature that essentially examines promotions and operant conditioning for issues such as transit usage, energy conservation, and curtailing littering. This work, while relevant, was felt to be inappropriate here, since it comprises the body of mainstream behavioral learning research and generally uses noncompetitive situations of limited relevance to marketers.

²For a general discussion of involvement, see Houston and Rothschild (1978), among others.

withdrawn, purchase behavior may be unaffected. Scott, quite rightly, suggests that incentives may exist upon a continuum and that researchers need to identify the size/impact of various incentive levels. Behavioral learning theory offers marketers a framework to study the impacts of incentives upon purchase behavior. This framework includes consideration of various types of reinforcers (primary, secondary), various types of reinforcement schedules (continuous, intermittent), and the impact of any delay that might occur between a behavior and its reinforcement (immediate or delayed reinforcement). It seems essential, however, that any study of the incentive/purchase behavior relationship employ a shaping paradigm to provide the greatest insight into the impact of consumer deals upon long run behavior.

Dodson, Tybout, and Sternthal (1978) also examined incentives from a self-perception framework, examined one-time incentives (media coupons, cents-off deals, and in-package coupons) for low involvement products (margarine and flour), and found weak but sometimes significant results. In this study there was strong brand switching behavior when dealing occurred, but little follow-up behavior when deals were retracted.

Behavioral learning theory would suggest that deals cause brand switching because the deal is more likely to be reinforcing than the product. In fact the authors found that the greatest switching occurred for the greatest financial incentive; next most switching occurred where there was less financial incentive but great ease of use (the cents-off deal required no prior purchase or coupon clipping). It is reinforcing to save money if little effort needs to be expended.

When they considered repeat purchase the impact of the deals was reversed. Now the in-package coupon outperformed the media coupon and cents off deal. Operant conditioning would predict poor results from the latter incentives because no shaping had gone on over time. While the in-package coupon also provided poor shaping, it was better than the others in that it provided a two step process leading to changed behavior. Again self-perception theory may be inappropriate due to the low involvement nature of the products; repeat behavior may not be attained because the one-time incentive was not powerful enough to overcome apathy and inertia.

A consideration of behavioral learning theory would suggest that in both the case of a media coupon and a cents-off deal, the primary reinforcement for purchase behavior was derived from the deal, not the product itself. Hence when the

deal was withdrawn, purchase behavior was extinguished. The authors provide some support for this when they suggest a media coupon may be advisable to induce switching when the deal product is perceived to be superior on some relevant attribute. In this case one presumes that primary reinforcement would be derived from the product itself; the deal would play a secondary role.

It is interesting to note that in the two reviewed papers, self-perception and behavioral learning theories make similar predictions as to the outcome of the one-time incentive, but for different reasons. The two theories, though, suggest different strategies to alleviate the ineffectual one-time incentive. Both theories predict a low level of success, but self-perception predicts this because the most effective change will come when people attribute their behavior to inner causes rather than external incentives; therefore, incentives should be minimized. Behavioral learning predicts greater behavior change through a shaping process and therefore more incentives would be necessary.

Each theory would seem to have its place. In high involvement situations where complex cognitive activity would seem to take place, self-perception based strategy may be more appropriate. In low involvement cases where little cognitive activity is necessary for adequate decision making, behavioral learning based strategy may be more appropriate. The two cited studies were low involvement cases; and, therefore, the lack of success in each should be more easily remedied by behavioral learning strategies.

In low involvement cases, Kassarian has called for a return to simple models of behavior explanation. Self-perception and other cognitive theories assume a high level of involvement, since individuals are felt to go through a complex mental activity. If such activity does not take place, then a one-time incentive will not be successful; shaping procedures are needed to avoid early extinction.

Another set of contributing data is from a proprietary study reported by Ogilvy and Mather (n.d), who found that samples that include a coupon for an initial purchase have a 20% higher initial purchase rate than do samples without coupons. This is a test of a two step versus a one step shaping procedure that clearly favors the two step procedure, and is consistent with the theory.

A final contribution to this discussion comes from Prentice (1975), who divided the common promotional tools into classes: those that contribute to the Consumer Franchise Building effort (referred to as CFB) and those referred to as non-CFB. This work is a report on current industry practice and

is not based on any theoretical model. Conclusions include that most promotional deals are too short temporally, and that for a promotion to work, a brand must provide value of its own. Behavioral learning theory would support the following conclusions: Shaping takes time; promotions of short duration cannot do the tasks asked of them; behavior toward a brand of little value will rapidly extinguish, since there is no primary reinforcement.

In separating tools into CFB and non-CFB classes, the author suggests that non-CFB tools do not emphasize product/brand value but rather key on other issues. For example, price-off deals and refund offers stress financial issues, premiums stress other objects, and contests/sweepstakes stress games. CFB tools stress the product. Examples here are samples and coupons. This classification is also intuitively consistent with behavioral learning, which suggests that secondary reinforcers (money, objects, games) are less likely to lead to appropriate behavior than will good product. The CFB/non-CFB model has not been rigorously tested but is generally consistent with behavioral learning theory. Figure 3 summarizes the relationships between the three models discussed above.

Discussion

It can be seen that modern marketing thought is at least implicitly related to behavioral learning. Since repeat purchase is necessary for survival in the marketplace, behavior must be positively reinforced. Since new products are continuously entering the market, shaping procedures can be used so that trial is more than a random process. In behavioral learning terms, purchase is a behavior, and the product is a positive (or negative) reinforcer. This discussion will consider the theoretical issues emerging from behavioral learning theory, research questions which must be answered before wholesale adoption of these principles can be made, and the potential implications of behavioral learning for marketing strategy.

Theoretical Issues Emerging from Behavioral Learning Theory

As Nord and Peter (1980) point out, there are many areas where benefits to marketing can be derived, and one should consider the differences between cognitive learning and behavioral learning. Cognitive learning (especially as it applies to marketing)

FIGURE 3
Promotional Effects Predictions Made by the Three Models

Promotional Tool	Behavioral Learning Theory	Self Perception Theory	Consumer Franchise Building Model (CFB) (Prentice 1975)
Samples	Good, Positively Reinforcing	Poor (Scott 1976)—Free trial did not help	Good, focuses on product value
In-Package Coupon	Good since it requires approximate repeat behavior in order to redeem	Good (Dodson, Tybout, Sternthal 1978). Led to repeat purchase	Good, won't be used without product value
Media Coupon	Depends on method—need to use as shaping mechanism	Poor (Dodson, Tybout, Sternthal 1978). Did not lead to repeat purchase	Good
Price-Off Deal	Depends on method—need to use as shaping mechanism	Poor—Did not lead to repeat purchase (Dodson, Tybout, Sternthal 1978) Good—Led to repeat subscription (Scott 1976)	Poor, too much financial emphasis
Premiums	Poor, does not reinforce appropriate behavior	No effect of premium plus free trial (Scott 1976)	Poor, nonproduct emphasis
Contests/Sweepstakes	Poor, does not reinforce appropriate behavior		Poor, nonproduct emphasis
Refund Offer	Poor, reinforcement is too delayed to be effective		Poor, too much financial emphasis

takes place without reinforcement, and can, indeed, be forced upon consumers through the judicious use of repetition in advertising (Ray et al. 1973) and can occur as a result of mere exposure.

Behavioral learning occurs through the use of reinforcers. While Ray shows that trial purchase behavior may also occur as a function of advertising repetition, such behavior is often stimulated by the use of promotional devices. Repeat behavior, on the other hand, is certainly based on reinforcement of the trial. Krugman (1965) posits that this reinforcement leads to a positive attitude after the trial. (A behaviorist would not add the hypothetical construct of attitude onto a discussion of these events.)

Two issues emerge:

- Reinforcement is necessary to behavioral learning, especially beyond the trial stage. Advertising (modeling, vicarious learning) can help in behavioral learning, but product, price, and place must be favorable in the long run.
- Cognitive learning focuses on the internalization of messages rather than the learning of behavior patterns. In behavioral learning the message cue announces the upcoming reinforcement opportunity.

Returning to the concept of attitude, the behaviorist feels that since he/she cannot observe any state of consciousness, he/she should merely be concerned with that which is observable (i.e., behavior). This is a very different concept from that held by consumer researchers who use a social psychology model. It is not, though, inconsistent with notions concerning low involvement (Kassarjian 1978). As Kassarjian suggests, perhaps the middle range social psychology theories are best reserved for high involvement cases, and behavioral learning theory should be used in low involvement cases.

In recent years the notion of involvement has become popular in consumer behavior (e.g., Houston and Rothschild 1978). Part of its popularity is due to its intuitive appeal as a simpler model of behavior development for unimportant decisions. It is in these cases of decision making when consumers have low involvement and attempt to satisfy, that behavioral learning theory has its greatest potential. As involvement increases, cognitive processes become more complex; here the middle range theories of cognitive dissonance, attribution, personality, perceived risk, and so on have their value. In low involvement cases, behavioral learning theory may be most relevant for consumer behavior.

While economic man may be an appropriate model for high involvement cases, marketing man (Bagozzi 1975) is more the prototype for low involvement cases.

Research Issues Emerging from Behavioral Learning Theory

There are some questions that have not been formally raised by marketers but should be explored before there can be wholesale adoption of behavioral principles. Each of these has been explored in the behavioral learning literature but none has been resolved in a marketing context:

- Behavioral learning works well in the laboratory because the environment can be controlled by the experimenter. In the competitive marketplace the marketer has much less control; hence, research is needed to assess the impact of the low degree of control the marketer can exercise on the predictions of behavioral learning theory. For example, do simultaneous choice situations necessitate the use of continuous reinforcement schedules?
- Is shaping through successive approximation an efficient/effective method for inducing new product trial and long-term purchase behavior? Would the employment of shaping procedures have decreased the attrition rates found by Dodson, Tybout, and Sternthal (1978) and Scott (1976) when deals were used on a one-time basis?
- Are premiums and other promotional devices more effective when based upon primary versus secondary reinforcers? Are premiums and other promotional devices more effective when based upon immediate versus delayed reinforcement? Is there an interactive effect between type of reinforcement (primary, secondary) and the delay between behavior and reinforcement (immediate, delayed)?

Figure 4 dichotomizes both types of reinforcement and delay between behavior and reinforcement. Behavioral learning theory suggests greater long run rates of behavior change will be experienced when respondents are moved through an $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow D \rightarrow E$ or $A \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E$ sequence than when any one treatment is presented in isolation. This test of the greater value of shaping procedures versus a one-time consumer deal was not performed in the studies of Scott or Dodson, Tybout, and Sternthal.

FIGURE 4
The Impact of Reinforcement Type and Reinforcement Delay Within the Context of Behavioral Learning Theory

		Greater Reinforcement	Lesser Reinforcement
		Primary Reinforcers	Secondary Reinforcers
Greater Reinforcement	Immediate Reinforcement	Immediate Primary (A)	Immediate Secondary (B)
Lesser Reinforcement	Delayed Reinforcement	Delayed Primary (C)	Delayed Secondary (D)
		(E) No Reinforcement	

There are also situational types of research questions that can be raised:

- Are there differences in the above questions that are a function of high or low involvement situations?
- Can the issues of behavioral learning theory give insight to increasing survey response rates through the use of behaviorally based incentives for respondents?
- Can sales force compensation schedules be made more effective through the use of behavioral learning theory?

Application and Strategy Issues Emerging from Behavioral Learning Theory

Turning to a more applied view of behavioral learning, there are a number of concepts discussed above which may lend themselves to the more orderly and efficient development of marketing strategy. The following points are suggested by the literature reviewed above and by Nord and Peter:

Motivation and meeting needs. Both the marketing concept and behavioral learning stress meeting needs. Appropriate long run behavior only takes place when the reinforcer meets some need. A reinforcer can't be positive if it does not meet needs.

Controlling the environment. Behavioral learning works well in the laboratory because the environment can be controlled. In the marketer's world there is much less control; therefore, the 4 P's must be organized. Due to the lack of total control, those areas where control is possible must be utilized to their fullest.

Shaping through successive approximation. It may be possible to aid consumers in their acquisition of new behaviors through the use of shaping procedures. In cognitive terms, risk is reduced; in behav-

ioral terms, any behavior is a minor change from the preceding one.

Immediate reinforcement. In addition to creating time utility, in itself reinforcing, immediate reinforcement is strong because it is linked most directly with the appropriate behavior.

The need for systematic and consistent application. Behavioral learning has worked best in laboratory environments where the world of the subject is orderly and predictable (to the subject). In transferring these principles to the marketplace, behavioral learning theory suggests that reinforcers should be immediate, should be as described in the discriminative stimulus, and should be consistent.

The use of promotional tools. These tools can be used in both the shaping of new behavior and the reinforcement of existing behavior. There is a tendency to overuse these aids; as a result, a dependency develops so that removal of the promotion leads to extinction of behavior. Promotional tools should not overshadow the products they are aiding (if long-term behavior toward the product is desired).

In addition to the similarities between behavioral learning theory and marketing, and the insights that the former can provide to the latter, there are also a number of problem areas which need to be considered. For example, in the controlled environment where behavioral research is generally conducted (e.g., a Skinner box), the experimenter has total control of the situation and absolute power; there are no competitive choices available to the subject. Such a situation rarely exists in the private sector marketplace; as a result, some behavioral notions cannot be transferred.

A Concluding Comment

Behavioral learning theories offer a framework within which to organize and structure marketing and promotional activities, and a simple but elegant model of the generic concept of marketing. In marketing, the desired end is appropriate behavior manipulation and control to further the goals of the organization. The currently recognized most efficient means to these ends is through the use of the marketing concept. By developing reinforcers which meet needs, marketing would seem to have already embraced behavioral learning theory. Behavior is a function of its consequences and environment; by assessing needs, marketers are best able to meet their own needs and control portions of the consumer's environment.

This model may be appropriate for many of the

“ . . . unimportant, uninvolved, insignificant, minor decisions that are made in the marketplace everyday . . . ” (Kassarjian 1978, p. xiv). In these situations,

consumers have weak cognitive processes, and as a result, behavioral learning theory can offer insightful direction to the marketer.

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ADVERTISERS' INDEX

Addison-Wesley Publishing Company	Page 168
American Warehousemen's Association	Page 165
Burke Marketing Services, Inc.	Cover 4
The Ehrhart-Babic Group	Page 1
Elsevier North-Holland, Inc.	Page 3
Harper & Row, Publishers	Page 167
Richard D. Irwin, Inc.	Cover 2, 3, Page 166
Martinus Nijhoff Publishing	Page 4
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.	Page 2