

Discrimination Learning Theory

General

Discrimination learning theory was introduced in 1936 by [Kenneth Spence](#), one of the [Clark Hull](#)'s students and coworkers.

What is discrimination learning theory?

Spence departed from Hull because he attributed improvement in performance to motivational factors rather than habit factors.

2. Logic and scientific methodology in psychology - Spence identified four different kinds of theories in psychology. These were “animalistic conceptions”, the belief that soul, libido, vital energy, or other vague “forces” within the organism guided behavior; “neurophysiological theories” such as Pavlov and Kohler; “Response-inferred theoretical constructs” such as put forth by Gestaltists such as Kurt Lewin; and “intervening variable” theories of Hull and Tolman.

4. Experimentation in discrimination learning- Spence observed that reinforcement combined with frustration or inhibitors facilitated finding a correct stimulus among a cluster which included incorrect ones. This was a “carrot and stick” model.

5. Absolute stimulus theory and transposition - Transpositional phenomena referred to the tendency of an organism to select between two NEW stimuli based on learning from a previous relationship of stimulus and response.

What is the practical meaning of discrimination learning theory?

Keywords and most important names

Criticisms

Bibliography

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