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THE WITH-IN SESSION EFFECTS OF STIMULI

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Traditionally, data collection and analysis has been taken across sessions with little interest given to differences within the session. However, McSweeney (1990) has shown differences within the session can have effects on the outcome of an experiment. Alternation of stimuli seems to be an important factor, but the reasons remain unclear. Two experiments were designed to determine the effects of stimuli on within-session response patterns. Six naive, female, Long-Evans Hooded rats were used in the study. In experiment 1, each subject was placed in a standard operant conditioning chamber on either of the two schedules. The first condition administered multiple VI30 - VI30 second schedule in which one bar was extended into the chamber for 5 minutes, retracted and immediately re-extended. In the second condition, the subjects were placed on multiple VI30 - VI30 seconds schedule in which one bar was extended for 5 minutes, retracted and then the other bar was extended for 5 minutes. Each session lasted for 1 hour and each subject was exposed to both conditions for 20 days with 3 of the subjects receiving each of the conditions first. In experiment 2, each subject was placed on multiple VI30 - VI30 schedule with the bar extended for variable amounts of time. In one condition, the bar was extended for 5 minutes then retracted and the other bar was extended for 5 minutes, in the other condition, the bar was extended on a VI5 minute schedule with alternating bars. Each session lasted 1 hour and each schedule was alternated after 15 days. In both experiments, it is expected that significant differences will be shown between the two conditions.