Apr 22nd, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Olfactory Cues on Rats Responding on a Simple Variable Interval Schedule

Colleen M. Kennedy
Illinois Wesleyan University

James D. Dougan, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

OLFACTORY CUES ON RATS RESPONDING ON A SIMPLE VARIABLE INTERVAL SCHEDULE

Colleen M. Kennedy and James D. Dougan*,
Department of Psychology, IWU

Biological variables need to be examined in operant conditioning studies. Optimal foraging theory (Lea, 1982) and behavior systems theory (Timberlake & Lucas, 1989) support the effectiveness of representing natural foraging in the laboratory, with operant conditioning in particular. In the present study, six rats were exposed to three scent conditions (fox, none, perfume) while bar pressing on a variable interval 60s schedule. Responding was expected to decrease during the fox scent condition because the fox is a natural predator for rats. The results indicated no significant difference between the three scent conditions. Further research should look into using other biological variables and also investigate the use of different scents.