

Abstract

Evaluative conditioning is a type of learning that results in the acquisition of likes and dislikes in humans. The procedure that produces evaluative learning is similar to that of Pavlovian conditioning. A consistent observation is that evaluative conditioned responses are less sensitive to extinction procedures than would be expected given the Pavlovian-type conditioning procedure used for acquisition. The present study sought to determine what the effect of an extinction condition was on the level of responding to visual conditioned stimuli in a visual-gustatory evaluative conditioning paradigm. Two dependent measures were used: an explicit measure, and a choice-based preference measure. The explicit rating scale, which measures preference and is administered prior to acquisition and post-extinction, is the measure typically used in the assessment of evaluative conditioned responding. Because conclusions regarding evidence of extinction in a pre-acquisition, post-extinction measure may be complicated by the experimental design, the explicit rating scale was administered on a trial-by-trial basis during all parts of the procedure (pre-acquisition, acquisition, extinction, post-extinction). This was done in order to continuously assess evidence of extinction effects. A choice-based preference measure where participants choose how much they preferred one conditioned stimulus as compared to the other was used as a secondary measure prior to acquisition, on a trial-by-trial basis during the acquisition and extinction procedures, and after extinction. This study is a systematic replication of the work described by Lipp, Oughton, and LeLievre (2003, Experiment 2) and an extension of the measure described by Field (2006, Experiment 1), and contributes to the literature through methodological extension. Evidence of evaluative conditioning extinction was found with both measures (rating scale, preference scale) supporting a conclusion regarding the effects of experimental parameters on conditioned responding.