

RULES AND METACONTINGENCIES: REPLY TO SANDAKER

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In this section we elaborate on Sandaker's (2004) point that our analysis always involves individual behavior. Operant contingencies account for the behavior of each individual participating in interlocking behavioral contingencies. The behavioral contingency that controls the behavior of one individual can be analyzed independently of other individuals' behavioral contingencies. What makes the contingencies interlocking is that the controlling environmental events for each person's behavior include elements of the behavioral contingencies of others. Any component of the operant contingencies (i.e., antecedent, behavior, consequence) or its product can be a component of the behavioral contingency of another individual. These operant contingencies are the basic elements in interlocking behavioral contingencies.

Our analysis of cultural contingencies begins with interlocking operant behavior. We are interested in why the interlocking contingencies are repeated over time. Our analysis suggests that the reason for the reiteration is that their products meet the demand of an external entity. Without that external receiving system the interlocking contingencies will no longer have a viable function.

Another point that Sandaker made is that the behavior in the interlocking contingencies is rule-governed. A rule is a contingency specifying statement (Skinner, 1969). The statement might specify the relations in the behavioral contingencies or in the metacontingencies. If the behavior of people in the organization is affected by such rules, then the behavior is rule-governed. We suspect that a great deal of behavior in organizations is rule-governed.

Although organizations contain many direct-acting contingencies, performance management interventions often make use of indirect-acting contingencies, where the outcome of the response is too far removed to directly affect the behavior. Therefore rules are formulated to describe the relations between the behavior of individuals and the products of the interlocking behavioral contingencies.

We appreciate Sandaker's reply. We are encouraged by her comments on the relevance of our analysis to the study of cultural complexity.

REFERENCES

- Sandaker, I. (2004). Commentary on complexity and selection. *Behavior and Social Issues*, 13, 145.
- Skinner, B. F. (1969). *Contingencies of reinforcement: A theoretical analysis*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.