

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESTORATION AS A CONSEQUENCE OF SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore one of the positive repercussions of sustainable behaviors: psychological restoration. Which is defined as those restorative experiences that involve the renewal of psychological resources depleted by stress (attention, positive mood and mental health) This finding would allow us to promote sustainable behavior, not only for its benefits to the environment and the preservation of life on earth, but also for the benefits it would bring to people's mental health

SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR

The current environmental psychology is not only interested in behaviors related to the protection of the physical environment, but also seeks to explain care behaviors for social environment. This, together form what we call the sustainable behavior, which is defined as the set of effective and deliberate actions that have as an aim the care of the natural and sociocultural resources necessities to guarantee the present and future well-being of the humanity

Studies on sustainable behavior have focused mainly on finding the background to the emergence of these behaviors for example attitudes, values, pro environmental standards, and affinity towards diversity. However, the consequences, especially the positives of sustainable behavior have been studied to a lesser extent. One aspect that will give us a broader perspective is the one that has to do with the positive aspects of the implementation of these behaviors. The precedents of sustainable behavior are important for understanding the determinants of such behavior, but equally, the study of the positive consequences of sustainable behavior can give us a broader picture of the determinants of sustainable behavior which has four instances: altruistic, pro ecological, frugal, and equitable actions

Psychological Restoration

This study aims to explore one of the positive repercussions of sustainable

behaviors: psychological restoration which is defined as those restorative experiences that involve the renewal of psychological resources depleted by stress (attention, positive mood and mental health) (Hartig, Kaiser & Bowler, 2001)

Also Psychological restoration is a process that is related to certain deficits of antecedent conditions (e.g. environmental stress) in which people seek recovery of their cognitive resources and its psychophysiological responsiveness. (Van den Berg, Hartig & Staats, 2007).

The study wants to proof that sustainable behavior (frugality, equity, altruism and pro ecological behaviors) are associated with psychological states of restoration, self-reported by the participants

Theoretical framework

The appearance of preoccupations concerning to the sustainable development gives a new impulse to the development of environmental psychology. More specifically, the "Brundtland Report" (Brundtland, 1997) defines sustainable development as a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The reference to the human needs allows indeed to include not only the necessity of a harmonious and respectful economic

development of the atmosphere, but also to worry about the well-being of the individual.

In this frame, environmental psychology through the contribution of pertinent knowledge, is essential to analyze, explain, clarify and understand the conditions of human well-being (Moser, 2003)

Sustainable behavior is defined as the set of effective and deliberate actions that have as an aim the care of the natural and sociocultural resources necessities to guarantee the present and future well-being of the humanity

Sustainable behaviors, according to Corral (2010), are divided into:

Altruism

The psychological altruism causes that the aid acts are accompanied by the motivation to do something good by the others: these acts will be altruistic only if the actor thinks about the well-being of the others like remote objects (Sober & Wilson, mentioned in Corral, 2010).

Frugality

Frugality implies to avoid in a deliberate way the personal consumption of resources. It is defined as the prudent use of the resources and the interest to avoid the waste. (De Young, 1991)

Pro-ecological behavior

They are a set of deliberate and effective actions that respond to social and individual requirements and that is in the protection of the natural environment (Corral, 2010).

Equity

Is the justice that corresponds with the rights or the natural laws, more specifically with the fact to free itself of the slants or the favoritism. (Corral, 2010) It implies to distribute resources fairly and to try the others without slants due to his demographic or physical characteristics.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The ideals of sustainable development include ecological, social, political and economic benefits declared explicitly. But that's not all also governments and institutions mention the existence of psychological benefits like for example the subjective well-being or happiness. (Gardner & Prugh, 2008). The health and well-being of people is now a decisive factor, for both, humans and health institutions. The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2001). Thus the identification of sustainable behaviors that lead to a psychological restoration will be useful to improve the mental health of people. As the WHO mentions in 2004 the mental health is the base for the well-being and effective operation of an individual and a community.

The perception that sustainable behaviors contribute to personal well-being can help us develop strategies to renew those depleted psychological resources, such as attention and mood and in the same way develop an adequate social and community environment. Environment will be essential for optimal development, both personal and communal. An environment that respects and protects the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights is fundamental to the promotion of mental health. (WHO, 2004)

In addition we should remember that the central purpose of the sustainable development is the well-being of the people. (Corral, 2010) so performing conducts orientated in the pro ecological and pro social sense could contribute to the well-being of the human beings.

In the research on sustainable behavior, there is a greater tendency to study the negative aspects, linked to environmental risks such as climate change and habitat destruction. This gives us a limited perspective on what motivates people to perform sustainable behavior. One aspect that would give us a broader perspective is the one that has to do with the positive aspects of the performance of those behaviors.

Attention to the fascination, restoration, and other positive motivations might be more appropriate to promote environmental performance. (Hartig, Kaiser & Bowler, 2001).

In this way we will be able to promote the care of the environment not only warning of the damages that can be caused to the planet and the human beings not to carry out sustainable behaviors. But also we could take the attention of the people to those positive effects that have the practice of sustainable behavior in the human being and his health.

Also the possible development of psychological restoration strategies that involve not only being in a restorative space, but a lifestyle centered on sustainability.

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