

Relationships between Daily Affect and Pro-Environmental Behavior at Work: The Moderating Role of Pro-Environmental Attitude

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Introduction

Past research on relationships between pro-environmental behavior and affect has largely focused on emotions related to nature or environmental issues, and how these specific emotions influence pro-environmental behavior. We extend this research by examining how *everyday* affective experiences (Forgas, 1995)—those not necessarily related to the natural environment—influence two types of pro-environmental behavior at work. We conceptualize *typical* pro-environmental behavior as pro-environmental behavior that is widely accepted and commonly carried out (e.g., recycling paper). *Proactive* pro-environmental behavior is conceptualized as an active and change-oriented approach to pro-environmental behavior (e.g., setting up a new recycling bin). We further investigated the moderating effect of pro-environmental attitude on the relationships between daily affect and both types of pro-environmental behavior at work.

Drawing on broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), which states that positive affect broadens people's thought-action repertoires and builds resources for altruistic behaviors, we hypothesized that daily positive affect positively predicts both types of pro-environmental behavior. Consistent with past theory and research on psychological factors influencing pro-environmental behavior (Bamberg & Möser, 2007), we expected that pro-environmental attitude is positively related to pro-environmental behavior. Finally, we predicted that pro-environmental attitude moderates the relationship between daily positive affect and pro-environmental behavior, such that positive affect is more strongly related to pro-environmental behavior when pro-environmental attitude is low than when it is high.

Method

To test our hypotheses, we used a daily diary design implemented over a two-week period. Participants completed one general survey at the beginning of the two-week period, measuring pro-environmental attitude. Twenty daily surveys were completed over the following ten working days, measuring affect in the morning and pro-environmental behavior in the evening. Participants were 56 employees working in small businesses in a metropolitan area in Australia across a wide range of occupations.

Results and Discussion

Consistent with expectations, pro-environmental attitude and daily positive affect predicted both types of daily pro-environmental behavior. In addition, pro-environmental attitude moderated the relationship between daily positive affect and daily proactive pro-environmental behavior.

Our findings suggest that daily affect and pro-environmental attitude play a role in pro-environmental behavior at work. In practice, by understanding under which conditions affective experiences best predict pro-environmental behavior at work, managers can promote pro-environmental behavior within their organizations by creating messages invoking those affective experiences.

References

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