

The relationship between health behavior and proenvironmental behavior

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Introduction

The purpose of our study was to investigate (a) whether propensities to perform health preserving behaviors and environmentally friendly behaviors are correlated and (b) to which degree correlations between the two types of behavior can be attributed to common roots such as personality, values, and/or demographic variables. Our major hypothesis was that proenvironmental behavior and health behavior are related. Further we expected that this relationship can be attributed to common background factors, namely conscientiousness and values.

Methods

The survey was administered in 2005. We had a convenience sample of 269 Hungarian residents, age 18+ who filled out a 12-page questionnaire. For measuring proenvironmental behavior we used the General Ecological Behavior (GEB) scale (Kaiser, 1998). We constructed a new measurement for health behavior based on goal-directed approach. We also measured values and one of the big-five factors, conscientiousness.

Results

We built a structural model. In the first step we analyzed the bivariate correlation among the two behavior categories by means of confirmatory factor analysis. In the second step partial correlation analysis by means of structural equation modeling was conducted, controlling for a number of background characteristics that might function either as

common antecedents (reflecting personal resources) or suppressors (reflecting basic differences in opportunities for performing the two types of behavior between groups defined by the suppressor). In the third step the same procedure was conducted as in Step 2, but now controlling for both relevant background characteristics and the included personality trait. In the fourth step again the same procedure was conducted, but now also controlling for the individual's value priorities. The results show that there is a significant attenuation on the correlation between health and proenvironmental behavior when background characteristics, conscientiousness and value priorities together are present as common antecedents. This indicates that all these factors contribute to explaining the relationship between the two behaviors.

Acknowledgements

- Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences (Denmark)
- Austrian-Hungarian Action Foundation
- Hungarian Scholarship Committee and Cirius (Denmark)
- Personality and Clinical Psychology Department, University of Debrecen and Széchenyi NKFP-1B/0015/2002 research project (Hungary)
- Technische Universiteit Eindhoven (Holland)

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