

Positive and negative effects of human behavior



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Individuals behave differently depending on his or her beliefs and the choices come from the beliefs one holds. This can have a positive or negative effect on one's environment within his or her control and the environment that affects the human population on Earth. Some environmental conditions that humans do have control over are pollution and crowding, although the rising temperatures and noise pollution may be out of individual reach.

By changing some conditions and adding items that have a positive mental influence on individuals can make some over-populated urban environments more pleasant and less stressful to the community and population living among those areas. "Urban environmental quality thus is a multidimensional concepts that comprise both negative and positive influences" (Steg, 2013, p. 98).

Further reading will describe how environmental cues shape individual behavior, examine how behavior is modifiable to support the environment, how social norms are essential for individual beliefs and the influence on behavior, and to find solutions to modify habits and behaviors of the general population. Environmental Cues Environmental cues are shaped by individual behavior. According to Steg, "Cues are elements in the environment that convey important information or trigger an affective reaction" (2013, p. 120). Environmental cues are influential on individual behavior, goal setting, and completion of personal goals.

For example: In Arizona, there is a law that no one is allowed to smoke within 20 feet of any business entrance and nowhere on hospital grounds. This cue

is in the form of a sign and many people do not catch the importance of the cue. The laws are not strict enough to punish the individuals who disobey this law. Normally when an individual sees an environmental cue, it usually has an influence on his or her behavior. " In any society, it is essential that people endorse and keep to social norms and legitimate rules. This is also essential for pro-environmental behavior" (Steg, 2013, 120).

Each area of a person's life has a certain social norm to follow; this includes one's home, school, work, and hanging out with friends. The social norms for an individual's behavior change as his or her environment changes. Social Norms " Social norms are rules and standards that are understood by members of a group, and that guide and/or constrain human behavior without the force of laws" (Steg, 2013, p. 154). Social norms have two areas or types they fall into. Injunctive norms are considered behavior that is approved or disapproved and descriptive norms are described as behavior shown by the members of a group.

Individuals follow social norms for the rewards involved and the individual wants to avoid rejection and ridicule from societal members. " Social norms can exert a powerful influence on pro-environmental behavior through normative and informational influence" (Steg, 2013, p. 162). Behavior is influenced through normative and informational influences, also moderator variables that may decrease or increase the strength of the influence.

Moderator variables contain the size of the group in question, the salience of the norm, if the group is considered an in-group, and the individual personal norms.

A wide variety of research shows that the behavior of others in the social environment shape individuals' interpretations of, and responses to, the situation, especially in novel, ambiguous, or uncertain situations" (Goldstein, Ciadini, Griskevicius, 2008, p. 473). Some individuals are leaders and have a following. If the leaders or individuals use the 'lead by example' rule of thumb and take care of the environment, the followers will follow in suit and carry on this information to others.

The problem comes to a leader that does not care and has the followers destroying the environmental resources and because these individuals are followers, they may not know any better and pass these bad habits along to other individuals that may look up to him or her. Behavior modification
Behavior modification involves finding a balance between social, environmental, and economic sustainability (Steg, 2013). Each has an important criteria and value that should be balanced for the behavior to perform properly.

Modifying behavior should not require drastic changes the individual must do. This will cause an individual not to be comfortable with change and may affect his or her quality of life. Major changes pushed on a group at one time can also make the people involved rebel and dismiss the changes because the changes were not proposed in smaller goals. The quality of life or (QoL) is defined as an individual who has his or her values and needs met. This is involving social, physical, and economic environments. There are certain criteria for everything.

Social sustainability includes water and gas consumption and the criteria for economic sustainability involves inflation rates and purchasing power. Social sustainability has two forms to measure. First is societal, which covers the average lifespan of the public, and the second is on a more individual level that includes one's income and individual well-being. " Therefore, a considerable part of individual QoL depends on environmental qualities. This environmentally determined individual QoL is a good sustainability criterion, as environmental, social, and economic become balanced (Steg & Vlek, 2009, p. 09).

Solutions One solution that may be a success involves changes in habits and behavior to reduce any negative environmental impact that involves a systematic approach to help improve pro-environmental behavior. This approach encourages individuals to want to change his or her behavior by use of physical and technical innovations. This will teach people the need to understand, accept, and acknowledge the proper way to use technically efficient, nature friendly products. The second solution would involve investigating factors involved in influencing the environmental behavior. The effectiveness of behavioral interventions generally increases when they are aimed at important antecedents of the relevant behavior and at removing barriers for change" (Steg & Vlek, 2009, p. 309). Some factors that may impede environmental behavior contain cost and benefits, normative and moral fears, and basic affect.

Conclusion Most environmental issues the population faces are caused by the behavior of human beings. A modification in human behavior is needed to solve many environmental problems this world has or will

have. Environmental cues are responsible for shaping individuals behavior, and for behavior to change there must be a balance between an individual and his or her environmental surroundings. Social norms are also influential on human behavior. If one can find a solution to change behavior, the individuals must be willing to accept, understand, and learn why following orders or changing the thought process of individuals would make the world a safer place for humans and animals involved in the cycle of life.