Social Cognitive Theory in Social Environment: A Study of Pro-Environmental Behavior

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النظرية المعرفية الاجتماعية في البيئة الاجتماعية : دراسة السلوك المؤيد للبيئة

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Abstract

From a social cognitive theory perspective, this study set out to examine pro-environmental behavior and the theory's applicability to social contexts. Social cognitive theory is a school of thought within psychology that places equal emphasis on an individual's actions, their surroundings, and their thoughts as foundational to their maturation. Social cognitive theory is a school of thought within psychology that places equal emphasis on an individual's actions, their surroundings, and their thoughts as foundational to their maturation. Viewed through the lens of social-cognitive theory, environmentally conscious actions To describe human behavior, social cognitive theory employs the triadic reciprocity model. The three parts of this triadic model of causation cognitive and other personal features like emotional states and physical traits, external environmental effects, and overt behavior—influence each other in a two-way street.

Key Words: Social Cognitive Theory, Social Environment, Behavior, and Environmental Behavior

الملخص

من منظور نظرية الإدراك الاجتماعي، يهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة السلوك البيئي ودور تطبيق النظرية في السياقات الاجتماعية. نظرية الإدراك الاجتماعي هي مدرسة فكرية في علم النفس تعطي نفس القدر من الأهمية لأفعال الفرد وبيئته وأفكاره كأساس لنموه. هذه النظرية تستخدم نموذج التفاعل الثلاثي لتوضيح السلوك البشري، حيث تؤثر ثلاثة عناصر هي العوامل المعرفية والخصائص الشخصية الأخرى مثل الحالات العاطفية والسمات الجسدية، والتأثيرات البيئية الخارجية، والسلوك الظاهر في بعضها البعض في علاقة تبادلية

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية الادراك الاجتماعي ، البيئة الاجتماعية ، السلوك ، و السلوك البيئي

1. Introduction

According to social cognitive theory, a psychologist's point of view, development depends on three main factors: behavior, environment, and cognition. Bandura focused most of his early work on observational learning, or picking up new skills by watching how others perform them. Many beliefs, attitudes, and actions can be "caught" by observing the actions of others, say social cognitive theorists. These findings are a major part of lifespan development. Current models of learning and development proposed by Bandura (1986, 1998, 2000) incorporate behavior, humans, and the natural world. The following actions are considered environmentally friendly according to Homburg and Stolberg (2006): environmental activism (such as being an active member of an environmental organization), public-sphere non-activist behavior (such as submitting a petition on environmental issues), private-sphere environmentalism (such as reducing energy consumption or buying goods made from recycled materials), and organizational behavior (such as creating eco-friendly products). In their 2007 article, Ramus and Killmer argued that pro-environmental acts are a subset of actions conducted with the intention of helping an individual, community, or organization, and that these actions are necessarily pro-social. Sharing, helping, and caring for others are examples of pro-social acts that people often partake in, as stated by Caprara and Steca (2007). All it takes for this kind of behavior to happen is for people to think they can pull it off and manage the emotions it brings.The

field of applied environmental psychology is shifting its emphasis to encourage pro-environmental behavior change in response to the mounting evidence of the negative effects of contemporary human lifestyles on the natural world (Jackson, 2005). Interactions between humans and their natural and man-made surroundings are the focus of environmental psychology. This involves studying the factors that influence people to make choices that are good for the environment, climate, and sustainability, as well as the causes and effects of these decisions, and how to encourage more environmentally conscious actions (Gifford, 2014). This study aims to explain the social cognitive Theory in social environment and identify the pro-environmental behavior from social cognitive theory perspective.

2. Social Cognitive Theory in Social Environment

According to social cognitive theory, which is a branch of learning theory, individuals gain a great deal of insight into their own personalities from observing the actions and inactions of those around them. According to Devi et al. (2017), social cognitists concede that an individual's observable behavior in their surroundings has a major role in shaping their moral development, but they contend that the individual (and therefore cognition) is equally crucial. A person's development is influenced by their surroundings, actions, and thoughts, but they also pick up new skills by observing those around them. According to Devi et al. (2017), these three components are not independent or static, but rather participate in a triadic reciprocal determinism process.

3. Behaviors in Social Environment

Social cognitive theory explains human functioning in terms of a model of triadic reciprocality. In this triadic. Three components (i.e., cognitive and other personal factors like affective states and physical qualities, external environmental impacts, and overt conduct) have a reciprocal effect on each other in the reciprocal causation paradigm. Behaviors, the environment, and personal factors do not all interact reciprocally at the same time. They require a lag in time to have an effect because they are causative variables. The concept of personal agency is also essential to the social-cognitive theory in order to analyze the personal determinants inside the triadic reciprocality. The ability of people to consciously select, carry out, and control their own activities in order to achieve desired results is known as personal agency. According to this agentic socio-cognitive viewpoint, people are proactive and capable of self-regulation in addition to being reactive to outside forces. To put it another way, people become both "products" and "producers" of their surroundings.

Researchers have traditionally used a variety of words to characterize actions taken to preserve the natural world, including environmental, environmental significant, environmental responsible, and pro-environmental (Lee, etal., 2013). In order to improve environmental quality or reduce the negative effects of human activities on the environment, people engage in pro-environmental behavior (Jensen, 2002; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

4. Pro-enviromental behavior from social cognitive theory's perspectives

A Social-Cognitive Theory Perspective on Eco-Friendly Actions According to Bandura (1986), social cognitive theory explains human behavior through the paradigm of triad reciprocity. This triadic reciprocal causation paradigm (Bandura, 1986) posits that three elements—individual cognitive and other attributes like affective states and physical characteristics, external environmental consequences, and overt behavior have a reciprocal influence on each other. There is no simultaneous and reciprocal interaction between behaviors, the environment, and individual factors. Because they are factors that cause things to happen, their effects take time to materialize. For social-cognitive theory to examine the individual factors inside the triadic reciprocity, the idea of personal agency is also crucial. Personal agency is defined by Bandura (1997) as the capacity for individuals to willfully choose, execute, and exert control over their own actions in pursuit of their own goals. People can both respond to external stimuli and take the initiative to control their own behavior, according to the agentic socio-cognitive perspective (Bandura, 1999). As a result of being in constant interaction with their environment, humans are at once "producers" and "products" (Bandura, 2000).A self-efficacy mechanism plays a key role in exercising agency. As per Bandura (2000), self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to have an impact on an individual's objectives, actions taken to achieve them, perseverance in pursuing goals, and thoughts and emotions experienced during action execution. According to Bandura (1997), people also act based on their beliefs about the predicted outcomes of their activities as well as their assessment of their own abilities, or self-efficacy. High outcome expectations, or the belief that one will succeed when one's goals are achieved, motivate oneself when pursuing goals and have an impact on one's progress during the career decision-making process. Furthermore, rather than directly influencing human functioning, outside factors do so through self-efficacy (Bandura, 1999). The social cognitive career theory is one instance of an applied kind of social cognitive theory that may also be used in environmental psychology.The function that aspects of personal agency have in the

field of environmental psychology has been noted in the literature as one that requires further study. The importance of human agency in understanding pro-environmental behavior has only been studied by a few number of academics, including Homburg and Stolberg (2006), Meinhold and Markus (2002), and Tabarnero and Hernandez (2010). All social-cognitive factors, including self-efficacy, outcome expectations, objectives, and behaviors, were not used by these researchers, though. The belief in one's own ability to direct and control the actions necessary to deal with certain problems in the near future is known as self-efficacy. In the field of environmental psychology, self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their own capacity to make constructive changes in their surroundings. No matter how great the payoff, people will not undertake an act if they do not believe they are capable of doing so, and they will not be able to persevere in the face of challenges (1997). They must believe they can execute the deed to a particular degree and at a certain moment. People who first doubt their ability are prone to become unhappy with themselves and their accomplishments and lose interest in the activity, as shown by Bandura (1997). Fewer studies, nevertheless, have examined how self-efficacy influences altruistic and pro-social behaviors, like pro-environmental behavior. In their 2002 study, Meinhold and Markus, for instance, showed that while self-efficacy was not a successful moderating variable in predicting environmental behaviors, it was an independent variable that was predictive of environmental behaviors. Since there isn't much research on the relationship between environmental attitudes and actions and perceived self-efficacy, this study serves as a roadmap for future investigations because self-efficacy seems to be important in comprehending environmental activities. Furthermore, the self-efficacy scale was employed in the study by Homburg and Stolberg (2006). "I know how to take precautions against pollution in everyday life" is an example item. Furthermore, in their study, Tabernero and Hernandez (2010) also used self-efficacy for recycling behavior. This self-efficacy measure was developed in accordance with the guidelines provided in the handbook for developing self-efficacy scales. Items like "To what extent do you feel capable of separating all the paper and cardboard generated in your home and taking them to their respective containers?" were used to assess the perception of the ability to perform each of the specified recycling tasks. On a 10-point scale, with 1 denoting no confidence and 10 denoting complete confidence, participants were asked to rate their degree of confidence. As far as we are aware, outcome expectancies have not been used in any environmental studies. This construct, however, has the potential to be applied in environmental psychology studies. Beliefs regarding the results of a sequence of action are known as outcome expectations (1986). This concept can be converted into opinions regarding the effects of people's pro-environmental actions in the field of environmental psychology. Learning experiences can produce a variety of behavioral outcomes, including social impacts like other people's recognition and appreciation, physical effects like money gain, and self-evaluation that is gradually altered by people's learning experiences (1999). Goals are the next construct. Goals are characterized as a person's intention to carry out a specific action or influence a specific result. For instance, in their study, Tabernero and Hernandez (2010) employed self-set goals for recycling behavior. The intention to engage in each of the chosen behaviors in the near future was taken into consideration when creating the following four items: (1) "How would you rank your present recycling practices in terms of realism?" In the near future, what level would you try to reach? (3) "How much would you like to put in more effort to do it better?" (4) "How likely do you think you are to continue working toward this objective in the future?" On a 10-point rating system, with 1 denoting none or not at all and 10 denoting always, participants displayed their responses. Actions are then derived from goals. Pro-environmental conduct is defined in the field of environmental psychology as efforts to achieve objectives. For instance, self-reported recycling practices have been used by Tabernero and Hernandez (2010) to illustrate pro-environmental behavior and activity. Three questions were developed to gauge an individual's degree of recycling activity with regard to paper, glass, and packaging in order to gauge pro-environmental behavior: (1) "Do you separate cardboard and paper from other waste?" (2) "Do you sort glass out of the other trash?" (3) "Are cartons, cans, and plastics separated from the rest of the waste?" Contextual influences have not yet been thoroughly investigated in environmental psychology, with the exception of a few studies (Black et al., 1985; Guagnano et al., 1995; Hunecke et al., 2001). Individual motives and environmental behavior can be influenced by a variety of contextual circumstances. For instance, the market supply of goods, the quality of public transportation, or the availability of recycling facilities can all have a significant impact on people's pro-environmental behavior. Constraints can sometimes be so tough that changing behavior can be highly expensive and motivations don't really affect the environment. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account contextual elements like physical infrastructure, technical facilities, and product availability in addition to intra-personal aspects like attitudes, conventions, and habits. This is noteworthy since the field of environmental psychology

studies how people interact with their surroundings, thus it should be especially interested in how context affects behavior.

Conclusion

Planned behavior, norm activation, and values-beliefs-norms theories may only go so far when trying to explain environmentally conscious actions; social cognitive theory offers an additional framework. Several behavioral, environmental, and human elements impact the process of engaging in pro-environmental actions, as stated in the hypothesis. You can have goals, or the intention to do something, when you have self-efficacy, which is your belief in your own ability to plan and execute actions effectively, and positive outcome expectations, which are your beliefs about the results you can expect from those actions. These two factors can happen alone or together. Goals motivate actions that are good for the environment. In addition, the circumstances in which an individual finds themselves may influence their sense of competence and their will to follow through on their plans. People have a better chance of succeeding when they face few obstacles and plenty of contextual supports. However, similar processes of translating goals into actions could be hindered by unhelpful conditions. So, it stands to reason that the connection between objectives and actions should be stronger in contexts where enabling rather than limiting factors are at play. Environmental policy should prioritize certain regions to foster more responsible environmental behaviors, according to studies that utilized social-cognitive theory to promote environmentally friendly actions. Among these domains are the promotion of goal-setting, the encouragement of capacity evaluations, the provision of supportive contextual settings, and the promotion of the conviction that people may achieve positive results after initiating or carrying out changes to their environment. To further understand environmentally conscious actions, future studies should look to social-cognitive theory, which brings together the following variables: action (i.e., pro-environmental behavior), goals, contextual support, result expectations, and self-efficacy.

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