**ENCOURAGING PRO ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR**

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**ASSIGNMENT#1**

**APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY BS 3RD**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Since 1970’s social and environmental psychologists have examined different ways to encourage people to adopt pro environmental behavior in order to alleviate effects of human behavior on the environment such as the depletion of fossil fuels and climate change. Our impact on environment is still considerable. In this chapter we focus on strategies for behavior change such as

* ***Informational strategies*** are aimed at changing knowledge, awareness, norms and attitudes (campaigns to raise recycling awareness) it is also sometimes referred to soft measures.
* ***Structural strategies*** are aimed at changing the circumstances in which behavioral decisions are made.

**INTERVENTIONS FROM RESEARCH TO IMPLEMENTATION**

\*Firstly it is important to target behaviors that can improve environmental conditions. Ideally interventions should focus on behaviors with relatively high environmental impacts.

\*Secondly interventions should be rooted in theory. Theory driven approach is important as it will provide a better understanding of changing environmental behavior and also develop sound evaluations.

\*Thirdly it is important that the effect of the intervention is assessed properly. Intervention studies include

* *Measurements of the target behavior before and after implementation of the intervention.*
* *Pre-test/post-test design*
* *A control group that has not been exposed to the intervention*

In this way changes in the outcome measured can be monitored and compared with a business as usual situation. Also including measurements of factors related to behavioral decisions, as it will tell us why the intervention was effective.

**INFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES**

1. ***Provision of information***

Information provision is the widely used intervention to promote behavior change. It has its roots in the so-called **knowledge-deficit model** which is the assumption that people do not know about a specific environmental problem and also don’t know what to do about it information provision aims to overcome this problem. There are two types of information one is the information about the environmental problem and the other is that helps people to alleviate these problems. One more effective strategy to encourage behavior change is **tailored information** which reaches to specific people or the group of people on the basis of unique characteristics. Studies revealed that it is the more effective way to encourage behavior change. Another informational effective strategy which is based on **BANDURA’S SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY** is in which information is conveyed via models, i.e. other person carrying out the recommended behavior. **Normative information** is the information on the opinion or behavior of others is also an effective way to encourage pro environmental behavior.

1. ***GOAL SETTING***

This intervention technique is based on goal setting theory, which states that individual behavior is goal-directed and this motivates respective behavior. Goals should be clearly formulated and achievable in short span. It is the most effective way when the goals are high. Becker examined the role of goal setting and feed back to encourage households to reduce their energy consumption, he founded that goal setting is only effective combined with feedback and only for high reduction goal. Goal setting is more effective when combined with the other informational strategies. Its effect can be enhanced by so-called implementation intentions they are if-then plans that spell out.

1. ***COMMITMENT***

In this intervention individuals or groups are asked to sign a pledge (commitment) to change their behavior. A commitment effects behavior change via **cognitive dissonance.** Commitment techniques are regularly combined with other strategies. It requires high amounts of time and resources.

1. ***PROMPTING***

This technique has been used to encourage pro environmental behavior since the early years of intervention research. It entails a short written message or sign which draws attention to a specific behavior in a given situation. Prompts can be assumed to overrule the automatic elicitation of a problematic behavior, they can be assumed to directly convey sanctions or incentives. Prompting techniques have been criticized for having only weak, short term effects. It is only effective with less complex and easy behaviors.

1. ***FEEDBACK***

It consists of people giving information about their performance, FOR INSTANCE energy savings or amount of recycled material. According to feedback intervention theory feedback influences behavior because it gives insight in to the links between certain outcomes and behavior changes necessary to reach that outcome. Feedback appears to be an effective way to encourage behavior change. However as feedback is used in combination with other strategies.

**INTERVENTION RESEARCH: SOME GENERAL ISSUES**

Here are four central issues discussed

* Firstly little is known about the long term effects of interventions and their effectiveness. It is important to establish whether behavior changes are maintained once an intervention has been discontinued.
* Secondly intervention research is often action-based and seems to lack a coherent theory underlying the promotion of pro environmental behavioral. It is important to clarify the underlying theoretical assumptions about how interventions work, in which contexts they work, and for which type of behavior they are most suitable. These factors should be recorded as a part of evaluation.
* Thirdly collaboration with other disciplines is important and necessary to inform and help research on the effectiveness of informational strategies.
* Lastly informational strategies to encourage behavior change can often only be part of a solution to environmental problems. For the more effective approach informational strategies can be combined with structural strategies.