

Streszczenie w języku angielskim – *Abstract*

Environmental degradation and climate change, caused by human activities, have become the most urgent global problem that contemporary civilization must confront. One solution is to promote pro-environmental behaviors. In my doctoral dissertation, I examined how to encourage society, especially young people, to engage in such behaviors. I conducted three studies among those most vulnerable to the effects of this environmental situation: adolescents and young adults (aged 15-25).

The project had two main objectives: 1) to identify key psychological correlates of pro-environmental behaviors and construct models enabling their prediction in two age groups (adolescence and young adulthood); 2) to explore effective methods for promoting pro-environmental behaviors in youth education.

In the first study, I analyzed results obtained from 501 adolescents and young adults. The utilized questionnaires allowed for measuring the frequency of pro-ecological behaviors and explanatory variables from the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Two models were developed in the path analyses – separately for adolescents and young adults. In both models, identified and integrated regulation were the strongest positive, direct predictors of pro-environmental behaviors, while pro-environmental beliefs were the strongest indirect predictors. Differences in the models concerned variations in the significance of predictors related to the need for autonomy (frustration was a significant predictor for adolescents, while its satisfaction for adults) and internal goals (a direct predictor for adolescents and an indirect one in the older group) in predicting the declared frequency of pro-environmental behaviors. The models explained 47% and 41% of the variability in the frequency of pro-environmental behaviors, respectively.

The second study was a pilot, conducted as an online experiment involving 363 participants randomly assigned to one of three groups – exposure to praise, educational information, or neutral information. Significant, only in the older group, positive effects of praise and educational information on readiness for pro-environmental behaviors were demonstrated, measured by two indicators. Also, praise and educational information elicited higher emotional reactions and were perceived as more important compared to neutral information in both developmental periods.

The last of the conducted studies, also experimental, took place in real-life settings with 247 participants. Once again, I examined the impact of messages (praise vs. educational

information vs. neutral information) on readiness for pro-environmental behaviors, intensity of emotions, and perceived importance of messages. The main results showed that for the overall readiness indicator in the entire studied group, there was a significant effect of praise and educational information (compared to neutral). This effect was repeated in the adolescent group. Conversely, among young adults, there was only a significant effect of praise on readiness for general pro-environmental behaviors. Praise (compared to the control group) significantly influenced the engagement indicator in pro-environmental behaviors in the adolescent group. Results for affective and cognitive indicators were consistent with the second study but only in adolescents. Among young adults, a significant impact of educational information on the perceived importance of the message was observed.

The research results confirm the occurrence of differences in the frequency of pro-environmental behaviors and their subjective determinants in two age groups. Thus, they validate the significant role of developmental research in this area. However, results concerning the influence of praise and educational information on readiness and engagement in pro-environmental activities are not consistent and require further verification.

Keywords: eco-friendly behaviors, pro-environmental behaviors, praises, informational praises, educational information, self-determination theory, satisfaction and frustration psychological basic needs, life goals, beliefs, developmental psychology, adolescents, emerging adults.

