

Motives of young adults for being in nature considering connectedness with nature

Kathrin Röderer, Margarete Huber and Renate Cervinka

Medical University of Vienna, Center for Public Health, Institute of Environmental Health

Mail to: renate.cervinka@meduniwien.ac.at

Background

According to Attention Restoration Theory (ART) and research on Perceived Restorativeness (PR), natural environments are consistently preferred over urban environments as they better support attentional restoration. Further, time spent in nature for recreational purposes (TINrp) is positively associated with Connectedness with Nature (CN). The questions arise: what are relevant motives for being in nature in an urban setting and are there any differences in the motive patterns considering CN?

Objectives

Our aim was to investigate the motives for spending time in nature and to detect characteristic motive patterns according to respondents' CN-scores. We laid our focus on young adults, because CN increases with age, and we therefore expected CN-effects to be less pronounced in this age-group.

Method

Members of the general population (N = 105, mean age = 42, SD = 18,36, 63 % females) participated in a survey on motives for being in nature (see tab. 1), TINrp and CN (CN-SI and CNS). The study took place in Vienna and its environs. The sample was split into tertiles by age and CN to compare the motives of young adults (N = 37, low on CN vs. high on CN).

Results & Discussion

We replicated the positive correlation of CN with TINrp (controlled for age and sex) in summertime ($r = .220, p = .029$ for the CNS and $r = .430, p = .000$ for the CN-SI,) and in wintertime ($r = .423, p = .000$ for the CN-SI), as well as age effects ($r = .222, p = .025$ for the CNS).

The motive patterns are displayed in fig. 1, significant differences between single motives are indicated in yellow (crosstabulation analysis: Chi-square = 6.389 to 16.180, $p \leq .041$). While young individuals scoring low on CN gave more utilitarian motives for their outdoor activities, individuals with high CN named rather restorative motives.

The detected motive patterns are in line with ART and research on PR, even in young adults. We therefore (1) propose CN as an important factor for restoration in nature which should be considered in basic research on restoration. The results are (2) further relevant in education and applied environmental-health psychology, in order to foster both pro-environmental behavior and health behavior.

References

Abraham, A., Sommerhalder, K., Bollinger-Salzmann, H. & Abel, T. (2007). Landschaft und Gesundheit. Das Potential einer Verbindung zweier Konzepte. Bern: Universität Bern, Institut für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin, Abteilung Gesundheitsforschung.

Berman, M. G., Jonides, J. & Kaplan, S. (2008). The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature. *Psychological Science, 19* (12), 1207-1212.

Cervinka, R., Hefler, E. & Zeidler, D. (under review). Measuring connectedness with nature, beyond national and disciplinary borders. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*.

Kaplan, S. (1995). The restorative benefits of nature: toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 15*, 169-182.

Kaplan, S. & Kaplan, R. (1989). *The experience of nature: A psychological perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mayer, F. S. & Frantz, C. McPherson (2004). The connectedness to nature scale: a measure of individuals' feeling in community with nature. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 24*, 503-515.

Schultz, P. W. & Tabanico, J. (2007). Self, Identity and the Natural Environment: Exploring Implicit Connections With Nature. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 37* (6), 1219-1247.

Van den Berg, A. E., Koole, S. L. and Van der Wulp, N. Y. (2003). Environmental preference and restoration: (How) are they related? *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 23* (2), 135-146.



Motives

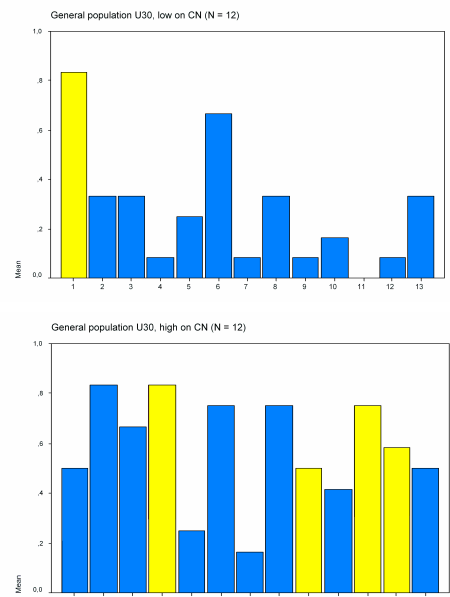


Fig. 1: Motive patterns

1	To get from one building to another
2	For mental recreation
3	For physical recreation
4	To recover from stress
5	To smoke
6	To be together with others
7	To care for the green
8	Because it is beautiful
9	Observing plants and animals is fascinating
10	Because it is peaceful
11	Because I feel safe and secure
12	To contemplate life
13	To do sports
14	...

Tab.1: Motives-Checklist

