

Value Orientation, Awareness of Consequences, and Environmental Concern

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The thesis is based on the following four studies referred to by their roman numerals:

- I.** Hansla, A., Gamble, A., Juliusson, E. A., & Gärling, T. (2008). The relationships between awareness of consequences, environmental concern, and value orientations. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28, 1-9.
- II.** Hansla, A., Gamble, A., Juliusson, E. A., & Gärling, T. (2008). Psychological determinants of attitude towards and willingness to pay for green electricity. *Energy Policy*, 36, 768-774.
- III.** Hansla, A. (2011). Value orientation and framing as determinants of stated willingness to pay for eco-labeled electricity. *Energy Efficiency*, 4, 185-192.
- IV.** Hansla, A., Gärling, T., & Biel, A. (2010). The relationship between households' willingness to pay for eco-labeled electricity and their willingness to reduce electricity consumption. Manuscript submitted for publication.



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Abstract

Hansla, A. (2011). *Value Orientation, Awareness of Consequences, and Environmental Concern*. Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

The tenets of the value-basis approach to environmental concern are (i) that environmental concern is motivated by beliefs about adverse egoistic (e.g., own health), social-altruistic (e.g., peoples' health), and biospheric consequences of environmental problems (e.g., the balance of the ecosystems), and (ii) that the relative importance of these consequences for environmental concern is determined by individuals' value orientations, generally proposed to be altruistic (self-transcendence) and egoistic (self-enhancement) value orientations. This thesis examines the basic tenets of the value-basis approach. In Study I the relationships between self-transcendence and self-enhancement value orientations and concern for and beliefs about egoistic, social-altruistic, and biospheric consequences of environmental problems were examined. A survey of Swedish residents ($n = 494$) showed that both concern for and beliefs about egoistic, social-altruistic, and biospheric consequences of environmental problems are related to the three value types power (concern for and beliefs about egoistic consequences), benevolence (concern for and beliefs about social-altruistic consequences), and universalism (concern for and beliefs about biospheric consequences) located on a value orientation dimension from self-enhancement to self-transcendence. It was also shown that beliefs about consequences partially mediate the effects of value orientation on environmental concern. Study II examined the relationships between self-enhancement and self-transcendent value orientations, beliefs about occurrence of specific environmental problems, and concern for consequences of these problems, and whether these factors and their relationships account for attitudes towards and stated willingness to pay (SWTP) for eco-labeled electricity. Another survey of Swedish residents ($n = 855$) showed that a self-transcendence value orientation, beliefs about environmental problems, and concern for consequences of the problems are positively related to attitude towards and SWTP for eco-labeled electricity. The results also showed that beliefs about occurrence of environmental problems partially mediate the positive influence of a self-transcendence value orientation on environmental concern. In turn, environmental concern was shown to partially mediate the influences of beliefs about environmental problems on attitude towards eco-labeled electricity. Study III examined influences of egoistically, altruistically, and biospherically framed messages on SWTP for eco-labeled electricity, and whether such influences are moderated by self-transcendence versus self-enhancement value orientation. An experiment conducted in the context of another survey of Swedish residents ($n = 476$) showed that SWTP for eco-labeled electricity is higher for biospherically framed messages than for egoistically and altruistically framed messages and increases with self-transcendence. It further showed that the effect of framing of messages on SWTP for eco-labeled electricity is not moderated by value orientation. In Study IV using the same survey data as in Study III, the relationship between self-transcendence versus self-enhancement value orientation and SWTP for eco-labeled electricity was reexamined and contrasted to the relationship between this dimension and stated willingness to reduce (SWTR) electricity consumption. The results showed that while there is a relationship between the value orientation dimension and SWTP for eco-labeled electricity there is no relationship between this dimension and SWTR electricity consumption. This was accounted for by assuming that it is more difficult to reduce electricity consumption than purchasing eco-labeled electricity. In conclusion, the four studies provide further empirical support for significant relationships between self-transcendence versus self-enhancement value orientations and pro-environmental attitudes. The main contribution is that these relationships are mediated by beliefs about environmental problems and environmental protection as well as moderated by situational influences.

Key words: Value orientation, awareness of consequences, environmental concern, eco-labeled electricity.

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