

Environmental Cues and Behavioural Response: Shaping habits over time

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Abstract

This article investigates how human behaviour is influenced by ecological psychology. It establishes a strong connection between individuals and their environment. The field displays actual behavioural shifts over time. The article focuses on how human behaviour is not formed in isolation but is fabricated with the environment and the people we live with. It explains the vital principles of ecological psychology, such as transformation, affordances, and environmental interaction. It also discusses how a clean, green, and positive environment culture can promote a sustainable, healthy lifestyle along with the dire need for social responsibility. To naturally encourage eco-friendly behavior, ecological psychology helps teachers, facilitators, and communities to create an environment that promotes sustainable living.

Keywords: Ecological psychology, Eco-friendly, Sustainable living, Environmental challenges,

1. Introduction

Ecological psychology is a perspective where human behavior is interwoven with nature and the environment. There is a strong bond between humans and their environment; it is an intricate relationship. As centuries and years have passed, humans have put the environment in constant distress. The term 'ecological psychology' is a part of general psychology. Considering today's environmental psychology, it traces its origin to the school of Roger Baker and his colleagues during the second half of the 1940s(Barker, 1968). This stream of psychology was developed to comprehend the relationship between the psychological process and the constant changes in human behaviour through the years and through generations. There is always a sustainable development in human behavior, along with progress in shaping human relationships with nature. There has always existed a deep-rooted behaviour between people and their environment, such that it causes a transformation, not just in the way people think, but also in their internal motives. This connection leads to behavioural transformation over time. It has been proven that changing one's environment leads to a psychological transformation, enhancing decision-making skills and human perspectives. (Gifford, 2014)

For instance, if a child grows up near a quiet park, surrounded by nature and trees, she will psychologically have a calm mood and peaceful mind, and if this child is moved to live near a noisy street, automatically the child's levels of stress increase. The change in environment causes a shift in behaviour.

Eco-conscious choices

The idea of eco-conscious choices plays a vital role in every individual's walk of life.

There is a constant connection with nature, a constant choice of what humans learn from nature. This choice also helps create a sustainability of resources in the environment. Throughout centuries it has been proven that recognizing the deeper connections with nature creates a sense of love and responsibility. It has been stated by Carl Jung.

Whenever we touch nature, we get clean. People who have gotten dirty through too much civilization take a walk in the woods or a bath in the sea (Jung, 1964). Entering the unconscious, entering through dreams, is touching nature from inside, and this is the same thing; things are put right again.

Carl Jung emphasizes the need to strike a balance between human civilization and the nature all around him. It is essential that every individual have a conscious behaviour, striving towards eco-conscious choices on an everyday basis. Simple actions like creating posters that promote energy-saving habits, distributing recycling bins, creating an awareness of the importance of recycling, encouraging school gardening, and raising awareness of nature. Ecological psychology throws light on the fact that perception and actions are fabricated. The phrase "environmental psychology matters" originates from Robert Gifford's groundbreaking 2014 article in the *Annual Review of Psychology*, which highlights how human existence is intricately linked to environments, necessitating research on how we impact and are impacted by the natural and constructed worlds, impacting everything from mental health to climate action. Change in the environment causes a change in behaviour. A simple example would be the cheer that warm sunshine brings after days of dark clouds and rain.

Behavioural Transformation

The concept of transformation is a change in behavioural that takes place after a realization. As Carl Jung quotes, "Your vision will become clear only when you look into your own heart." Who looks outside dreams; who looks inside awakes." Inner peace can be attained only when one is one with nature, in a quiet and silent environment, surrounded with fresh air and tranquility. As William Wordsworth's philosophy of nature states, the company of nature gives a man complete joy, as nature in all her abundance has a healing power. It heals a broken heart and soothes the mind. His famous line from Tintern Abbey, "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her,"

The conscious changes towards behaviour changes will eventually cause a transformation in one environment, social circle, and routine. A simple example would be if we keep healthy food like nuts and fruits in front and avoid looking at junk food, it would result in eating healthier and forming healthy habits. "No animal could exist without an environment surrounding it. Equally, although not so obvious, an environment implies an animal to be surrounded." James J. Gibson, from *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. The fundamental idea that an organism and its surroundings constitute an integral, mutually defining system is highlighted in this quotation. It is a universal truth that human behaviour does not take form in isolation but holds a strong connection to the

surroundings and the people we are with. As environmental challenges grow globally, ecological psychology provides important insights into how constantly changing environments play a vital role in influencing human behavior.

Environmental influence on daily habits

Behavioural transformation doesn't take place overnight; it is a conscious process.

Taking into consideration Japanese techniques like Kaizen and Ikiigai as simple, meaningful, and holistic ways to improve the standard and quality of life. For instance, the Ikigai technique concentrates on the "Reason for Being," as there is a strong connection between ecological psychology that emphasizes the well-being of human existence. Throwing light on the alignment of the human mind along with nature. The entire journey is about finding meaning, not about scaling goals in life. The bonding with nature fosters sustainability, enhances life, improves mental health, and reduces stress.

The theory on Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides an understanding for integrating human needs, human changes, and human motivation into their environment. Basic physiological needs and safety needs like food, water, shelter, and security are directly intertwined with health and the stable environment around us. A sustainable and holistic approach recognizes that access to clean air, water, and a safe environment, when there is a degradation of the environment, creates a threat to human survival. Drastic environmental changes cause natural disasters; on the contrary, a stable environment creates an avenue for security for future generations.

"Affordances" is a term coined to highlight the relationship between humans and the environment. For instance, the possibility of action to the output or the reaction that follows. Affordance plays a role in shaping behavior naturally and continuously. For example, a park will offer a healthy, calm, and peaceful environment, but a polluted and busy street affords stress, diseases, and tension.

Health, well-being, and nature

Clean, safe, and supportive environments promote mental and physical well-being. The presence of natural light, fresh air, greenery, and good ventilation has been shown to reduce stress and improve health, well-being, and concentration. Well-being centers like Auroville, the temple of consciousness (Aliyar Arivu Thitukovil), and a few other places that foster holistic health and peace and show a way of life. These are centers that offer an experience for people to be one with nature, focus on introspection, and transform. Visiting these centers creates an avenue to transform life with health, prosperity, and happiness. To experience the power of ecological psychology and behavioral transformation, it is important to visit these centers.

Conclusion

Ecological psychology emphasizes the importance of how behavior transforms lives. It is important to realize that a peaceful, healthy environment ambiance can inspire a meaningful behavioral transformation. It is essential to fathom and comprehend the interaction between people and their environment,



communities, schools, and surroundings. It is a social responsibility for every human, both young and old, to contribute to promoting sustainable well-being and social responsibility. Ecological psychology ultimately teaches that behavioral transformation towards the improvement of the well-being of individuals leads to the improvement of the world and the environment we live in. Like little drops of water make a mighty ocean, little and simple actions of individuals make a difference in the world.

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