

Application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to Leisure Choice

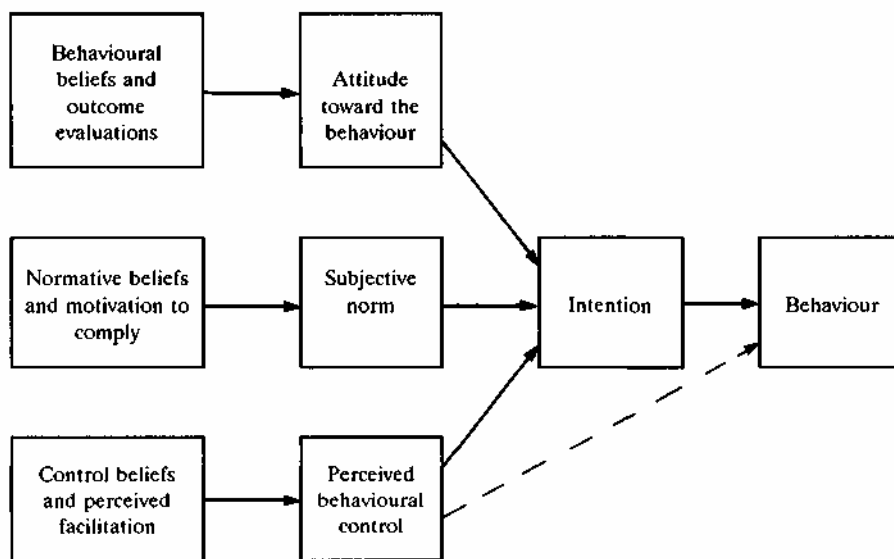
Icek Ajzen, Department of Psychology, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003

B. L. Driver, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Experiment Station, Fort Collins, Colorado 80526

INTRODUCTION

The research reported in the present paper focused on psychological aspects of outdoor recreation, and on the relation between psychological variables and economic measures of value in the form of willingness to pay. The conceptual framework for this research was provided by the *theory of planned behaviour* (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen and Madden, 1986). The theory's basic concepts are intention to perform a behaviour, attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and different kinds of beliefs that constitute the informational foundation for the behaviour. The hypothesized relations among these variables are shown in the following structural diagram (see Figure 1 - correlations among the predictor variables are omitted for the sake of clarity).

Figure 1
Theory of Planned Behaviour



The objectives of the research were as follows.

1. *The theory of planned behaviour as a model of leisure behaviour.* The predictor variables in the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) were used to account for variance in several specific recreational activities (outdoor jogging or running, mountain climbing, spending time at the beach, boating, biking).
2. *Instrumentality versus affect.* An attempt was made to distinguish between an act's perceived instrumentality (its perceived benefits and costs, and the associated evaluation of the act) from affective responses toward the act. Perceived benefits are defined as beliefs about improved conditions or gains brought about by a given recreational activity, while perceived costs are beliefs about

deteriorated conditions or losses engendered by that activity. Such beliefs deal with the behaviour's instrumentality in bringing about positively or negatively valued end states, and they differ from behavioural beliefs with a more affective tone (perceived pleasant or unpleasant aspects of a recreational activity). Measures representing both types of beliefs, instrumental and affective, were obtained, as were evaluative and affective semantic differential measures.

3. *Contingent valuation.* Another objective of the proposed research was to explore the significance of the quasi-economic measure of psychological value embodied in the contingent valuation method. Willingness to pay for recreational activities was assessed and this measure was correlated with the variables of the TPB.

METHODS

A pilot study, involving 60 students, was conducted to select outdoor recreational activities appropriate for a student population, to identify perceived costs and benefits of these activities, and to elicit sets of salient behavioural, normative, and control beliefs. To select recreational activities, participants in the pilot study were asked to indicate how frequently they perform each of a number of different activities, including fishing, boating, camping, skiing, hiking, and so on. Five activities with base rates ranging from about twice a year (mountain climbing) to about 10 times a year (spending time at the beach) were thus selected.

Pilot subjects were also asked a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit several different types of beliefs with respect to each recreational activity:

1. beliefs concerning costs and benefits of the activity;
2. beliefs concerning the activity's pleasant or unpleasant features;
3. beliefs concerning expectations of other people with respect to engaging in the activity (normative beliefs); and
4. beliefs about available or unavailable resources needed to perform the activity (control beliefs).

Finally, pilot subjects also indicated how much money they would be willing to pay as a "user fee" to engage in each of the recreational activities. To lessen the burden on respondents, the elicitation questionnaire was divided into 2 parts and each part was administered at random to a different subsample. The data obtained were used to construct standard questionnaires that was administered in the main study.

Main study

In the main study, 140 students completed a comprehensive questionnaire designed to assess all variables of interest in the present research.

Data analyses

Being correlational in nature, the data were analyzed by means of regression-based techniques. Two types of correlations were computed: between-subjects (one correlation matrix for each recreational activity) and within-subjects (across activities, one per subject). The within-subjects correlations were averaged for the sample.

RESULTS

1. Intentions and reported leisure behaviours were predicted with considerable accuracy from the independent variables of the TPB. With respect to the prediction of behaviour, multiple between-subjects correlations ranged from 0.62 for biking to 0.78 for outdoor jogging or running; the average multiple within-subjects correlation was 0.86.

Moreover, in each case perceived behavioural control significantly improved prediction of behaviour beyond the level obtained on the basis of intentions alone. For the prediction of intentions, multiple between-subjects correlations ranged from 0.50 for spending time at the beach to 0.81 for outdoor jogging or running, and the mean multiple within-subjects correlation was 0.85. Again, inclusion of perceived behavioural control significantly improved prediction beyond the level obtained on the basis of attitudes and subjective norms.

2. The distinction between instrumental and affective responses proved useful especially in the within-subjects analyses. As expected, instrumental beliefs correlated well with the evaluative (mean $r = 0.50$) but not with the affective semantic differential (mean $r = 0.03$). Conversely, affective beliefs about recreational activities had a high correlation (mean $r = 0.56$) with the affective but not with the evaluative semantic differential (mean $r = 0.18$). The evaluative and affective measures both made significant contributions to the prediction of intentions.
3. Contrary to predictions, willingness to pay (contingent valuation) was found to be largely unrelated to attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, intentions, and reported behaviour. The only exception occurred in the within-subjects analyses where willingness to pay was found to correlate significantly with affect (mean $r = 0.65$) but, interestingly, not with evaluation (mean $r = -0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The results of the study provide support for the utility of the theory of planned behaviour in the context of leisure activities, and for its superiority over the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) which lacks the perceived behavioural control construct. The study also suggests that, at least for leisure activities, it is important to distinguish between evaluative (instrumental) and affective attitudinal responses. Not only could these two types of responses be clearly distinguished, it was found that only affect predicted willingness to pay.

The reasons for the finding that willingness to pay for a given recreational activity increases with the experience of positive affect, but is unrelated to an instrumental evaluation of that activity, remain to be investigated.

REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. 1988. Attitudes, Personality, and Behavior. Milton-Keynes, England: Open University Press.
- Ajzen, I. and Fishbein, M. 1980. Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior. Englewood-Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Ajzen, I. and Madden, T. J. 1986. "Prediction of goal-directed behavior: attitudes, intentions, and perceived behavioral control". Journal of Experimental Social Psychology. 22: 453-474.

Ajzen, I. and Peterson, G. L. 1988. "Contingent value measurement: the price of everything and the value of nothing?" In Peterson, G. L.; Driver, B. L.; and Gregory, R. (eds.). Amenity Resource Valuation:

Integrating Economics with Other Disciplines. State College, Pennsylvania: Venture, pp. 65-76.

PROCEEDINGS
Sixth Canadian Congress on Leisure Research
May 9-12, 1990

COMPTE RENDU DU
Sixième Congrès Canadien de Recherches en Loisir
Le 9-12 mai, 1990

University of Waterloo

***Leisure Challenges:
Bringing People, Resources and
Policy into Play***

***Les défis des loisirs:
agencer les personnes,
les ressources, et les décisions***

Editor/Le rédacteur: Bryan J. A. Smale

©Ontario Research Council on Leisure 1990
©Conseil Ontarien de Recherche en Loisir 1990

Copyright © 1990 Ontario Research Council on Leisure/Conseil Ontarien de
Recherche en Loisir

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used
in any form without written permission of the editor or ORCOL.

Printed and bound at Graphic Services
University of Waterloo



Appropriate Use of Documents: Documents may be downloaded or printed (single copy only). Please note that this document is copyrighted and CREDIT MUST BE PROVIDED to the originator of the document when you quote from it. You must not sell the document or make a profit from reproducing it. You must not copy, extract, summarize or distribute downloaded documents outside of your own organization in a manner which competes with or substitutes for the distribution of the database by the Lifestyle Information Network (LIN). <http://www.lin.ca>