

Using Public Transport Can Make Up for Flying Abroad on Holiday: Compensatory Green Beliefs and Environmentally Significant Behavior

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Abstract

Compensatory Green Beliefs (CGBs) refer to beliefs that the negative effects of energy-inefficient or unsustainable behaviors (e.g., flying abroad on holiday) can be compensated for by engaging in energy-efficient or sustainable practices (e.g., using public transport). The present research developed and validated a scale to measure endorsement of CGBs. This scale formed part of an online survey, which investigated the relationship between endorsement of CGBs and how people think and behave in relation to energy and environmental issues. Factor analysis confirmed the reliability of a 16-item, single-factor scale measuring CGBs. Endorsement of CGBs was found to correlate negatively with measures of proecological behavior, environmental values, “green” identity, concern with climate change, age, and education level. These findings offer an insight into the possible cognitive antecedents of “rebound effects” that are known to limit the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce energy consumption and promote sustainable behavior.

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