

The ecological footprint of „green” and „brown” consumers – The Behaviour-Impact Gap Problem

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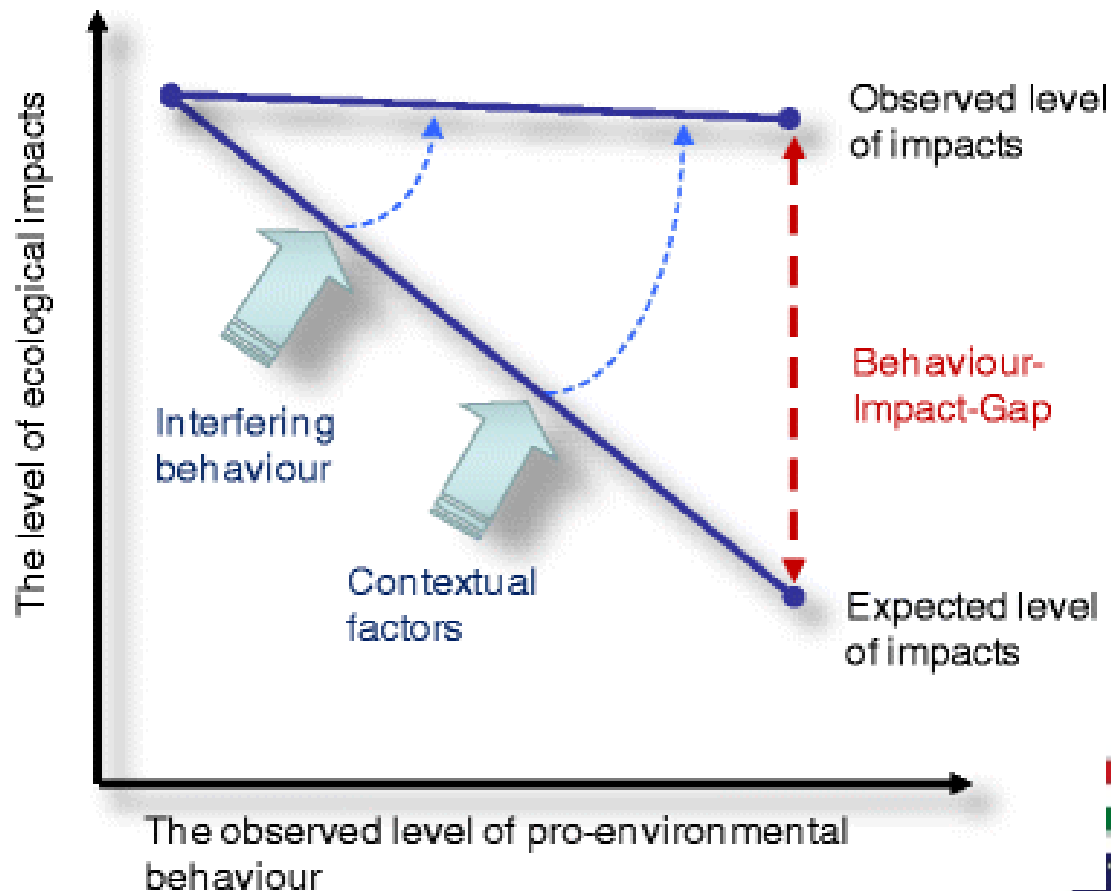
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- A number of studies suggest that there exists a gap between environmental awareness components (Zsóka, 2009) Consumers with high level of environmental awareness may not act sustainably. (Sanne, 2003), (Gatersleben et al. 2002; Thøgersen and Grønhøj 2010), Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), Thøgersen, JPC 2005)
- According to Sanne (2002) consumers are locked into unsustainable lifestyles (e.g. by social norms), even though they are not willing and happy to act unsustainably.
- **BUT:** we generally suppose that pro-environmental behaviour, once followed, **DOES** lead to reduced ecological impact

- the amount of post-consumer recycled waste gained from recycling companies may fall far below what it should be, considering the recycling rate reported by consumer surveys
- the amount of waste European families produce is increasing despite their efforts to reduce it
- **THUS**
- Even when the required behaviour changes do happen, the results may lag far behind what was originally expected

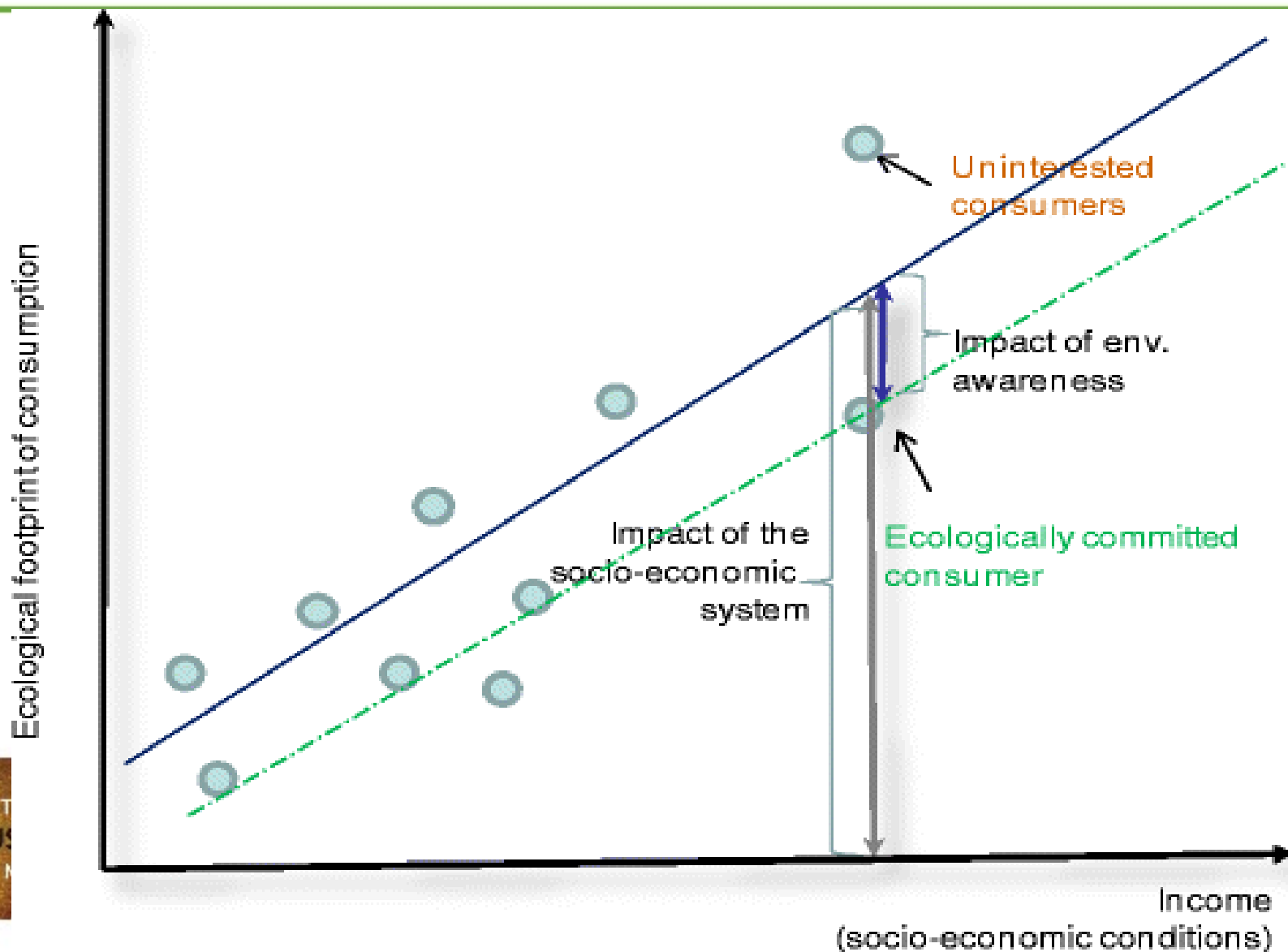
Behaviour-Impact Gap (BIG) problem

whenever the required behavioural change is achieved, but the observed ecological effect is minor or missing



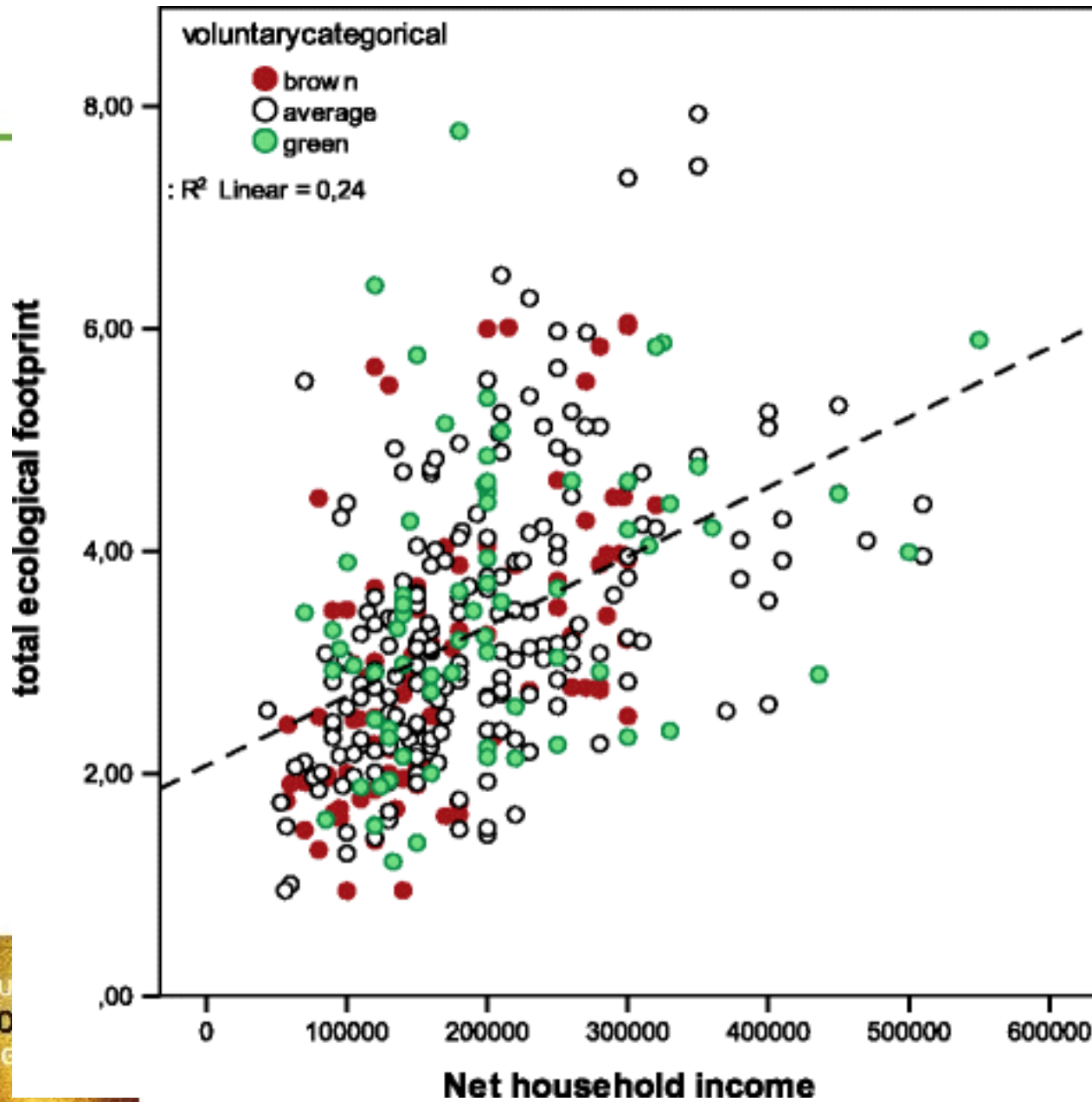
- Misleading market segmentation
- Choose easy-to-do but marginal actions in the target field
- Interfering behaviour (Over-enthusiasm in separating waste, accompanied by rare enthusiasm in buying articles made from recycled material)
- Rebound effect

Pro-environmental behaviour and its ecological impacts



- 1012 respondents, representative survey of Hungarian grown-up population
- Carried out in 2010 by CUB and TARKI, a professional opinion poll institution. . The survey was financed through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism
- Pro-environmental behaviour:
 - Chosen an environmentally friendly way of travelling
 - Reduced consumption of disposable items
 - Separated most of their waste for recycling
 - Cut down on water consumption
 - Cut down on energy consumption
 - Bought environmentally friendly products marked with an environmental label
 - Chosen locally produced products or groceries
 - Used their car less

- The ecological footprint was thus calculated twice, using a bottom-up and a top-down approach.
- Bottom-up approach was based on detailed data on diet and mobility customs.
- Top-down approach was based on spending data combined by national average EF/spending data.
- Finally a hybrid approach was used.



Survey results

Partial achievements found



- Vegetarian diet: people featured a lower ecological footprint than meat eaters.
- Mobility: For transport I found that the footprint of green consumers is slightly under that of the average ones. The transport footprint of “browns” are even more favourable, however.
- Electricity: Environmental awareness proved to negatively impact electricity bills, once it was controlled for variance in income.

The Motivation-Ability-Opportunity-Behaviour model

The original model

Model extension

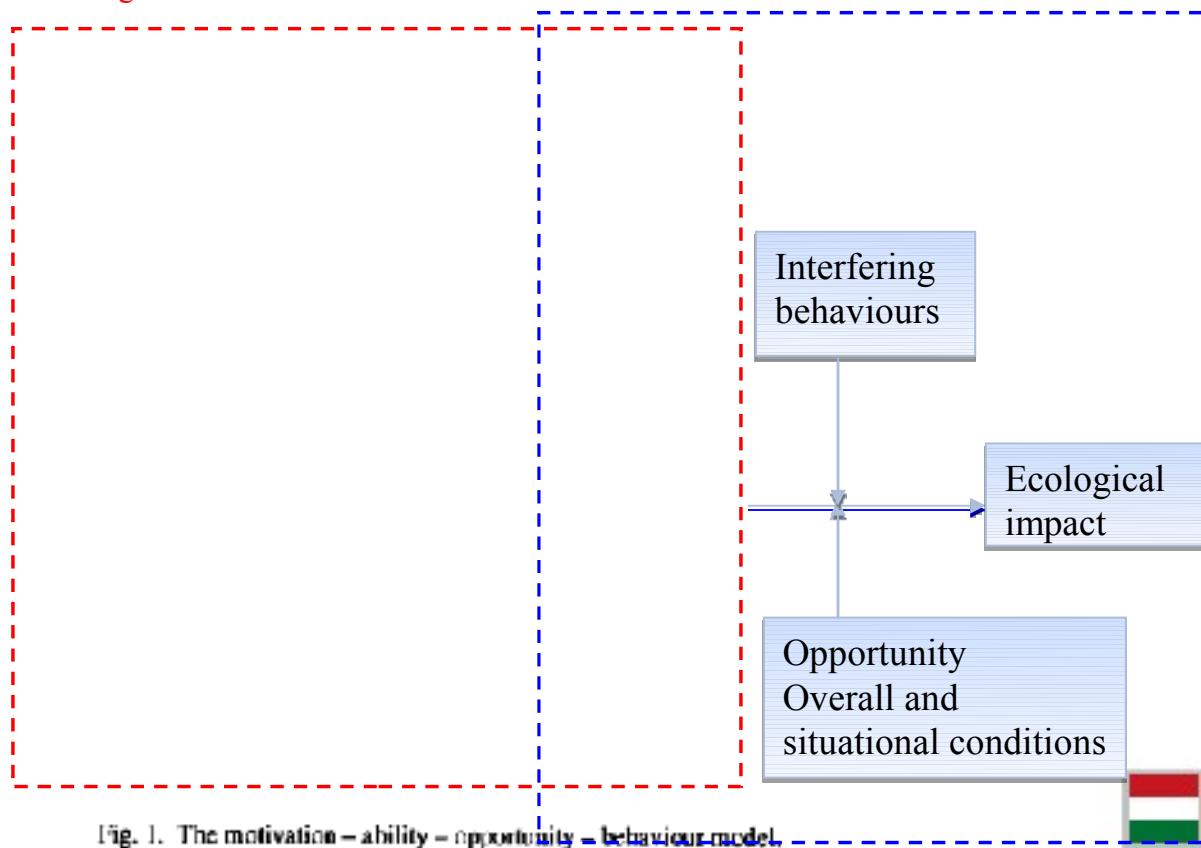


Fig. 1. The motivation – ability – opportunity – behaviour model.

Pro-environmental behaviour may not save the world, but makes you happier....

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Mindent egybevéve, mennyire érzi boldognak magát?

voluntarycategorical	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
brown	5,90	1,878	118
average	6,59	1,877	248
green	7,14	2,050	78
Total	6,50	1,949	444

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: householdlg

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	16,079 ^a	3	5,360	903,518	,000	,860
Intercept	2180,209	1	2180,209	367533,203	,000	,999
htnetto	15,604	1	15,604	2630,470	,000	,857
voluntarycategorical	,028	2	,014	2,394	,092	,011
Error	2,610	440	,006			
Total	12201,123	444				
Corrected Total	18,689	443				

a. R Squared = ,860 (Adjusted R Squared = ,859)

Maria Csutora:
**One More Awareness Gap? The Behaviour–Impact Gap
Problem**

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