

Protecting the environment for a meaningful life: The role of eudaimonia in angler values and pro-environmental behavior

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Abstract

Understanding the transactions that occur between humans and their environments requires research focused on phenomena that explain behavioral patterns, particularly values that serve as guiding principles in life. Mounting evidence has suggested that pro-environmental behavior is motivated by the long-term goal of living a meaningful life, as reflected by Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia. However, the relationship between eudaimonia and other values remains unclear despite the similar role that these constructs play in representing the fundamental reasons why people make behavioral decisions. We conceptualized eudaimonia with guidance from Self-Determination Theory and examined its role in explaining a suite of values and pro-environmental behavior reported by residents across five US states (Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Indiana) in the Great Lakes region ($n = 1,103$). Results from a latent variable path model showed that eudaimonic values were strong predictors of biospheric, altruistic, egoistic, and hedonic values, which in turn influenced self-reported behavior among recreational anglers who were at risk of spreading aquatic invasive species. These findings suggest that eudaimonia is an antecedent to values that can improve the predictive capacity of behavioral models and inform management strategies for shaping behaviors that contribute to biological invasions.

Keywords: Values, eudaimonia, pro-environmental behavior, recreation, fisheries management