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Uncovering the evidence base of the awareness-behaviour-water quality pathway

an interdisciplinary review of diffuse agricultural water pollution

Murat Okumah*, Pippa Chapman, Julia Martin-Ortega and Paula Novo

*ee15sa@leeds.ac.uk



BACKGROUND

Recent policies introduced to improve water quality have focussed on raising land managers' awareness regarding diffuse pollution.

This is expected to increase uptake of measures designed to help reduce diffuse pollution, and improve water quality.

This research answers the following:

1. what is the evidence base of the awareness-behaviour-water quality pathway?
2. Which factors (potentially) affect this pathway?
3. Which aspects of the pathway and which variables have received little or no attention?

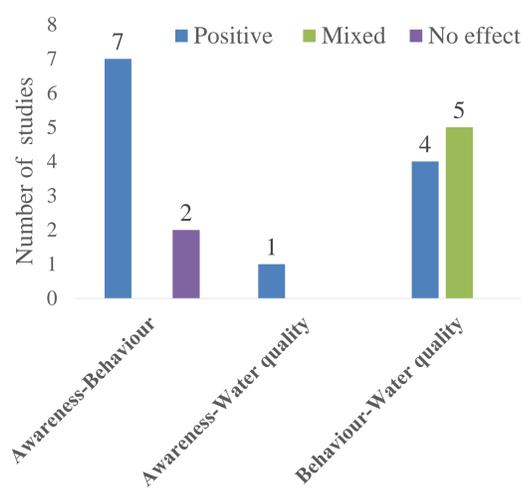
METHODOLOGY

Systematic review:

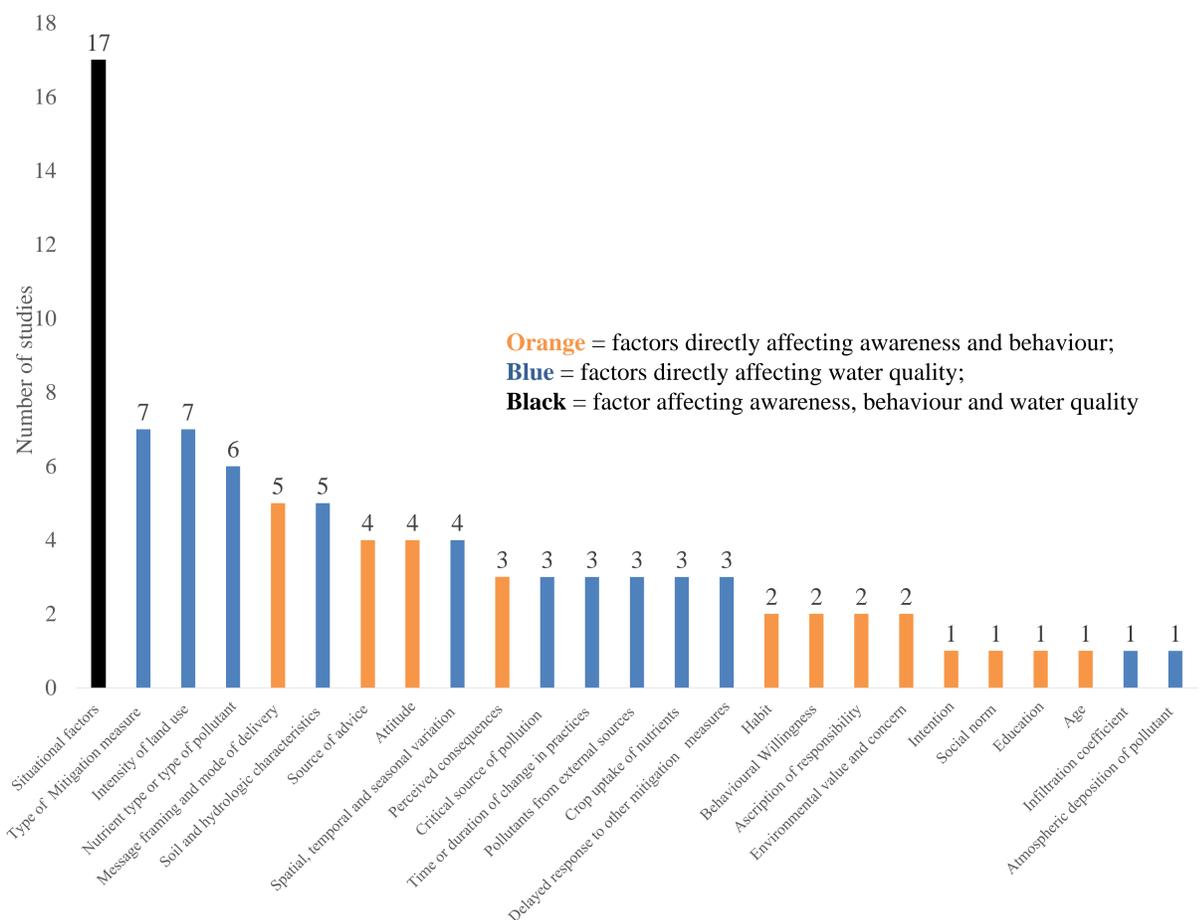
- Peer-reviewed publications
- Europe and North America
- Empirical evidence

609 papers found; 19 papers analysed

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



- No primary study investigates the whole awareness-behaviour-water quality pathway.
- Mixed evidence for the different components of the pathway.
- Situational factors were the commonly reported moderators.
- Studies overlook the joint effect of psychosocial and biophysical factors
- Mechanisms and the conditions under which this happens remain understudied.



CONCLUSIONS

- An in-depth understanding of the pathway is needed for the design and implementation of context-specific and effective policies.
- Need to develop an integrative model in which water quality is dependent on awareness, with behavioural change as a key mediator.
- All other factors identified to (potentially) influence the pathway act as 'other' mediators and/or moderators of these relationships..

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