
Adaptive Health Behavior Inventory (AHBI): Diagnostic Role of AHBI-20 in Identifying Adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive Stages

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Pre-Adaptive Stage



Post-Adaptive Stage

Overview

- This article discusses the diagnostic role of Statement 20 in the Adaptive Health Behavior Inventory (AHBI) in identifying and understanding adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stages.
- Because of their lack of control in making health decisions, Pre-Post Adaptive adults are less relevant to health marketers.
- Sometimes due to data collection methods, or the demographic characteristics of a research study sample, adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stages may be over-represented.
- Three strategies are offered for addressing an over-representation of Pre-Post Adaptive adults in marketing research samples.

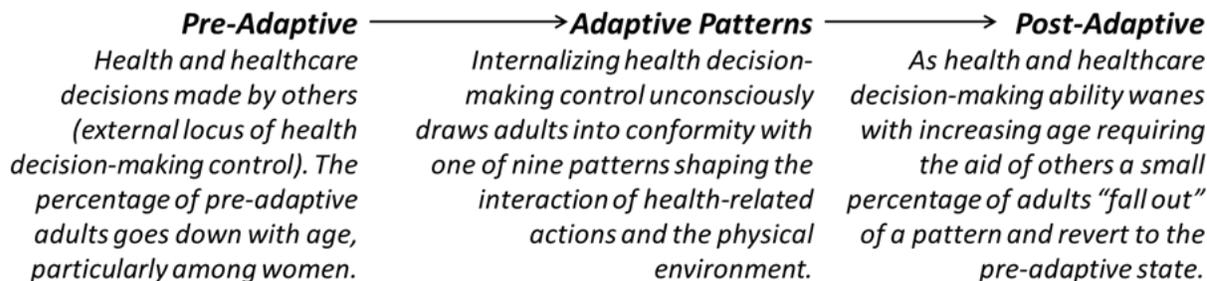
The Three Stages of Adapting to Health

Examination of tens of thousands of adult responses to the Adaptive Health Behavior Inventory (AHBI) and their relationship to having a dominant pattern of adapting to health (PATH) indicates the existence of *three stages of adapting to health* as shown in Figure 1. The stages are the Pre-Adaptive stage, Adaptive Patterns stage, and the Post-Adaptive stage.

Pre-Adaptive Stage. The Pre-Adaptive Stage is occupied by younger adults, predominately male,

with a stronger *external* versus internal locus of health decision-making control (LoHDMC) (Navarro, 2020). Individuals in this stage perceive themselves to have less than full control in making health-related decisions for themselves, sometimes due to the influence of parents. This lack of perceived control is associated with a lack of motivational energy directed at paying attention to and optimally adapting to health-related situations. These adults

Figure 1: Developmental Stages of Adapting to Health



are more likely to choose health options on the basis of convenience or low cost.

Most adults with a strong external locus of health decision-making control do not conform to a dominant pattern of

adapting to health (PATH).

Adaptive Patterns Stage. The Adaptive Patterns stage is occupied by normal functioning adults who assume a somewhat or strong internal locus of health decision-making control. These adults are the ones whose adaptive health behavior conforms to one of the PATH at the highest rate. They are gener-

ally between the ages of 27 to 65 years old (Navarro, 2020).

A firm internal locus of health decision-making control requires adults to consider and balance “on-the-fly” health-related decisions against their own preferences, dislikes, and physical capabilities. This requires much more active attention to the characteristics of health-related situations. There is also greater nonconscious priming of health behavioral habits.

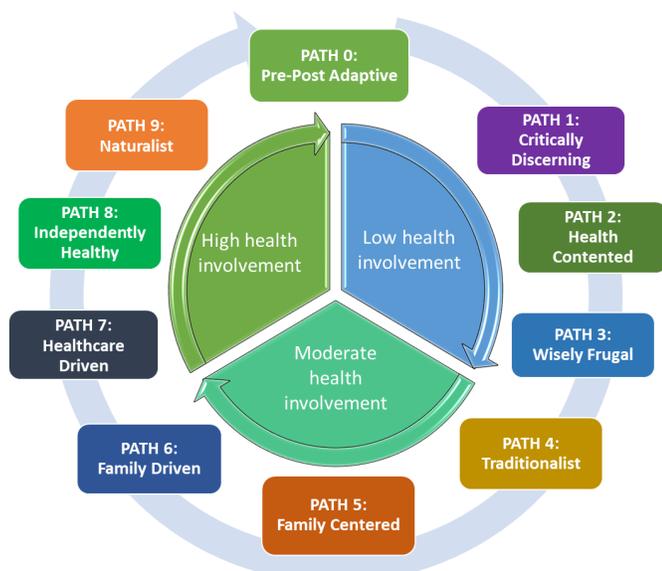
It is theorized that the interaction of these multiple priorities within the individual drives health behavior to express itself in one of the nine patterns of adapting to health. Some adults with a somewhat or strong internal locus of health decision-making control may still occupy the Pre-Post Adaptive stages, but there are few of them.

Post-Adaptive Stage. The Post-Adaptive stage is similar to the Pre-Adaptive Stage except that this stage applies to adults, again more frequently males, in the post-retirement years (Navarro, 2020).

The Post-Adaptive stage is occupied by individuals who once may have possessed a strong internal locus of health decision-making control but now do not or are experiencing its decay due to increasing frailty or cognitive decline. These adults have less pressure on them to balance health-related decisions against their preferences, dislikes, and physical capabilities.



Patterns of Adapting to Health (PATH)



As a result, these adults “fall out” of one of the nine PATH. Many adults in post-retirement age may still occupy one of the PATH if they express a sufficiently strong internal locus of health decision-making control.

In summary, adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stage are generally not in control of health decision-making, are less capable of weighing different health-related options and characteristics, and rely on others for those decisions.

AHBI Statement 20 - Locus of Health Decision-Making Control

AHBI Statement 20, “I make my own health care decisions” is the AHBI measure of *locus of health decision-making control*. “Agreement” with Statement 20 indicates control lies with the individual (i.e., internal locus) while “disagreement” indicates control lies with external others (i.e., external locus).

The table on Page 4 shows data from two different samples at two different times, Sample 1 from the year 2001 and Sample 2 from the years 2018-2019. The mix of females and males were the same in both samples, but the average age of adults in Sample 1 was 44 years old and in Sample 2 51 years old.

Both samples illustrate how the percentage of adults identified with a dominant PATH or in the Pre-Post Adaptive stages are heavily influenced by the level of agreement or disagreement with Statement 20. In Sample 1, the rate of adults occupying

the Pre-Post Adaptive stages increased from 13% to 76% as responses to AHBI Statement 20 moved from “strongly agree” (i.e., strong internal locus of health decision-making control) to “neutral” and “somewhat disagree” (i.e., somewhat strong external locus of health decision-making control). In Sample 2, the rate of adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stages increases from 7% for the “strongly agree” response (i.e., strong internal locus of health decision-making control) and 61% for the “somewhat disagree” response (i.e., somewhat external locus of health decision-making control). Adults with a dominant external locus of health decision-making control are more often found in the Pre-Post Adaptive stage while adults with a dominant internal locus more often occupy the Adaptive Patterns stage and conform to one of the PATH.

In summary, AHBI Statement 20 is a powerful diagnostic question. The locus of health decision-making control (LoHDMC) it assesses plays a major role in identifying an adult’s health adaptive stage.

Pre-Post Adaptive Stage Adults and Their Relevance to Health Marketers

Now, a few words about the relevance of adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stage to health marketers. If adults truly do not perceive themselves to be in control of their health decisions, they are less likely to proactively adapt to health situations or seek information motivated by their own preferences and needs. This makes them less persuadable by and responsive to health marketing appeals.

As a target, these adults are less relevant to health marketers working to differentiate their prod-

The locus of health decision-making control (LoHDMC) plays a major role in identifying an adult’s health adaptive stage

Adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stages are less relevant to health marketers



*Dominant PATH by Locus of Health Decision-Making Control (LoHDMC)**Sample 1*

The PATH	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Critically Discerning	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%	1.4%	2.3%	1.7%
Health Contented	5.2%	4.0%	6.3%	9.7%	10.4%	9.6%
Wisely Frugal	6.9%	2.7%	5.5%	13.2%	20.8%	16.0%
Traditionalist	3.9%	4.2%	2.3%	2.9%	7.5%	5.2%
Family Centered	12.8%	8.2%	3.7%	5.7%	8.8%	7.2%
Family Driven	0.7%	1.1%	2.3%	3.8%	9.9%	6.6%
Healthcare Driven	6.9%	1.3%	0.7%	4.0%	11.6%	7.5%
Independently Healthy	3.3%	0.6%	1.6%	4.0%	7.8%	5.6%
Naturalist	2.0%	1.3%	1.6%	6.0%	8.0%	6.5%
Pre-Post Adaptive	58.5%	76.1%	75.7%	49.5%	12.9%	34.2%
<i>n</i> =	306	526	1,537	8,090	10,226	20,685

Sample 2

The PATH	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Critically Discerning	0.9%	1.8%	1.0%	1.6%	1.3%	1.4%
Health Contented	3.5%	3.5%	5.4%	8.7%	9.8%	9.0%
Wisely Frugal	8.9%	6.5%	5.7%	14.8%	19.2%	16.7%
Traditionalist	0.9%	0.6%	1.9%	2.2%	3.0%	2.6%
Family Centered	6.2%	10.6%	3.6%	7.5%	10.0%	8.8%
Family Driven	0.9%	2.9%	2.7%	8.3%	11.4%	9.6%
Healthcare Driven	14.2%	6.5%	5.0%	12.3%	20.0%	16.4%
Independently Healthy	1.8%	5.9%	3.3%	7.1%	9.6%	8.2%
Naturalist	1.8%	1.2%	1.9%	6.8%	8.8%	7.5%
Pre-Post Adaptive	61.1%	60.6%	69.6%	30.8%	6.9%	19.8%
<i>n</i> =	113	170	523	2,935	5,415	9,156

ucts and services from competitors. The passive approach to health decisions among adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stages diminishes the odds that such individuals are actually in a position to choose a product or service promoted by health marketers based on some value proposition.

Solutions for High Pre-Post Adaptive Stage Rates in Marketing Research

In a general marketing research sample, the rate of adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stage has historically been between 10% to 12% in samples with a gender split of 60% females and 40% males.

The passive approach to health decisions among adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stages diminishes the odds that such individuals are actually in a position to choose a product or service promoted by health marketers.

However, the Pre-Post Adaptive rate may be larger if the sample has a higher percentage of males and/or is dominated by younger adults. Conversely, the rate may be smaller if the sample has a higher percentage of females and/or is dominated

by older adults. Some data collection methods may also lead to a higher than expected rates of Pre-Post Adaptive adults.

In marketing research samples where a higher than expected rate of adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive stage is found, for example, 17% to 20%, the following options are recommended:

- **Remove or Filter Records.** Remove or filter out the records with either a “1”, “2”, “3” response to AHBI-20. This should bring the sample closer to the expected Pre-Post Adaptive rate of 10 to 12% and increase the representation of adults in the Adaptive Patterns stage who are actually in control of their health decisions.
- **Re-interview Pre-Post Adaptive Adults.** Generally, a high “Pre-Post Adaptive” rate is associated with mail surveys and on-line data collection methods. Studies using these methods that end up with a higher than expected Pre-Post Adaptive rate can be re-interviewed either by telephone phone, interactive voice response (IVR), or in-person interviews.
- **Weight the Sample.** This solution to a high rate of adults in the Pre-Post Adaptive Stage is addressed in the document, *Data Collection Methods and Weighting a High Pre-Post Adaptive Stage Outcome in Health Care Marketing Research*, available at www.pathinstitute.life

References

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