

# The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Promoting Environmental Friendly Behaviour in Organization

<sup>1</sup>Faiq Aziz, <sup>2</sup>Nomahaza Mahadi, <sup>3</sup>Zailin Zainal Ariffin

<sup>1</sup>Industrial Logistic, UniKL MITEC, Johore, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>AHIBS, UTM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Defense Study and Management, UPNM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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## Abstract

Preserving the environment can only be done by changing individuals' behaviour towards environmental friendly in addressing the problem of the environmental degradation leading towards organizational sustainability. Nevertheless, the existing models pertaining to environmental friendly behaviour in the workplace is not sufficiently taken into account in the current studies. Considering this, the present study extends the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) that identifies the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in promoting environmental friendly behaviour in the universities in Malaysia. This model proposes that EI as the mediator between intention and behaviour in TPB construct. This proposed model includes 5 hypotheses and is based on the TPB. A total of 420 questionnaires are distributed among six universities in Malaysia (Klang Valley area) which yielded 344 usable questionnaires to proceed for further analysis. The partial least squares based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data. The results indicate that out of all 5 proposed hypotheses, 4 of them are supported while the remaining 1 are not supported. The study findings suggest that, in order to achieve the organizational sustainability, EI play significant roles in promoting environmental friendly behaviour in the universities. Overall, this study proposes and verifies an extended model of the TPB in promoting environmental friendly behaviour. It reveals positive results in not only having a theoretical significance but also enhancing the understanding of the employees' behaviour in universities.

**Keywords:** Emotion, Behaviour, Environmental Friendly

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## 1. Problem Statement

The solution in fostering employee environmental friendly behaviour remains

obfuscated because in the previous studies, the analysts had been mullered over as it were within the private circle and general society, but once in a while within the working environment

setting in spite of the working environment being one of the potential contributing components in towards natural supportability [1]. This statement is also supported by [2] who mentioned that the current research has identified the lack of systematic efforts in making the researcher to comprehend the output of the research in terms of the factors and conditions affecting the employee environmental friendly behaviour. The lack of organizations related to the research has also been pointed by several scholars especially regarding the workplace of the employee and their behaviour [3] as well as the insufficient study on the factors influencing the daily environmental behaviour [4].

In the meantime, inquires about related to feeling may impact the employees' natural conduct through different forms which are exceptionally much distinctive from other cognitive viewpoints of demeanor, and in this way will lead towards the producing numbers of the modern investigate questions [5]. In conjunction with these progressions within the viable writing, feeling has been considered as a motivational calculate that will impact the natural conduct [6]. In reality, [2] recommended that the thinks about on looking at the emotions, on the other hand, are able to enjoy the openings to expand the inquire about on pro-environmental behavior within the work environment. The employees can be energized, motivated to form a distinction within the quality of the common environment, and persuaded to lock in the pro-environmental practices within the working environment when the workers are affected by the positive feelings [3]. Be that as it may, in most natural conduct thinks about, the part of feelings is to a great extent truant [7].

In addition, one of the most confinements of the issue looking at natural inviting practices

utilizing state of mind speculations is that they generally dismissed the enthusiastic perspectives since they are fundamentally centered on the cognitive perspectives of attitude [5]. As it were a number of pieces of inquire about in this setting have the endeavor to get it how the impacts of feeling can contribute towards natural conduct [8], [9], [3], [10], [11]. Parallel to this, critical intrigued in a developing region of investigate has been created through the development of "emotional intelligence" even in spite of the fact that the investigation interaction between cognition, feeling, and conduct isn't unused [10]. In show disdain toward of the rationale of this contention, there are, to the analyst information, experimental thinks about have been done to look at the part of passionate insights in foreseeing natural conduct is still missing. Therefore, this research incorporates the additional variables in TPB construct to bridge the gap between emotional intelligence and employee environmental friendly behaviour in the context of Malaysia universities.

## 2. Objectives

There are lots of efforts by researchers, government and NGOs around the world that strive to find solution to cater this global crisis, however environmental degradation continues to rise. Since it is indicated that the major cause of environmental today is caused by human practice within organization [5], [3] and research in environmental behaviour in workplace still remain unsolved [2], [12]. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to extend the use of TPB model that focus on fostering employee environmental friendly behaviour as dependent variable by using employee environmental friendly intention as mediator on independent variables (employees' attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN) and perceived behavioural control (PBC)). This

research also examines the mediating effect of Emotional Intelligence (EI) towards relationship between intention and employee environmental friendly behaviour.

### 3. Literature Review

Basically, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is an extension of the well-established Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). Since human behaviour is not accurately predicted through TRA [13], the addition of perceived behaviour control (PBC) assessment should precisely predict the behaviour. This inquires about analyzes the appropriateness of TPB due to the initial show (TRA) was incapable to bargain with practices over which individuals have fragmented volitional control. PBC reflects an individual's recognitions that individual and situational obstacles to the execution of the behavior may exist [13]. TPB explains that people's intention is the main factor that influence behaviours, whereby it assumes that people's intention signifies the willingness degree of a person to perform specific behaviour. TPB is constructed with behavioural intention that antecedent by subjective norm (SN), attitude (ATT) and perceived behavioural control (PBC). Moreover, [14] mentioned, there are three phases of a planned process in the TPB approach to behavioural change: the elicitation of relevant beliefs, the change of intentions by the change of the individual's prominent beliefs and their respective social-cognitive determinants, and finally, the change of intentions and strengthening of skills or reduction of environmental constraints that will alter behaviour [13]. Previous research, [15] mentioned that TPB is beneficial in foreseeing extensive range of behaviour. In addition, the investigation and prediction on various types of workplace behaviours has been using TPB extensively especially among researchers who delves into research regarding the study of

management [15].

TPB stipulates that, there are presume beliefs that are accessible during evaluating a behaviour [16], but only a limited amount of beliefs is necessary in deciding whether to perform or do the otherwise behaviour [13]. Firstly, behavioural belief that accepted to impact attitude towards behaviour, which explain that, behavioural belief is the subjective likelihood that the behaviour may contribute towards specified outcomes. Secondly, normative belief that is accepted to impact subjective norm alludes to perceived behavioural expectations of critical importance referent individual or group. It is accepted that normative beliefs, in combination with the individual's inspiration to consent to various referents may decide the predominant subjective norm. Finally, control belief that belief to influence perceived behavioural control that needs to do with presence of factors perceived of elements that may encourage or obstruct execution of behaviour. In addition, this perceived power contributes to the perceived behavioural control in extent to the components present in a given circumstance requiring the performance of behaviour [13]. As such, TPB assumes that an individual would consider beliefs, which are available consciously (salient beliefs) in determining perceived behavioural control in the behaviour performance, their attitude, and personal norm in performing specific behaviour [16].

On a different note, not all of the constructs of TPB has a binding association with intention [17]. Their findings reveal that the top predictor of behavioural intentions to choose an eco-friendly restaurant is the SN and ATT that have a significantly predictable ability [17]. The study also stated that, PBC however, was indeed negatively related to behaviour intention to pick an eco-friendly restaurant in TPB

constructs. In contrary, SN is said to be the less significant independent variables in TPB construct that accountable for the explanation on variation towards intention referring to a meta-analysis by Armitage and Conner in their research done in 2001 [18]. This is supported by [17] that found SN was the less predictor of the behavioural intention in the applications of food choice. [11] mean while stated that the highest predictor among the independent variables of TPB is ATT that may influence the intention to visit an eco-friendly hotel. Based on above discussion, the numerous constraints and limitations between previous studies regarding relationship of behavioural intention and those 3 independent variables (ATT, SN and PBC) in TPB construct leave room for conceptual and operational improvement in TPB [19].

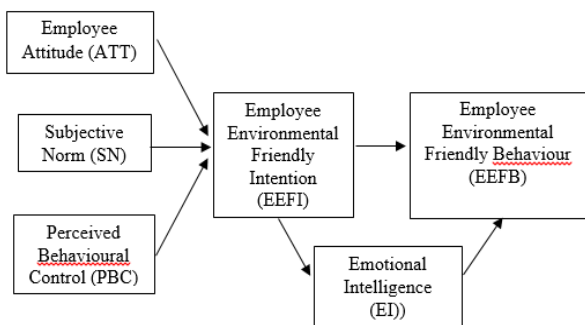
The TPB also has empirical limitations based on empirical studies under the TPB paradigm. The component of behavioural intentions in TPB measures just between a fourth and a third of the variance in actual behaviours [20]. In other words, intention is not contributing towards behaviour. Accordingly, [15] also mentioned that, TPB biggest holdback lies in their sequential nature despite the wider acceptance as compared to other theories and its application of the behavioural model. He also added several unavoidable elements that pertains human mind may also attribute towards TPB limitation because humans tends to switch into a defensive mode when their behaviour is being explained to them. In other words, they are not completely “rational” in a sense that their logical reasoning are not used to its full extent. Parallel to this, [18] suggests that independent contribution to the prediction of intentions may be made in the anticipation of the effect of emotion in the construct of TPB. This explains expected affect to the potentiality of positive or negative emotion after performing

certain behaviours [18]. Despite of the influential role of emotion towards action and behavioural intention in TPB model [19], research on the effect of emotion towards environmental behaviour still lacking.

On the other hand, [15] mentioned that, organization researchers are effectively employing TPB to study ethical behaviour which stipulates that the most important factor in understanding human action in general are attitude and values. Similarly, the level of participation or action increases as the values or the more positive attitude toward the activity increase. In relation to this, social psychologist has revealed that the importance of people’s fundamental values in trying to understand several other infernal factors, such as beliefs, norms, intentions and attitudes, which in turn determines how people will act on environmental issues [17]. Meanwhile, [13] mentioned that religious belief is an essential constituent that modify the relationships between the TPB variables and their ability to predict a social behaviour. Despite of the important role of values that may influence human behaviour [11], the TPB framework has neglected the significant role of value. Therefore, this research examines the role of values in TPB framework.

As the weakness of TPB has been realized, an addition of more possible predictors in TPB construct was explicitly left open [13]. The incorporation of additional variables is allowed, provided that these variables can be a prominent contribution to the explanation of behaviour in TPB model [13]. Hence, this research examines the role of emotional intelligence in the construction of TPB in explaining their relationship with employee’s environmental friendly behaviour.

#### **4. Research Framework**



Following are the hypotheses produced that supports the research framework of this study:

H1: There is a significant relationship between ATT and EEFI

H2: There is a significant relationship between SN and EEFI

H3: There is a significant relationship between PBC and EEFI

H4: There is a significant relationship between EEFI and EEFB

H5: EI positively mediates the relationship between EEFI and EEFB

## 5. Research Methodology

A total of 420 questionnaires are distributed among six universities in Malaysia (Klang Valley area) which yielded 344 usable questionnaires to proceed for further analysis. The partial least squares based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data. In this research, the 7-point scale, ranging from 1 indicating strong disagreement all the way to 7, which indicates strong agreement towards the statements given.

In the context of this research, Employee Environmental Friendly Behaviour (EEFB) is operationally describe as any action taken by the employee to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace [1], [12]. This variable is measured by using several items developed by [12].

Besides that, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is operationally define as employee ability to control over appraisal and expression of emotion of themselves; the ability to appraisal and recognition of emotion in other employee; the ability to regulate personal emotion; and the ability to use the emotion guide their thinking and actions in the context of workplace [13], [14]. In this research, the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as mediator towards relationship between EPEI and EPEB has been examined. This variable is measured by using items adopted from framework of 16-items by [16].

Moreover, employee attitude reflects the feelings of favourableness or unfavourableness to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace [13], [1], [18]. This variable is measured by items developed by [18].

Furthermore, employee subjective norms describe as the perception that significant referents desire an employee to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace [13], [1]. This variable is measured by using items developed by [19].

In addition, perceived behaviour control reflects employee belief as to how easy or difficult to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace [13], [1]. This variable is measured by using items developed by [20].

Finally, employee pro-environmental intention (EEFI) operationally defines as an effort to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace [13], [1]. In this research, the role of EPEI being examine as mediator on independent variables (employees' attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN), perceived

behavioural control (PBC)) towards EPEB. This variable is measured by using items developed by [12].

### 6. Results and Recommendations

| H. | Relation-ship    | P Value | CI (LL) | CI (UL) | Support |
|----|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| H1 | ATT > EEFI       | 0.000   | 0.170   | 0.397   | Yes     |
| H2 | SN > EEFI        | 0.089   | -0.014  | 0.321   | No      |
| H3 | PBC > EEFI       | 0.003   | 0.091   | 0.408   | Yes     |
| H4 | EEFI > EEFB      | 0.010   | 0.038   | 0.292   | Yes     |
| H5 | EEFI > EI > EEFB | 0.000   | 0.122   | 0.305   | Yes     |

Previous research has criticized that not all of antecedent in TPB are always the strong predictor of intention that can lead towards behaviour [14]. This research tends to examine the applicability of TPB construct in the context of this study. Firstly, this study shows that H1 is supported, which the relationship between employee attitude and employee environmental friendly intention is significant. Attitude is an individual experience or reaction after a certain evaluation is made towards one's target behaviour as advantageous or disadvantageous cognition [18]. When an employee sees that a certain behavior has ideal comes about, the conduct gets to be indeed more emphatically and pleasant and brings a willing intellect to perform that conduct. Attitudes incorporates an unmistakable affiliation with behavioral purposeful, which is expressed clearly in Hypothesis of Arranged Behavior. This consider appeared that representative who have a positive state of mind in respects to moving forward natural quality, decrease the sum of squander in squander administration and develop the concept of natural protection, then,

the deliberate to secure the environment within the work put will be adamant which at that point complies with prior considers [13]. Similarly, [19] found that, employee personal attitude is critical to generating desire levels of environmental sustainability intention. Hence, it is important for any organization to ensure that the attitude of their employees are in line with the company objective in promoting organizational sustainability. This is because, employee that in favour of certain behaviour or action will lead to their effort of performing the action. In the context of this study, an employee who in favour of protecting the environment in their workplace, will certainly making an effort to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace.

On the other hand, this study shows that H2 is not supported, which the relationship between subjective norm and employee pro-environmental intention is not significant. Employee subjective norm is formed from the individual's willingness to abide with their views of the beliefs towards particular action is important to others (superior, subordinates and colleagues) [13]. In simple word, people surrounding of an employee plays an important role in influencing the employee to perform pro-environmental behaviour. According to the result of this study, assumption of social pressure from others towards the employee to behave in a certain manner and their motivation to comply with those people's views to perform certain behaviour or action will not lead to their effort of performing the action. Theoretically, this is inconsistency with the study [12], [13] that found subjective norm positively lead to intention in TPB construct. The researcher postulate that, this situation is due to the declining trend of Environmental Performance Index Ranking of Malaysia from 51 in year

2014 to 75 in year 2018 that shows Malaysia are still lacking of comprehensive methods of presenting the environmental awareness and behaviour performance of Malaysian [19]. Since Malaysian environmental awareness and behaviour did not positively correlated, this also indicates that employee in the universities who are surrounded by others (superior, subordinates and colleagues) that are not acting to protect the environment would influence the employee not to make an effort to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace.

The result of this study shows that H3 is supported, which the relationship between perceived behavioural control and employee environmental friendly intention is significant. Perceived behavioural control is the belief one possess in performing a certain behaviour. In other words, to feel the hardship in acting out certain behaviour [15]. Even though, study by [17] mentioned that, perceived behavioral control is a non-significant autonomous variable in anticipating the impact of TPB, but, this result is consistence with past ponder [19] and suggest that the increased levels of perceived behavioral control lead to increased personal environmental intentions. This indicates that, employee belief in personal control to perform specific behaviour or action, will influence their effort to proceed with that action.

Furthermore, perceived behavioural control can be classified in two distinctive viewpoints: the degree one can control in a certain way when performing a certain behavior whereas the other concerns the sum of certainty one can have in it. This ponder uncovered that, as worker increment their assets and certainty, for occasion, having adequate salary to purchase environmental products, being able to reduce paper usage, electricity and reduce plastic usage, they increase their commitment to

natural assurance, which increments their purposeful to ensure the environment. This has emphasized that the conviction in seen behavioral control is the accessible assets and the number of chances one can have in performing pro-environmental behaviour. In context of this study, employee who belief that it is important to protect the environment must therefore believe in their personal capabilities and feel encouraged to validate environmentally oriented behaviour will make an effort to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace.

In expansion, the objective of this consider is basically to address the various limitations and restrictions that take off room for conceptual and operational change in TPB [19]. Existing studies [20] revealed that, strong intention is not sufficiently lead towards a given behaviour and suggesting to add more construct in order to increase the predictability between intention and behavior in TPB construct [13]. Parallel to this, the results show that H5 is supported, which the mediating effect of emotional intelligence towards relationship between EEFI and EEFB. This result is in line with previous study [17] that suggest, decision-making models such as the TPB should subsume emotions and take greater consideration of the factors that facilitate the intentions.

Even though the direct relationship between EEFI and EEFB is supported (H4), which the t-statistics value of 2.595, however the t-statistics value for EI as mediator between EEFI and EEFB is 4.578. This higher t-statistics value indicates that the role of emotional intelligence as a mediator variable in this study can improve the predictive validity of the traditional TPB model. Therefore, it is important to ensure that organization to increase the level of emotional

intelligence of their employee in order to fostering employee pro-environmental behaviour. This is because, employee that have high EI would use their ability to control their emotion towards having a positive feeling towards saving the environment. This positive feeling will strengthen their effort towards making any action by the employee to conserving, working sustainably and avoiding harm in preserving the environment at workplace. This indicates that, the level of emotional intelligence triggering the formulation of intention may promote initiating (and maintaining) exercise behaviour because of their tendency to either decide whether it is a positive or a negative action (Approach tendency and avoidance tendency).

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#### Authors Profile



**Faiq Aziz** received his PhD in 2018 from AHIBS, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. During his PhD journey, he was appointed as Research Assistant for two research projects in University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and manage to produce 12 publications. Previously in 2011, he work in banking industry where he served as Treasury Dealer in one of the leading investment bank in Malaysia. Currently he is working at Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) where he serve as Senior Lecturer and Subject Matter Expert (SME) for Management Cluster. He has been involved in many collaborative research projects financed by various instances including Malaysia

Ministry of Education, Johore State Health Department and Malaysian National Cooperative Movement.



**Nomahaza Mahadi** is an Associate Professor in AHIBS, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia where she has been a faculty member since 2011. Previously, Nomahaza Mahadi was in College Science & Technology, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia from year 2000 to 2007. She was also the consultant in Human Resource Unit under the Lion Group Bhd in year 1996. Nomahaza Mahadi completed her PhD at Southampton Business School, University of Southampton, England UK and Master's at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia. Her research interests lie in the area of Emotional Intelligence, Leadership, LMX, Organizational Behaviour and Development, Human Capital and Knowledge Management. She teaches and conducts research in the fields of organizational behavior and development as well as leadership.



**Zailin Zainal Ariffin** is an Associate Professor in at UPNM where she has been a faculty member since 2011. Previously, Zailin Zainal Ariffin was lecturer and academic staff from various education institution includes Faculty of Universiti Putra Malaysia Bintulu Campus, Damansara Utama College (KDUPJ), University Malaya, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak and Open Universiti Malaysia. She completed her PhD at Universiti Malaya in the area of Marketing and her Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Universiti Putra Malaysia. Zailin Zainal Ariffin research interests lie in the area of Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Accountancy, Entrepreneurship, Organizational Behaviour and Business Research Method.