

Employees' organizational citizenship behaviour toward the environment in response to environmental management practices:

A proposed mediation models

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Abstract—Organizational environmental management practices were acknowledged as one of the main properties in safeguarding the organizational citizenship behavior towards the environment (OCBE). Employees' responses to organizational citizenship behavior towards the environment are subject to his or her assessment of organizational environmental management practices. The relationship between organizational environmental management practices to OCBE has been established in previous literature. However, an environmental management practices as an only construct in explaining OCBE is rather basic, accordingly this study would like to present an affective commitment towards environment construct as a mediator to bridge the gap.

Keywords—organizational citizenship behavior towards the environment; environment management practices; affective commitment towards the environment; local government

I. INTRODUCTION

Climate change and global warming are two environmental issues that are being discussed rigorously worldwide especially in the aspects of these two issues posing many dangers to the environmental as well as the human systems [36] and eventually affect human health [32]. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that air pollution is the main cause for approximately 7 million deaths every year [41], worse still, it impacts heavily on low-income countries [25] and developing countries [17].

In a study conducted, it is projected that in Southeast Asia, there will be a 70 cm rise in sea level at the end of the century and approximately 563 million people living at the adjacent coastal areas will be affected from it [19]. Oceans in Southeast Asia are now reported to be experiencing a reduction in fish population which affects the lives of 100 million people whose livelihood depend on the fishing industry [13].

In Malaysia, climate change is one of the major risk factors that affect the continuity of agriculture activities here [37], and have unfavorable effects on the agricultural efficiency and output [1]. Hence, if no counter measures are taken to resolve climate change, eventually it will affect the survival of mankind. [19] desire for “an urgent need to plan national and regional level measures for climate change mitigation”.

Thus, global warming and climate change have become the key public policy matters for most countries worldwide [11]. The Malaysian government has expressed their concern of achieving sustainability via the five-year national development plan [42]. At the local level, the Local Agenda 21 (LA21) has set a guideline for state governments to achieve sustainable development [29]. In this regard, the responsibility and liability of the local authorities, as a medium of direct communication for the government to reach the local communities [12] are essential since they are in a better position to nurture sustainable lifestyles, improved the well-being of the local communities [3] and play an important role in creating and supporting climate policy at the local level [12].

To be seen as capable enough to uphold the LA21, local governments must be certain that the employees under their respective organizations act in accordance to the pro-sustainable development behaviours or pro-environmental behaviours outlined [6]. In this study model, employees' organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment (OCBE) are highlighted. Reference [27] noted that the achievement of the organizations' aspirations for environmental sustainability is cemented by the employees' commitment towards cultivating pro-environmental behaviors. Thus, the advancement of pro-environmental behaviors is a fundamental matter in the progress of sustainable humanities [22].

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Generally, pro-environmental behaviours or PEB is defined as the “behaviour that minimizes the risk of harming the environment and maximizes the application of practices that can benefit the environment” [39]. The PEB is constructed under various terms of definition [16] such as the responsible environmental behaviors, environmentally significant behaviors, conservation behaviors, environmentally sustainable behaviors, environmentally friendly behaviors [30], employees' environmentally responsible organisational citizenship behaviours [38], ecological behaviors, environmental-friendly behaviors [20], voluntary pro-environmental behavior among employees [23] and employees’ organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment [7]. Empirically, [2] found that the relationship between OCBE and the environmental performance among employees is positive.

A. *Employees’ organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment.*

The study conducted on the employees’ green behaviors, their pro-environmental behaviors, and environmental-related behaviors such as employees’ organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment at the workplace have been intellectualized as a discretionary and voluntary behaviour instead of a required one [8, 21]. Voluntary behavior is not listed in the formal job description [21] along with the individual’s initiative which transcend the set organizational expectations whereas the mandatory employees’ behaviors usually seen to contribute in the achievement of the primary business objectives [26]. As [14] stated, environmental programs should be contingent to the employees’ behaviours, thus encouraging them to cultivate vital green behaviors within the organization itself is essential (Paillé & Boiral, 2013). Commonly, OCBE is divided into three dimensions, i.e., eco-helping, eco-civic engagement and eco-initiatives [8].

B. *Environmental management practices on employees’ pro-environmental behaviours*

Reference [31] defined environmental management practices as “formal practices aimed at integrating environmental concerns in organizational management and at providing stakeholders with tangible evidence of the environmental commitment of the organization, including the implementation of an environmental policy, the adoption of ISO-norm 14001, environmental reporting, etc”. Environmental management practices are commonly substantial in the expansion of the organization’s environmental performance [33]. Empirically, the study conducted by [28] found that the relationships between the perceived presence of an organizational sustainability policy and the employees’ proactive green behaviors is positive. Reference [10] argued that the focus placed on environmental policies need to be accounted as under the responsibility of the local authorities in order for them to tackle the problem of climate change. Thus, based on the literature and aforementioned reason, the features of OCBE are summarized in Figure 1.

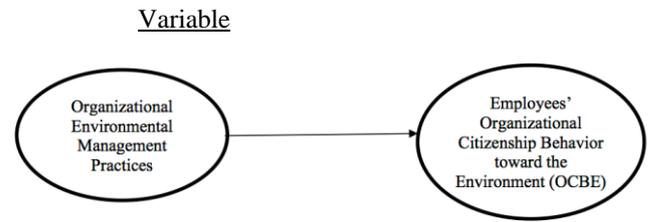


Fig. 1. Framework of OCBE

The successful executions of environmental management practices are generally significant in intensifying the organization’s environmental performance (Perez et al., 2009). The literature focusing on the discipline of environmental management in developed countries mostly showed that the implemented organizational ISO 14001 environmental management system has a significant and positive relationship with the firm’s performance. Nonetheless, these practices alone may not be able to deal with the complications posed by environmental problems, since the employees’ environmental performances are mostly not forced and voluntary in nature [7, 14].

Earlier studies discovered that the relationship between environmental management practices such as the organization’s environmental policies and employees’ pro-environmental behaviors are somewhat inconsistent to one another [35]. Nonetheless, an environmental policy is an essential order for executing the organizational environmental behaviours, although it seems to be inadequate [35]. As a variable to estimate employees’ organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment, the environmental policies are seen to be rather stumpy and simple. The relationship between these two constructs can answer the question of if and whether, but it fails to understand the questions of why and how. Therefore, the study believes that the varying results could be due to the slackness of the psychological mechanisms that influence the relationship between organizational policies and employees’ organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment, thus mediator emotional variable, i.e., affective commitment towards environment construct [34] is proposed in an effort to narrow the gap in the relationship between environmental policies and employees’ organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment.

Reference [18] stated that human life revolves around emotions, thus cognizing and valuing them as essential in knowing and comprehending the nature of human beings. If this arousal is activated, human feelings will be stimulated, followed by the demonstration of behavior. Therefore, the integration of human emotional and rational facets drives the crucial demonstration of pro-environmental behaviors [40]. The mediator functions as a variable that enlightens and clarifies the psychological mechanisms that trigger the relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable [5,24]. Based on the literature and argument, the new features of OCBE are summarized in Figure 2 and thus, proposed.

Independent

Dependent Variable

Independent

Mediator

Dependent

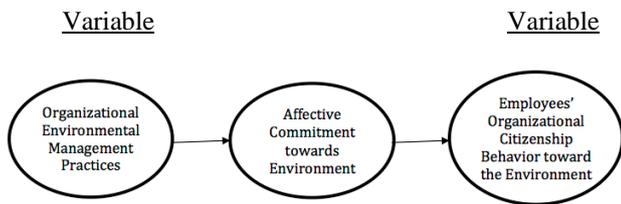


Fig. 2. New Framework of OCBE

III. CONCLUSION

At work organization, employees' emotions and affective states associated with work outcomes such as creativity and helping behaviors [9] and pro-environmental behavior [34]. Human action is based on emotional as well as cognition (rational) component, and emotions are at the core constructs for commitment as well as motivation [4]. Beliefs constructed unified with emotions possibly will go broader and further [15].

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