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Highlighting Influential Factor to Inculcate Green Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

The earth is facing with the environmental degradation such as climate change. To protect the earth, the environmental movements have been started around the world. The environmentalism has gotten a rapid growth in the societies by enrolment in various parts including colleges and universities. Human behaviour is known as the main responsible for the environmental degradation. Therefore, to protect the environment the term “Green Behaviour” has been introduced. This behaviour promotes the one which ables to reduce the damages done by human on the environment. This study reviews the concept of “Green Behaviour” and “Green Consumerism”. Furthermore, the aim is to investigate the influential factors on the behaviour of the respondents to perform green behaviour. Based on the review of other studies, it can be concluded that there are two groups of factors which can affect the intention to perform this behaviour. The first group concerns with the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents such as age and gender. However, by the review of psychology literature, the second group contains the factors of “Environmental Knowledge” and “Environmental Attitude”.

Key words: Attitude, environmental attitude, green behaviour, green consumer

INTRODUCTION

The rise of concerns about the environment in West is traced back to the late of the 1960s and the early of the 1970s (Grunert and Juhl, 1995). The environmentalism movement was activated in different shapes. For instance, the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring which awaked the readers about the damages that has been done by human to environment is one of those (Carter and Simmons, 2010).

The environmentalism has gotten a rapid growth in the societies by enrolment in various parts including colleges and universities (Fuller, 2010). In the corporate world, the agencies such as the United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), are organized to protect the environment from different levels of degradation (UNESCO., 2012; UNEP., 2012a). Evidences have been proven that the earth is suffering from environmental degradation (IPCC., 2007) and human behaviour is the main responsible

for this disaster (UNEP., 2012b). Therefore, there is a need to change the behaviour of public towards environment.

To protect the earth and the environment, the behaviour known as “Green” or “Environmentally friendly” behaviour has been introduced. Green behaviour is generally (or according to the knowledge of environmental science) judged in the context of the considered society as a protective way of environmental behaviour or a tribute to the healthy environment (Krajhanzl, 2010). Partly this behaviour can be performed by the behaviours such as recycling or saving energy, partly it can be performed by purchasing behaviour (Majlath, 2010).

Over the years consumers have realized the effects of their behaviour on the environment which effects directly and indirectly on the environment (Mostafa, 2007). To protect the environment, governments around the world try to promote green behaviour by applying different methods. For instance, around the worldwide market, the products known as the green products are available for the desirable consumers (FiBL and

IFOAM, 2009). Moreover, to promote the green behaviour, governments try to encourage the public to perform green behaviour by the acts such as reducing the plastic bags and by cutting of plastic bag usage (CBC News, 2007).

While people are knowledgeable about these concepts (Hosseinpour *et al.*, 2013), they are not successful in practice (Rahim *et al.*, 2012) and some of the programmes to promote green behaviour could not meet the main goals (Zen *et al.*, 2013). In fact, there is a gap between the efforts that have been done to promote green behaviour and the real practice of respondents. Therefore, this study as a structure one aims to find out the influential factors on green behaviour performance. These factors can be helpful in the investigation of filling the gap.

GREEN CONSUMERS

Awareness of the destruction of natural resources has raised the issues of environmental protection that developed term green consumerism (Moisander, 2007). This term is a multifaceted concept that contains environment conservation, minimising pollution and being responsible for the non-renewable resource and animal welfare (McEachern and McClean, 2002). Mandese (1991) believed that these groups of consumers carry strong environmentally friendly attitude and always look forward the opportunities to behave in a green way. Since these consumers are more concern about the environment and have more responsible towards it (Stone *et al.*, 1995).

In 1970s, the researchers have been started to uncover the perception of consumers about environment in terms of environmental concerns and ecological concerns (Anderson and Cunningham, 1972; Kinnear *et al.*, 1974). However, by the 1980s profiling the concerned consumers has been started. As one of the studies, Manzo and Weinstein (1987) can be mentioned to differentiate between consumers who were active and non-active. In 1990s, the studies to measure the willingness of consumers to behave in environmentally friendly way was performed by Myburgh-Louw and O'Shaughnessy (1994). Therefore, scholars such as (Stern, 2000; Robinson and Smith, 2002; Roitner-Schobesberger *et al.*, 2008; Han *et al.*, 2009) concluded that there are influential factors to affect consumers to perform green behaviour.

FACTORS INFLUENCING PERFORMANCE OF GREEN BEHAVIOUR

Age: Age is a simple, but important variable as allows for an understanding of how wants and needs change as an individual matures (Royne *et al.*, 2011). Considering the early studies on the environmental issues (Samdahl and Robertson, 1989), age has been examined by the researchers such as (Satia *et al.*, 2005). In general the assumption is that young respondents show more sensitivity towards environment (Straughan and Roberts, 2008). While, Franzen and Meyer (2010) believed

that the likelihood of engagement in environmentally friendly behaviour is more among the middle aged individuals. However, in the study done by Egea and de Frutos (2013) no significant difference was observed in the link from positive and negative environmental attitudes and performing green behaviour.

Furthermore, by analysing the correlation between age and performing green behaviour (McEvoy, 1972; Roper Organization, 1992), have been found the significant relationship but negative correlation with behaviour (Anderson *et al.*, 1974; Dunlap and Van Liere, 1978). However, the significant relationship but positive correlation was observed by Roberts (1996). In contrast Diamantopoulos *et al.* (2003) believed that it is not possible to categorise age into specific group in relation to performing green behaviour. Therefore, it can be concluded that age really can play vital role on the behaviour of respondent in terms of green behaviour.

Gender: Performing behaviour is not the same for two genders as men and women do not have the same attitude (Konrad *et al.*, 2000). The effects of gender on performing green behaviour is examined by many researchers (Tognacci *et al.*, 1972; Ajzen, 1985; Lea and Worsley, 2005). The idea of developing unique gender has led to this concept that the majority of women are more likely to perform green behaviour. For instance, most of the studies argue that women carry more environmentally friendly attitude (Tsakiridou *et al.*, 2008; Krystallis *et al.*, 2006). Whether it is because women are inherently closer to nature or because they more environmentally friendly (Iyer and Kashyap, 2007). However, this notion could not be proven as a general rule and gender based investigations are not near to convincing. As examples, several researches including (Nasir and Karakaya, 2014; Brooker, 1976) have been found no significant relation in this regard. While other studies including (Mostafa, 2007) have been discovered that men are more aware of environmental concept. Consequently, the effects of gender on environmentally friendly behaviour are in doubt.

ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

Fryxell and Lo (2003) defined environmental knowledge as "a general knowledge of facts, concept and relationships concerning the natural environment and its major ecosystems". Generally, psychology literatures on behavioural study found a positive relationship between knowledge and behaviour (Hoch and Deighton, 1989). However, this association cannot be generated as a general rule (Chan, 2001).

As examples (Laroche *et al.*, 2011; Dispoto, 1977) found positive association between environmental knowledge and performing green behaviour. In contrast Hies *et al.* (2000) have been analysed the previous studies and concluded that this factor moderately effective on green behaviour performance. This is while this factor could clearly differentiate between the groups of respondents who engaged

in environmental issues and others (De Young, 1989; Stern, 1992). Mostafa (2007) believed that environmental knowledge is a key relationship leading to be responsible towards environment. Besides, lack of knowledge about green behaviour such as e-waste could prevent the respondents from that behaviour (Nnorom *et al.*, 2009). By reviewing the influence of environmental attitude on behaviour, it can be concluded that this factor plays roles on changing the behaviour.

ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDE

Respondents' environmental attitude and behaviour have been considered as a complex and vital concept which plays role on profiling the green consumers (Kotchen and Reiling, 2000). According to Schultz and Zeleny (2000), "attitude of environmental concerns is rooted in a person's concept of self and the degree to which an individual perceives his or herself to be an integral part of the natural environment". McCarty and Shrum (1994) believed that consumers' attitude towards the environment can be categorised by the following aspects of "perceived severity of environmental problems, inconvenience of being environmentally friendly and importance of being environmentally friendly". The link between attitude and behaviour is perfectly analysed by the researches such as (Ajzen, 1985, 2002). Most of the scholars have shown the positive association between attitude towards environment and performing green behaviour (Laroche *et al.*, 2011; Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007). The consumers who positively carried attitude towards environment are willing to perform green behaviour (Donaton and Fitzgerald, 1992).

BEHAVIOURAL MODELS

There are different models applied to explain the ecological decision making by respondents such as the Theory of Reason Action (Fishbein and Azjen, 1975), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2002) and the Value-Belief-Norm theory (Stern *et al.*, 1999). However, in regards to performing green behaviour the Theory of Planned Behaviour is widely applied (Zakersalehi and Zakersalehi, 2012; Cheung *et al.*, 1999). Based on this theory the attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are three main determinates of behavioural intention. In terms of effects of attitude on green behaviour performance, the theoretical framework done by Han *et al.* (2009) showed the unique contribution of attitude towards green behaviour and performing green behaviour.

Society rules as perceive what is right and what is wrong (Harre and Lamb, 1986) are considered as an effective component on performing a behaviour (Ajzen, 2002). The researchers including (Acuff, 1997; Arvola *et al.*, 2008; Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005) have been examined the effects of subjective norms on the green behaviour. This factor has been proven to be as important predictor of performing green behaviour such as purchasing organic food (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005). The norms such as friends

or family can be influential on green behaviour (Rezai *et al.*, 2013). Even the programmes to promote green behaviour such as campaigning on recycling could play crucial role on campaign respondents as a social pressure (Prestin and Pearce, 2010). Moreover, subjective norm component was known as one of the main factors which could differentiate in green behaviour performance among different cultures (Arvola *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, based on Ajzen (2002), perceived behavioural control can be considered as a link between the intention and behaviour. In general, perceived behavioural control can be divided into two groups, perceived self efficiency (concerns with ease or difficult of the behaviour) and perceived controlability (concerns with the extent to which performance depends on the individual). In the study done by Tarkiainen and Sundqvist (2005) in regards to purchasing organic food no effects of perceived behavioural control was observed on the intention of consumers.

COMPARISON BETWEEN INFLUENTIAL FACTOR ON PERFORMING GREEN BEHAVIOUR

The present study aims to discover the influential factors on performing green behaviour. However, by reviewing other studies, it was observed that the influential factors can be divided into two groups of socio-demographic characteristics and the factors such as environmental attitude and environmental knowledge. In addition, by considering the related models in terms of performing green behaviour, it can be concluded that the factors of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control play role on green behaviour performance.

Based on the reviewing of other studies, there are still gaps to discover the real effects of respondents' age and their green behaviour. Therefore, more investigation on the influences of respondents' age is recommended. By these studies, firstly it could be realized the real influence of age on changing behaviour to green way. If the results showed the differences among age categories, it could be performed that why age categories make difference on green behaviour. Moreover, the studies on different types of green behaviour and whether age could make difference or not based on the type of green behaviour could be applied. For examples, the studies of the difference among the age categories and recycling, purchasing green product and following the programmes to protect the environment could be performed. Furthermore, it can be advisable to discover the reasons that why age could have no influence on green behaviour.

Gender is reviewed as another influential demographic factor. However, it is left behind that this factor is really can play role on changing green behaviour or not. Therefore, more studies on realizing that gender really affects on green behaviour performance is essential.

If the results proved the effects of gender, it might be clear that why female and male are not the same in terms of green behaviour. Moreover, the conceptual frameworks regarding to differentiate between males and females in terms of different

green behaviour categories could be applied. The results of these researches may bring benefits for green products marketers and advertisers. Furthermore, the results for the governmental organization and Non-Governmental Organizations who aim to promote the environmentally protection programmes could be beneficial to target their respondents. Conversely, if the results of studies show no difference, more studies might be employed to realize that why gender has no effect on environmentally friendly way.

Furthermore, reviewing the effective factors, it is clear that the factor of environmental knowledge is a crucial factor on performing green behaviour. Therefore, it is advisable to improve the public's knowledge of why environment is important and what green behaviour is. It is suggested that the organizations like governmental organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations try to apply the programmes to increase the knowledge of societies about the environment and environmental issues. Along with this way, it could be logical that these organizations set up the programmes to change the attitude of public into more environmentally way. These goals might be reached by establishing the workshops, seminars and campaigning to promote green behaviour. Since changing behaviour should be performed by the whole society, it is suggested that the target of these programmes, be the people with different age groups and both females and males.

The intention to perform green behaviour is indeed high when the respondents are more concerned about the environment. This is may be due to the perception of respondents about protecting the environment and considering it as an important issue. Future studies could try to provide the framework to analysis the effective factors on attitude. There is a possibility that the effective factors on environmental attitude to be changeable from one specific type of green behaviour from another type. For instance, the influential factors on attitude regarding to saving energy might be different from the effective ones on purchasing organic foods. Therefore, these results may be applied for the programmes which are organized to increase public participation in green programmes.

Clearly the role of social norm on green behaviour was discussed. The norms could be either the friends or the families or it could be the programmes to promote green behaviour such as recycling campaign. As a result, the governmental organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations might try to organize the national programmes and campaigns as a social pressure and rules to promote green behaviour within societies. By establishing these programmes, public not only might be affected to change personal behaviour but also they may ask others to change their behaviour towards the environment.

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