



# THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF AN INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTAL INTENTION TOWARDS THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIVE BEHAVIOUR THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDE AND EMOTIONAL AFFINITY TOWARD NATURE

Logeswari Uthama Puthran<sup>1</sup>, Mathivannan Jaganathan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Aminuddin Baki Institute, Ministry of Education

<sup>2</sup>Universiti Utara Malaysia

## -----ABSTRACT-----

*This research's primary objective is to investigate the mediating role of environmental intention between individuals' environmental attitudes, their emotional affinity towards nature, and environmentally responsive behaviour. Through a meticulous analysis of the complex dynamics between these variables, the study underscores the ability of individuals to be motivated to embrace more conscientious environmental behaviours by a profound affinity for nature and favourable environmental perspectives. The results of this research are anticipated to emphasise the importance of environmental intention as a critical factor in encouraging sustainable behaviours. It will provide valuable insights into environmental responsive behaviour can be influenced by recollections of previous encounters with nature and individual perspectives. This research contributes to the continuous dialogue surrounding improving ecological consciousness and societal accountability. It posits that strategically targeting interventions capitalising on the interplay between attitude, emotional affinity, and intention can promote positive environmental behaviours.*-----

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The environment is negatively affected by the change of substances in the atmosphere. Pollution and toxins from environmental degradation impact humans, plants and animals, which is also caused by over-reliance on fossil fuels, limited natural resources, the release of toxins and the imbalance of carbon emissions in the Earth's atmosphere. Historically, the 1970s and 1980s were the birth of an environmental revolution (Torelli & Balluchi, 2023). Consequently, environmental awareness about pollution and ozone depletion became widely discussed.

In the meantime, the industrial revolution has increased the demand for natural resources and challenged human life by depleting the environment. Humans start to change the environment to satisfy their needs. They start cutting down trees and hunting animals to fulfil their basic needs and live comfortably. Moreover, human exploitation of the environment for economic gains has caused global environmental problems such as global warming, ozone layer depletion, acid rain, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, water pollution, desertification, water depletion, depletion of non-renewable energy resources, and food and water scarcity. Significantly, these environmental issues became the focus of discussion in the International Coordinating Council of the Programme on Man and the Biosphere, UNESCO, 1971 (Malik et al., 2023). Therefore, it was suggested that environmental studies can create awareness of environmental issues, provide basic environmental knowledge, develop attitudes towards the environment, motivate the public to protect and conserve the environment and acquire the ability to recognise and solve environmental problems.

In this regard, many rows of literature address the impact of global pro-environmental behaviour in the context of economic, social and political perspectives. Many countries have developed policies to regulate and limit industrial pollution, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve natural resources. However, many people are forcing a contrary impact on natural resources. Therefore, environmentally conscious behaviour is becoming a niche area of academic research to avoid environmental disasters. Hence, to provide a conceptual framework, this research investigates various variables (including emotional affinity towards nature and environmental attitude) that could indicate an individual's environmental behaviour. Hence, to provide a conceptual framework, this research investigates various variables (including emotional affinity towards nature and environmental attitude)



that could indicate an individual's environmental behaviour. In addition, environmental intention is examined to discover the mediating effects between the variables.

## LITERATURE

### Environmental Responsive Behaviour

An assemblage of actions that benefit the natural environment, enhance environmental quality, or inflict minimal damage upon the environment was designated as environmentally responsive behaviour (Larson et al., 2015). With this, the term was further broadened to encompass the notion of individual actions, namely those that are environmental behaviour (Zareie & Jafari Navimipour, 2016). The author characterised pro-environmental behaviours as proactive measures individuals undertake to safeguard their immediate environment by promoting nature appreciation and resolving environmental concerns. Pro-environmental behaviours encompass actions that encourage an individual to assist in preserving or mitigating environmental issues. These individuals strive to live a green lifestyle by minimising their ecological imprint and living in an eco-friendly and environmentally conscientious manner. This conduct is consistent with the objective of human environmental behaviour, which is to restrict the preservation of natural resources. However, the literature almost exclusively defines environmental responsive behaviour regarding how people can behave to conserve and protect the environment (Thogersen & Olander, 2006). Therefore, examining all terms to discover the connections between them for environmentally responsible behaviour is important.

Besides, environmental behaviour is another nature-based behaviour related to environmental knowledge and experience (Latif et al., 2023). Education literature found that ecological behaviour is mediated by environmental knowledge and education (Zhu & Liu, 2023). It was supported by elements such as knowledge about flora, fauna, ecosystems and real-life nature experiences that added together environmental education eliciting ecology-preserving behaviour (Otto & Pensini, 2017). However, sustaining ecological behaviour is another challenge attempted by academic experts to discover. Sustainability is an "ecological, social and economic system that can last over the long term" (Cunningham, 2009). Environmental sustainability behaviour also shares the same definition as maintaining an environment and natural resources long-term, mainly preserving for future generations.

However, environmental responsive behaviour is still in the commencement stage in most developing countries (Rahman et al., 2023; Walker, 2023). Environment response behaviours are behaviour changes that benefit the natural environment, behave without harming the environment, and preserve natural resources for future generations. Therefore, based on the notion that environment responsive behaviours need to be explored to mean subjective judgement of how an individual will behave in the future and identify determinants or contributing factors that lead to the behavioural change. As a result, this study proposes that the least explored variable might influence an individual's environment-responsive behaviour. Therefore, this study assumes an individual environmental responsive behaviour will be determined via two independent variables (emotional affinity toward nature, environmental attitude) and mediating variable (intention) through the mediating effect of environmental intention.

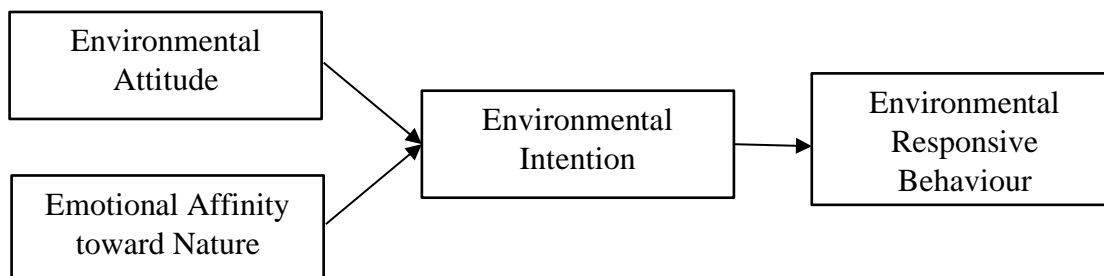


Figure 1. 0

### Proposed Conceptual Framework for Environmental Behaviour

In this study, environmental intention is a motivational predictor, establishing a link between an individual's environmental attitude and emotional connection with nature. This connection activates human nature interdependency, ultimately contributing to forming environmentally responsive behaviour. Therefore, environmental intention mediates the relationship between an individual's environmental attitude, emotional affinity toward nature, and the performance of environmentally responsive behaviour.



### **Underpinning Theory: Attention Restoration Theory**

Kaplan & Kaplan (1989) emphasise the value of nature in restoring mental focus. The rationale behind attention restoration theory is that voluntary, direct attention causes mental weariness, necessitating attentional inhibition or the deliberate decision to divert attention from other ideas or objects.

Besides, restorative environments take various forms because the natural environment is considered an active healing component (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). The author added that humans know their surroundings as vital sources of crucial information about personal and collective well-being. Furthermore, empirical studies underscored the preference of individuals for natural environments over constructed ones as a reliable indicator of safety and efficient operation. Establishing a link with sources of sustenance, water, and shelter is an evolutionary and primordial function that is efficient. Preferred environments are those that facilitate the efficient operation of individuals. "An expression of underlying human requirements," this predilection for circumstances that facilitate efficient operation, is not superfluous (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Consequently, it became apparent that variations in choice are present due to diverse cultural and ethnic characteristics, in addition to acquaintedness with the surroundings.

Briefly, the natural environment plays a vital role by enhancing experience in nature to prevent the recovery of natural resources. The theory is concerned with using natural settings and reinforcing the mental-wellbeing of a person.

### **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

To the researcher's knowledge, several studies consider emotional affinity toward nature as a form of analytical thinking that can view the consequence of attaining and not attaining specific behaviour (Kuo & Fu, 2019; Schaffner et al., 2015; Su et al., 2019). Although most of the studies have described the variable as moral support (Krettenauer, 2017) and moral values (Su et al., 2019), feeling of spiritual connection with nature (Jensen, 2019; Kuo & Fu, 2019; Scopelliti et al., 2018) for adopting and avoiding particular environmental behaviour is the fundamental reason for human nature interdependency. Scopelliti et al., (2018) tried to find the best determinant to predict activist commitment to biodiversity protection, and they found that feeling oneness with nature and spirituality with nature shows their desire to commit to activism. For that, 183 leaders from seven EU countries were screened, and the study's finding shows that strong intrinsic motivation in nature by embedding feelings of love, care, oneness, and spirituality with nature changes their lifestyle to support nature and biodiversity. This finding suggests that emotional affinity toward nature should integrate with TPB predictors in fostering environmental intention. Besides, due to the scarce studies, they need more research to fill the gaps that exist between the predictors (Bakir-Demir et al., 2019; Boiral et al., 2019; Muller et al., 2009; Scopelliti et al., 2018), particularly in developing countries (Khan & Mohsin, 2017; Paswan et al., 2017).

Therefore, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been employed as a fundamental theory to develop the conceptual framework for this study. This theory is well established for explaining human action and behaviour. The theory reflects the most powerful determinant of action and intention. According to the TPB, behavioural, normative, and control beliefs are three primary guided considerations of human behaviour.

### **Environmental Attitude**

Attitude has been studied widely since the 1970s. Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) are the major contributors to research about attitude and behaviour. Attempts to predict behaviour from attitudes are based mainly on a general notion of consistency. It is considered logical or consistent for a person who holds a favourable attitude toward some object to perform desirable behaviours, and not to perform unfavourable ones concerning the object. Ajzen (1991) study has a great focus on attitude within the behaviour literature. The author describes an attitude toward the behaviour as a degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in question. Attitude is a person's exceptional conviction toward behaviour. The concept of attitude entails an individual's conviction that a specific behaviour will lead to a particular outcome, as well as the expectation that the consequence would be generally evaluated in a good or negative manner (Jasrotia et al., 2023; Shaaban & Rabie, 2023). Fundamentally, the more robust an attitude towards behaviour, as the person predicts the benefit associated with behaving accordingly. This associates beliefs about the likely outcome of behaviour strengthened through increased evaluation related to belief.

Similarly, the fundamental goal of environmental attitude is a strong determinant of environmental behaviour. Rashid and Ostermann (2009) define environmental attitude as an acquired inclination to exhibit positive or



negative responses concerning the environment continuously. A variety of human characteristics has a significant relationship with environmental attitude. Conversion of an individual environmental attitude significantly correlates with behaviours towards the environment (Musah, 2023; Valentinov, 2023). Moreover, sustainability attitude is another growing area of research in environmental studies. Recent studies documented contemporary explanations for the term (environmental attitude). Rhead et al. (2015) describe that attitude is subject to change, particularly environmental attitude, because the agreement and information parallel with the environment significantly impact the particular attitude. For instance, Japan as the most developed country in this region. People there showed the highest environmental awareness (99%) compared to less developed countries such as Pakistan (12%) and Indonesia (35%). As a fast-growing economy and the primary carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) emitter, Japan has a high percentage of people aware of global warming and have vast knowledge about climate change (Masud et al., 2015). Thus, better knowledge of environmental issues shapes human-environmental attitudes. Attitude toward climate change is essential to adopt environmental responsive behaviour.

Notably, attitude represents a person's personal feeling toward environmental responsibility. This feeling ranged from highly negative (not supportive) to highly positive (supportive). Environmental attitude predicts complex perceptions formed by values and beliefs. An individual's values and beliefs bring out the verbal commitment, real commitment, motivation and intention to act pro-environmentally by actively participating in environmental protection and improvement (Zareie & Jafari Navimipour, 2016).

On the same note, the fusion of ethical principles and convictions concerning the environment can mould an individual following the promotion of ecological values, thereby producing responsible and environmentally conscious citizens. An approach to human civilisation that is environmentally conscious, such as "Love to nature," serves as a blueprint for achieving sustainable development. This change in perspective contributes to resolving environmental issues and formulating strategies to prevent further depletion of natural resources (Hanifah et al., 2015).

As far as sustainable behaviour is concerned, a growing nation like Malaysia is still in its infancy. The development of an attitude via mass media information access (Sahar et al., 2023). An inquiry was conducted by Huang (2016) into the ways via which information about global warming is transmitted to the general people. The research findings indicate that most respondents (86.9%) obtained information regarding global warming from television, while 50% obtained it from newspapers and 54% obtained it online. Notwithstanding, the Malaysians' environmental mindset shift has remained a matter of contention.

Therefore, in order to save the environment and its resources for future generations, it is imperative to cultivate an environmental attitude.

### **Emotional Affinity toward Nature (EAN)**

The human connection to nature is recognised through human affinity to the natural environment and resources. They have an affinity for natural features, entities and places (Kyung, Bonn, & Cho, 2015; Yusof, 2012; Zhang, Geng, & Sun, 2017). Indeed, people's emotional attraction toward the natural environment is defined as an emotional affinity toward nature (Tyson, 2004). The construct has been discussed in multiple fields of study, and most of the literature concerns people connected to nature, which influences people mentally, physically and emotionally (Caston, 2014). Although literature claims that emotional affinity is a new construct (Tyson, 2004), it has been developed by German scholars (Collado & Corraliza, 2015; Kals et al., 1999) by indicating that feeling good, free, safe in nature and feeling of oneness with nature with inclination an attitude of "love of nature".

Furthermore, emotional ties with nature are a powerful predictor of environmental responsive behaviour. The emotional ties and attachment to nature may be traced back to past experiences in the natural environment (Kals, 1996). Sometimes, people can interact with natural environments such as landscapes, animals, plants and natural resources that are not considered human-made. For instance, some people have to experience nature-based activities such as diving, mountain climbing, photographing landscapes, collecting seashells and having a pet (Oh & Ki, 2023). Pleasant nature experiences and memories may stimulate individual cognitive perception about nature, and consequently, individuals initiate to preserve their surrounding natural environment and resources. Mainly, nature exposure for rural and urban residents is not the same. This was studied by Rahman (2016), and the scholar found environmental care behaviour among aboriginal students in Malaysia and the impact of experimental experiences through environmental activities. Living close to nature provides environmental-related life experience and knowledge toward actions towards the environment.



Likewise, Muller, Kals and Pansa (2009) research has highlighted rural nature exposure as a prominent predictor for environmental behaviour. The research was initiated to identify factors contributing to pro-environmental commitment in Lithuania and Germany, and they found that Lithuanian affinity toward nature is high in the rural areas. This may be due to a high tendency of rural residents to contact with nature and adequate awareness about the natural risks of nature. Jones (2013) also investigated strategies to address the "nature deficit disorder" issue in educational institutions. The researcher discovered that engaging in direct nature experiences, particularly those in rural settings, can potentially alter individuals' emotional states and attachments to nature. Consequently, this can foster a strong affinity towards nature. As a result, environmental intention and behaviour were found to be directly predicted by emotional affinity toward nature.

On the other hand, an overwhelming amount of literature was produced to determine sentimental and positive feelings towards the natural environment. Notably, nature's protective behaviour, such as energy consumption, is motivated by an emotional response toward nature (Yost & Ellis, 2008), such as a feeling of responsibility for wasting energy. Thus, the power of emotions should not be overlooked to overcome human-made environmental uncertainties. This emotional engagement toward nature has been proven by literature analysed emotions connection to promote pro-environmental behaviour such as resentment about fear of diseases caused by overconsumption of energy and natural resources, guilt about own environmental sins and adverse environmental impact caused by individual activities such as pollution (Kals, 1996; Kals et al., 1999).

In detail, emotions and feelings are subjective views vital to developing affinity or love toward nature. Also, emotional affinity toward nature is distinguished from cognitive counterpart attachment to nature. Strong emotional ties to nature, such as a sense of connection with the functioning of flora, fauna and various natural phenomena, generate warm and pleasant feelings for nature and the environment (Martin, 2014). More than familiarity, trust and feeling of security ties with nature, it is a deep psychological level that potentially improves an individual mental strength to behave environmentally responsible manner. However, negative emotions such as self-blame, indignation, and anger also correlate with the willingness to commit to and behave in ways that influence environmental behaviour, such as energy consumption (Kals, 1996).

The positive experience is another significant psychological predictor related to affinity toward nature. Affinity requires positive experiences and memories to generate love and attachment to nature (Khalil et al., 2023). Nevertheless, interest may also result from a negative experience and contradicted practices, adversely affecting human life. This could happen through the communication of feelings with the remaining memories and leads to emotional affinity toward nature. In line with that, Soga and Gaston (2016) studied elaborate outdoor experiences as measures to bridge the gap between human-nature interaction. Declining the opportunity to experience nature generally imposes a higher risk to human psychological maturity to preserve the environment. Because more excellent orientation toward nature motivated to experience it directly, this can have a long-term effect on an individual emotional affinity toward nature and willingness to display environmental responsive behaviour.

Subsequently, the biophilia hypothesis posits that beings are attracted to living things and that this innate inclination is genetically programmed and evolutionary (Kahn, 1997). Responses to nature contributed to the species' survival and thus improved desirable traits in human genetic or deoxyribonucleic acid DNA (Kahn, 1997). This biological attachment to nature leads to relationships with the surrounding natural world and increases nature-protective behaviour. Yost and Ellis (2008) added that emotional ties with nature strengthen value judgement human emotional responses toward nature, which may be stimulated through genetics. Therefore, biophilia contributes to refining a proper understanding of the natural environment, thus giving survival and improving the experience of nature. Nature experience is considered the most influential element for acquiring emotional affinity toward nature to trigger individual environmental behaviour. However, childhood experience improves emotional development toward nature (Kals et al., 1999). Indeed, the beliefs and lifestyles of the same society that the child grows, such as family, peers, surrounding people and school teachers, are more likely to influence the child's emotional affinity toward nature (Soga & Gaston, 2016).

Therefore, testing the predictive power of emotional affinity toward nature is crucial. It has been demonstrated that fondness and attachment toward nature, a sense of oneness with nature, and interest in nature are the most accurate predictors of nature protection behaviour. Nonetheless, emotional attachment to nature was sufficient to account for environmentally responsive behaviour in this study. This study will compare the prediction potential of emotional affinity toward nature (a cognitive evaluation) and environmental responsive behaviour on an



individual level (a responsibility-related performance appraisal). The significance of childhood experience in environmental preservation has been previously elucidated. An individual's environmental consciousness, sense of unity, and affection for nature can significantly influence the experience they gain from engaging in daily environmental activities.

### **Environmental Intention**

The intention was used intensively as a predictor before forming actual behaviour in many areas of study. Notably, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) wisely emphasises predicting behaviour in multiple study contexts. Intention is reflected as the most proximal determinant by engaging as a mediator that improves the behaviour tendency. The first series of discussions and analyses of intention emerged during the 1980s with the establishment of an extended theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). This study comprises three components of personal standards, namely attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, to reflect as contributing factors of intention (Stuckey, 2016). TPB is a theory that predicts and explains human behaviour based on rational decision-making (Ajzen, 1989). Behavioural intention is a central concept of the theory that encompasses motivational factors such as the ability to work hard, the amount of effort to accomplish a task, etc. In detail, the stronger the intention, the higher the chances to perform a specific behaviour. Ajzen (1991) explained that behavioural intention only transforms as behaviour if the behaviour is under volitional control, meaning the person has a choice to execute a behaviour.

Similarly, environmental behaviour also may explain rationally using TPB, which is designed to predict and explain human behaviour concerning environmental defects and effects based on rational decision-making (Alok, Kabra, & Mudam, 2018; Echegaray & Hansstein, 2017; Heidari et al., 2018; Kumar, 2019; Onel, 2017; Paul et al., 2016; Pietralla, 2018; Russell et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2017; Yu, Yi, Liu, & Feng, 2018). Pro-environmental self-identity leads to an individual engagement with environmental intention and behaviour. Moreover, self-identity moderates the impact of perceived behavioural control and intention, and the moderating effect of past behaviour on intentions and behaviour was highlighted by Carfora, Caso, Sparks, and Conner (2017). Self-identity is a significant additional variance that may be found in controlling for past behaviour (Moshood et al., 2023; Norazman et al., 2023). Thus, as self-identity strengthens, past behaviour becomes a significantly more robust predictor of intention and behaviour. However, Huang (2016) found that experience in activities that indirectly impact the environment also shows an inclination toward the environment. Apart from experience, information on environmental change, such as global warming, strengthens the intention to take environmental action.

Apart from that, a large and growing body of literature has investigated the mediation effect of environmental intention and consumer behaviour (Afroz et al., 2015; Ertz, Karakas, & Sarig, 2016; Hartmann & Siegrist, 2017; He et al., 2016; Joshi & Rahman, 2017; Khan, 2016; Kumar et al., 2017). According to Han et al., (2017), pride in the intention to practice green activities was significantly influenced by buying behaviour of the green product. Environmental pride is a psychological predictor that brings satisfaction and fulfilment to environmental commitment. Thus, the intention of eco-friendly product buying behaviour improves as an individual's pride improves by involving pro-environmental behaviours. However, negative emotional determinants, such as guilt, also significantly affect the intention of improving green consumer behaviour. Guilt was crucial and relevant in environmentally responsible decision-making (Burton & Salama, 2023; Hamad et al., 2023). By this, pro-environmental intentions and actions are triggered. Individual guilt caused by environmental harm or damage improves awareness of ecology and influences moral obligation to make environmentally responsible decision making and thus subsequently reflected by firm environmental intention such as purchasing behaviour of environmentally friendly vehicles (Afroz et al., 2015; Mansfield et al., 2016) and electric vehicle (Cecere et al., 2018). Likewise, tax support (Hartmann, Eisend, Apaolaza, & D'Souza, 2017) provided for green electricity appliances; the solar vehicle also an encouragement for promoting conservation behaviour.

Similarly, Giannetti, (2016) encountered that the food and beverage (F&B) industry intends to incorporate the 'organic product' concept and initiated ISO14000 certification, an excellent tool for organisations to improve sustainability attributes in their principal activity. This organic product awareness and ISO14000 certification concern leads to the consumer's intention to seek and purchase an organic product based on cognitive judgement rather than an emotional decision (Burhanudin & Ferguson, 2018). Besides, high biospheric values, environmental concern, awareness of consequences, positive ecological attitude, aspirational responsibility and low egoistic values for purchasing green products significantly influenced the behavioural intention of environmentally sensitive purchase behaviour. Nevertheless, the decision may remain as intended if they believe that it would not



be easy for them to perform the behaviour. Therefore, the easy availability, accessibility, and difficulty or ease in locating eco-friendly products will induce high behavioural intention.

Before commencing the environmental study, the environmental intention is sought before generating actual behaviour. Individual environmental intention is beneficial and can be transmitted easily to society. The individual level mainly focuses on household (Gadenne et al., 2011; Pothitou et al., 2016) and individual energy-saving behaviour in the workplace (Gao et al., 2017; Smith & O'Sullivan, 2012). Concerning this, prominent efforts such as environmental protection lectures (Tan et al., 2018) and sustainability training programmes have been emphasised by company authorities to improve environmental intention among their stakeholders, including themselves (Stuckey, 2016). In future, these measures will make individuals realise the need to care for the environment and, eventually, foster a favourable attitude towards energy saving at home and in the workplace. However, the individual level of ecological awareness and concern about consequences caused by environmental degradation is another challenge to improving energy-saving intention. Enrich their confidence by making them realise that their obligation to reduce energy consumption, save energy and protect the environment will develop the intention to preserve the environment.

Nevertheless, behavioural intention regarding the environment and climate change is complicated. The study by Reddy et al. (2017) indicated that risk perception influences behavioural intention independently, and environmental intention is classified as a subjective element of the study. This results from unpredictable behavioural intentions, such as people sometimes being willing to take personal action but not always, and they are not always willing to support government intention.

Hence, Stuckey (2016) suggested that managers or people in managerial positions should lead to saving energy. However, managers' behavioural intention toward the environment incorporates perceived behavioural control on time, resources, opportunity and other factors. Similarly, Latip, Mohamed and Sharifuddin, (2018) state that organisation owners' self-control significantly affects the intention to adopt environmental management practice (EMP) by controlling resources to adapt the practice. Consequently, the need for the sustainability element implementation was considered using specific criteria such as the role of sustainability in the organisation's environment, opportunity and expected benefit through projects considering sustainability, and personal benefit and moral obligation with the project (Silvius & de Graaf, 2018). On the other hand, Latip et al. (2018) found an insignificant relationship between subject norm and intention to adopt EMP. The finding added that the opinion of the referent group was not crucial to determining the intention of the environmental practice.

In particular, this study's environmental intention as a mediator greatly connects with memory. This study confirms a relationship between emotional connection or engagement with nature and environmental responsive behaviour through environmental intention. Environmental intention as a mediator improves an individual willingness to attain the behaviour through memories formed by past nature experiences.

### **Mediating Effect of Environmental Intention on Environmental Attitude and Environmental Responsive Behaviour**

In this study, environmental intention as a mediator enhances the environmental beliefs about the extent of regret, tension, and upset the school leaders would feel if they could not perform the behaviour. Subsequently, they consider performing environmental responsive behaviour to avoid regrets. Based on the findings, the environmental intention elevated the feeling of regret developed by not performing the behaviour as a belief about the consequences. Particularly, the attendance of environmental intention as a willingness to perform environmental behaviour will consider the feeling of an individual regret toward consequences faced by avoiding environmental behaviour. Subsequently, environmental intention provides the essential willingness as a motivator to perform environmental responsive behaviour to avoid risk causes by neglecting environmental consequences. Thus, this result reveals the environmental intention of an individual as a willingness to overcome risk by negative belief about the consequences of neglecting environmental sustainability. Subsequently, environmental responsive behaviour was triggered by incorporating environmental intention as a solution.

In this mediation mechanism discovery, the results reveal that an individual environmental responsive behaviour affects their environmental attitude through environmental intention. Individuals with an environmental willingness to protect the environment are more likely to have a positive belief toward environmental knowledge, which causes higher environmental responsive behaviour. Individual environmental attitudes develop with strong environmental knowledge, nature concern, and environmental adverse effect consciousness led by their



environmental intention as motivating factors to adopt environmental responsibility. The conscious environmental intention can influence an individual's feelings and thoughts about performing the behaviour. Environmental intention captures their willingness to behave environmentally responsibly as motivating their belief in environmental behaviour.

In another aspect, environmental intention encourages individuals to continue learning to attain environmental responsive behaviour. This study has proven an individual's interest in participating in a meeting about environmental issues, showing their curiosity and willingness to engage in the continuous learning process. This attitude assumes a demand for environmental responsive behaviour. Their interest in participating in environmental groups shows individual intention toward environmental behaviour, and this willingness is to be shared with other pupils to make changes to preserve nature. Therefore, environmental intention is central to triggering an individual's awareness of aversive environmental consequences and strengthening their analytical thinking to activate their environmental responsive behaviour. This finding is consistent with the previous study, which seeks the direct and indirect determinant impact of human activities on the environment.

Overall, the mediation role of environmental intention should not be ignored in developing an individual's environmentally responsive behaviour. Hence, it is vital to integrate environmental knowledge, civic mindset and moral values with environmental intention to demonstrate environmental responsive behaviour among school leaders.

### **Mediating Effect of Environmental Intention on Environmental Attitude and Environmental Responsive Behaviour**

For this study, the emotional affinity toward nature enhanced environmental responsive behaviour through environmental intention. In the context of theory, the environmental intention's mediation role can be explained via the TPB theory. According to the TPB theory, an individual can improve their willingness to act environmentally responsibly by setting more effort to motivate their environmental responsive behaviour. The ability of the individual to use their emotional affinity toward nature to activate their emotional engagement with nature by stimulating their environmental intention, which can then enhance their environmental responsive behaviour. For instance, Su, Hsu, and Boostrom (2019) found that tourists' environmental intention became a mechanism to improve their emotional engagement with nature that impacts their environmental responsive consumption behaviour. Karami-Akkary, Mahfouz, and Mansour (2019) view emotional engagement with nature as a rational process and able to influence individual environmental engagement behaviour through emotional responses that are willing to change as a motivation.

There are considerable shreds of evidence about people's intentions, which specifies where, when and how they will achieve their preferred goal, which is an indicator to translate intention into behaviour (Caston, 2014). For this study, an individual environmental intention is activated when nature experience helps them to see their connection to nature and understand the continuous attunement of life that positively influences how they interact with nature. This transformative experience of an individual with nature is a guidepost by reminding them to act environmentally responsibly and improving their willingness to act pro-environmentally. Thus, for this study, environmental intention becomes a motivational predictor that connects collaboration between individual emotional connection with nature, activating human nature interdependency and, consequently, helping form their environmental responsive behaviour.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study underscores the pivotal role of environmental intention as a mediator in the intricate interplay between environmental attitude, emotional affinity toward nature, and the manifestation of environmentally responsive behaviour. By establishing a strong connection with both environmental attitude and emotional engagement with nature, environmental intention emerges as a crucial factor in driving individuals towards adopting environmentally responsible practices.

The findings of this research provide empirical support for a meaningful relationship between an individual's environmental attitude and their emotional connection to nature, ultimately influencing their environmentally responsive behaviour. The mediation effect of environmental intention enriches our understanding, shedding light on how individuals' willingness to embrace environmentally responsible behaviour is influenced by their attitudes and memories shaped by past experiences with nature.





As we navigate the complexities of fostering environmental consciousness and sustainable actions, recognising the mediating role of environmental intention becomes instrumental. This insight can inform targeted interventions and strategies to promote positive environmental behaviours by harnessing the synergies between attitude, emotional affinity, and intention. The study contributes valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on cultivating a more ecologically aware and responsible society.

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