

Pro-Environmental Behaviour as an Encouragement in Sustainability in the Workplace of the Tea Factory Labour Force in Sri Lanka

A.J. Jayasekara*, A. Gamage, E.V.D. Dilhani

Department of Economics, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka

**anne@econ.ruh.ac.lk*

INTRODUCTION

Research has highlighted that the behavior of human beings could contribute to environmental damages. The increasing pollution on the environment in different sectors has resulted in the decrease of the quality and the quantity of natural resources. Therefore, responsible parties in many countries significantly contribute to ensuring the sustainability of the environment. Responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water and life on lands have been named as the sustainable development goals under the pillar of environment (United Nations, 2015). As a developing country, Sri Lanka engages in projects relevant to such goals. The government and authorities revise and update policies to control pollution in the industrial sector to preserve the natural resources to enhance a/the sustainable lifestyle.

Pro-Environmental Behavior (PEB) is a trending concept that is introduced in many organizations, companies, industrial factories and institutes. PEB is a different type of behavior that pursues to reduce the inverse influence of one's action on the natural and built environment (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). The concept of PEB has been developed and literature supports to find the internal and external factors that impact PEB in relation to households and in workplaces. Therefore, the current research attempts to fill a/the research gap by investigating the two groups of factors that have an impact on PEB in the workplace namely external and internal factors.

As employees usually spend more than eight hours in their workplace per day, it is expected that PEB in the workplace will reduce the adverse impact on the natural and built environment. Investigating PEB in the workplace of the tea factory setting is important as a case. Kollmuss & Agyeman (2002) highlight that there is a relationship between the personnel and social norms in expectations in relation to

PEB. There are studies that prove an affirmative correlation between PEB and personnel and social norms in the workplace. A study has emphasized that there is a relationship between awareness of the environment and perceived behavioral control with PEB in the workplace (Rioux, 2011). Furthermore, attitudes are positively affected PEB in the workplace (Meinhold & Malkus, 2005). The literature clearly emphasizes that environmental leadership should be provided by the top management of a/the company to attain a critical impact on the behavior and attitudes of the employees. The primary objective of this study is to recognize the internal and external factors which have an impact on PEB in the workplace. The sub-objective of this study is to estimate the impact of factors on PEB in the workplace.

METHODOLOGY

Internal and external factors have been identified through a comprehensive literature review. For the internal factors, personnel norms, social norms, environmental awareness, environmental values and attitudes towards PEB were selected. Leadership support and leadership management were selected as the external factors. A self-designed pre-test structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data from 300 respondents using the simple random sampling technique from the general workers in 10 selected tea factories in the Matara district in Sri Lanka.

To identify the descriptive information of the primary data, descriptive-analytical techniques were used. The Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation was used to analyze multivariate data. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to assess the appropriateness of using the analytical technique. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to verify the reliability. The Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression was used to test the theoretical framework of the study. The data was analyzed using the software SPSS 26 version.

FINDINGS

According to the findings the majority of the respondents are females (61%). From the respondents, the majority (60%) is in the 25-45 age group. PEB has an average score of 2.87 with a standard deviation of 0.63. The reliability test indicated that there is good internal reliability with a value of 0.72. According to the results of the PCA, the first three principal components with variances equal to the eigenvalues greater

than 1 represent 0.902 (90.2%) of the total variability. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that three principal components adequately explain the variation in the data. Under the results of the OLS regression, the effect of the direct factors on PEB in the workplace was identified. The overall model is significant with the F-statistic of 6.32, with R^2 of 0.187. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is between 1.18 and 5.2 indicating no multicollinearity. As the direct and important factor, environmental awareness is the most significant one with a coefficient of 0.14. The social norm is significant at a 5 percent level of significance. Leadership support has a significant effect on PEB. The male gender as a factor has a low level of effect on PEB in contrast to female respondents. Other than these, the rest of the variables were not significant. To identify the model built under theoretical review, a second regression was performed (Table 1).

Table 1: The Direct effects of factors affecting pro-environmental behavior (PEB) in the workplace on the intention to act in a pro-environment manner

	Coefficient		Std. Err.	p-Value
Personnel norms	0.233	**	0.121	0.038
Social norms	0.015		0.029	0.624
Environmental awareness	0.297	***	0.085	0.002
Environmental values	0.046		0.038	0.228
Attitudes towards PEB	0.269	**	0.117	0.018
Leadership support	0.097		0.046	0.049
Leadership management	0.226	**	0.114	0.039

N=300; *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01.

Source: Survey Data, 2021

The model is significant with a F statistic of 24.35 and R^2 is at a satisfactory level. Environmental awareness (0.297) is the most significant factor and has a strong effect on PEB. Personnel (0.233), social (0.215) norms and leadership management (0.226) have a positive effect on PEB. However, gender has a significant effect and females have a higher intention contrast to males in relation to PEB.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study emphasize that social norms have an unintended impact on PEB while environment awareness and personnel norms have an indirect positive impact on PEB. The behavior by leaders has a significant impact on the intention of

employees' PEB and these results lead to implications at a managerial level in the workplace. Managers as the role models with regard to PEB should focus on the behavioral control of employees while understanding social and employee norms with respect to PEB. Future research should motivate additional direct and indirect factors that could have an impact on PEB in different working environments.

REFERENCES

- Kollmuss, A. & Agyeman, J., 2002. Mind the gap: why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior? *Environmental education research*, 8(3), pp. 239-260.
- Meinhold, J. L. & Malkus, A. J., 2005. Adolescent environmental behaviors: Can knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy make a difference?. *Environment and behavior*, 37(4), pp. 511-532.
- Rioux, L., 2011. Promoting pro-environmental behaviour: Collection of used batteries by secondary school pupils. *Environmental Education Research*, 17(3), pp. 353-373.
- United Nations, 2015. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, New York: United Nations Publications.