

# Pro- Environmental Behavior and Big Five Personality Traits: Bridging the gap between employees' behavior and Sustainable Human Resource Policies.

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## ABSTRACT

Pro-environmental behavior, "How individual behavior contributing to environmental sustainability and it is exclusively based on individual volitional choice i.e., it is a cognitive process" and it includes affect (feeling or emotion), motivation (goals or expectations), cognition (thinking), habits and commits. The main purpose of the study is proposing a conceptual model based on sustainable HRM, between – person variability, pro-environmental behavior with effect on environment sustainability further, bridging gap between employees' behavior to adopt sustainable policies in the organization. The review investigates the activities and attitudes, between – person variability – motivation, intentions and environment sustainability variables. This study gives suggestions to enhance the field of sustainability environment with the aid of PEB and mediating factor as between-in person variability. Further, this study also discuss future research to accept pro-environmental behavior in the organizations.

**Keywords:** Pro-environmental behavior, Person variability, Attitudes, Motivation, Environment sustainability

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

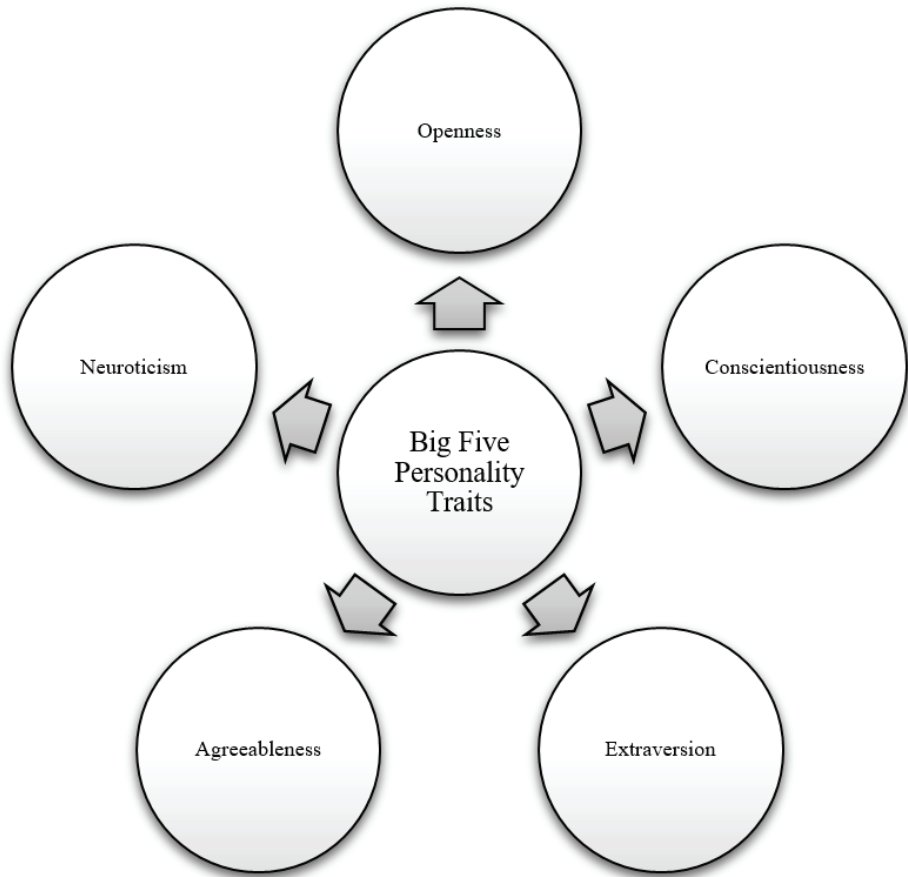
Environmental sustainability is currently a top-priority concern for our societies. Within this context, the role of employees in shaping an organization's environmental performance is pivotal. Ones et.al, (2015) extensively explore the realm of employee green behaviors, differentiating them from related concepts, delving into determinants, and assessing interventions supporting these behaviors. Preserving the Earth's natural ecosystems and resources stands as one of the most significant challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since many environmental issues are human-induced, the effectiveness of environmental policies hinges on reliable and valid data regarding these behavioral patterns and their underlying factors.

Bamberg and Rees (2015) dissect the theoretical foundations and merits, as well as drawbacks, of two prominent strategies for evaluating environmentally relevant behaviors: intent- and impact-oriented approaches. They also delve into the measurement of environmental concern and its connection to pro-environmental behaviour. Milfont and Sibley (2012) scrutinize the personal and national-level aspects of environmental engagement. Their research explores how specific personality traits relate to environmental concern, both at the individual level, examining environmental values and electricity conservation behaviour, and at the national level, correlating personality traits with sustainability indices, environmental attitudes, and harmony values. Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience emerge as the traits most strongly linked to environmental engagement, shedding light on the connection between overarching behavioral patterns and conservation behavior in individuals and societies as a whole. In a study by Simpson et.al, (2021), the focus shifts to personality traits beyond the Five-Factor Model (FFM) in predicting pro-environmental values and behaviors. Results reveal slight positive correlations between environmental values and integrity and femininity, along with negative correlations with religiosity. However, the findings provide limited support for these personality dimensions as predictors of pro-environmental values and behaviors.

Li, Wang and Li (2023) explore the dynamics behind residents' attitudes towards plastic reduction, considering the framework of the Big Five personality traits. Their findings indicate that individuals with a Conscientiousness personality exhibit positive plastic reduction attitudes, showing greater responsibility for the environment and a strict adherence to plastic ban policies.

Notably, the relationship between Conscientiousness and plastic reduction attitudes is negatively moderated by education, suggesting that both inherent Conscientiousness traits and post-birth education play complementary roles in shaping these attitudes. Soutter and Möttus (2021) emphasize the significance of understanding pro-environmental behavior in light of climate change. They highlight the suitability of personality traits for this purpose. Their prior research mainly concentrated on the association between broad personality traits and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors, but they examine into whether personality facets offer a more nuanced understanding. Their findings reveal that certain

facets are the primary drivers of these associations and that, collectively, facets predict pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors as effectively as domain-level traits, thus providing a more detailed comprehension of these relationships.



**Figure 1 Big Five Personality Traits**

Ambridge (2014) posits that openness to experience signifies a broad appreciation for art, emotions, adventure, unconventional ideas, imagination, curiosity, and a diverse range of experiences. Those who exhibit openness are intellectually curious, receptive to emotions, attuned to beauty, and eager to embrace novelty. In contrast to individuals with closed mind-sets, open individuals tend to be more creative, emotionally aware, and inclined towards unconventional beliefs. However, their behavior may be viewed as unpredictable, lacking focus, and potentially associated with risk-taking or drug use.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Toegel & Barsoux (2012) define conscientiousness as the inclination to exhibit self-discipline, dutifulness, and a commitment to achieve set goals or external expectations. This personality trait correlates with impulse control, self-regulation, and purposefulness. High conscientiousness is often linked with determination and concentration, whereas low

conscientiousness is characterized by flexibility and spontaneity, though it can also manifest as sloppiness and unreliability. Laney (2002) characterizes extraversion by the breadth of activities pursued (as opposed to depth), a propensity for urgency arising from external factors, and a generation of energy from external sources.

Rothmann and Coetzer (2003) define agreeableness as a general concern for social harmony, with agreeable individuals highly valuing interpersonal harmony. They exhibit traits such as thoughtfulness, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness, helpfulness, and a willingness to compromise. Additionally, they maintain an optimistic view of human nature. Jeronimus et.al, (2014) identifies neuroticism as the disposition towards intense negative emotions like anger, anxiety, or depression. This can also be referred to as emotional instability or, conversely, as emotional stability. Furthermore, Alan et.al, (2011) have conducted research on the influence of core personality traits, specifically the Big Five, on individual political interactions and outcomes. Their work replicates prior analyses and highlights the challenges faced by scholars pursuing this line of inquiry, including the need to refine theoretical explanations, address measurement concerns, and resolve inconsistencies across studies. Credé et.al, (2012) argue that the use of single-item measures may lead to significant underestimation of the role of personality traits in influencing crucial behaviors, emphasizing the importance of slightly longer measures for more valid research findings.

Ojedokun (2018) investigates the individual and combined impact of Big Five personality traits, age, and gender on the three dimensions of environmental citizenship behavior (ECB) in a Nigerian university community. The results suggest that understanding how personality traits, age, and gender are associated with environmental actions can guide the design of environmental initiatives, enabling them to target individuals inclined toward such actions, as well as explore alternative approaches that may resonate with different segments of the youth population.

Duong (2021) explores the roles of the Big Five personality traits, including conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience, in influencing green consumption behavior and bridging the gap between attitudes, intentions, and behaviors in environmentally friendly consumption. The study also investigates potential gender differences in these associations. Obrenovic et.al, (2021) focuses on the psychological mechanisms underpinning tacit knowledge-sharing behaviors, particularly examining the influence of conscientiousness as a personality trait on knowledge sharing. The study also assesses the effects of eagerness and subjective norms on the intention to share knowledge within both local and multinational knowledge-intensive enterprises in Croatia. Finally, Panno et.al, (2021) aims to investigate how HEXACO personality traits relate to climate change action, pro-environmental behavior, and moral anger.

**Table 1. Review Contributions**

Authors	Contributions
Ojedokun (2018)	Demonstrates that eco-initiatives and eco-helping exhibited stronger connections with personality traits such as openness and agreeableness. Similarly, eco-civic engagement displayed a stronger association with the traits of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness. Age consistently showed correlations with all three dimensions. Furthermore, the dimensions of ECB were found to be jointly influenced by the Big Five traits, age, and gender.
Duong (2021)	The study uncovered that, alongside extraversion, other personality traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and neuroticism exhibited significant correlations with green consumption. Furthermore, the study highlighted the pivotal roles of individuals' attitudes toward green products and their intentions to purchase environmentally friendly items in elucidating pro-environmental behavior among consumers. Notably, a gender-based disparity was observed in how personality traits influenced green consumption for men and women.
Obrenovic et.al, (2021)	<p>The positive influence of conscientiousness as a personality trait extends to tacit knowledge sharing behavior. Additionally, predictors like an attitude of eagerness and subjective norm have been validated in their role regarding tacit knowledge sharing. Furthermore, conscientiousness plays a significant role in shaping the willingness to share knowledge. An important connection has been established between subjective norm and conscientiousness.</p> <p>Lastly, it has been determined that subjective norm and eagerness act as mediators in the relationship between conscientiousness and tacit knowledge sharing.</p>
Panno et.al, (2021)	Hierarchical tests revealed the following findings: (1) Openness to Experience exhibited superior predictive power over the remaining HEXACO model personality traits in forecasting climate change action. Additionally, (2) Openness to Experience and Honesty-Humility displayed enhanced predictive abilities compared to the other HEXACO model personality traits in forecasting pro-environmental behavior, while accounting for participants' gender, age, education, and employment status. More specifically, mediation analyses unveiled that (3) Openness to Experience was linked to climate change action through both a direct path and an indirect pathway involving moral anger. Moreover, (4) Openness to Experience and Honesty-Humility were each independently associated with pro-environmental behavior through both a direct route and an indirect connection via moral anger.

Wang et.al, (2020)	The analysis findings reveal that, with the exception of Extraversion, the remaining four personality traits influence intentions for conserving household energy using distinct mechanisms. Agreeableness and Openness exhibit positive associations with all three TPB predictors. Conscientiousness likewise displays a positive correlation with perceived behavioral control, while Neuroticism exhibits only a negative association with attitude.  These research results hold the potential to inform the formulation of environmentally sustainable policies for community development.
Rothermicha et.al., (2021)	These findings enhance our comprehension of environmental issues for the broader populace and provide insights for upcoming research on the implementation of pro-environmental tactics.

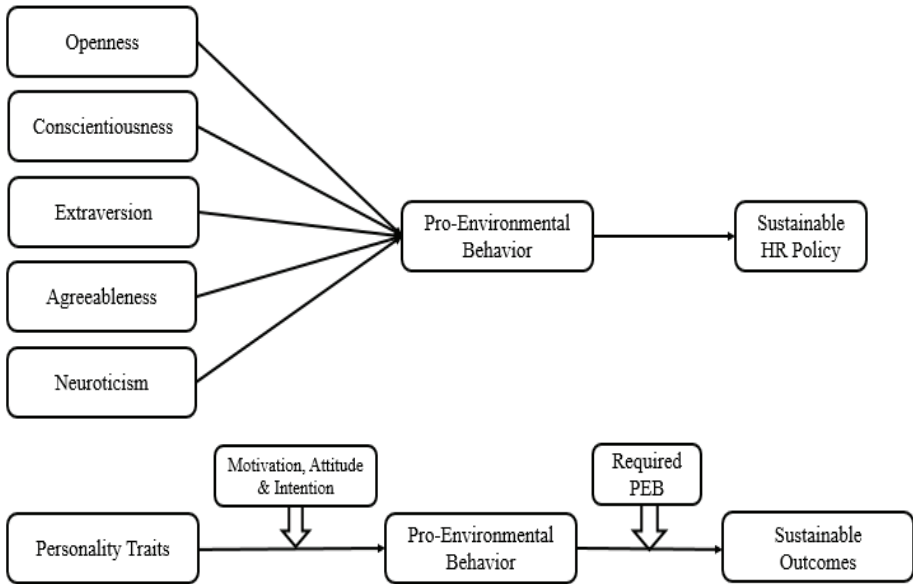
Wang et.al, (2020) sought to investigate the connection between the Big Five personality traits and household energy conservation intentions. Their research incorporated the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explore this relationship, ultimately offering empirical evidence on how personality traits relate to pro-environmental behaviors in the northwest region of China. Meanwhile, Rothermicha et.al, (2021) adopted a trait-level approach to examine pro-environmental behavior within the climate change context.

## 2.1 Value-Belief-Norm Theory

For this study, researchers implement VBN theory that, Stern (2000) introduced the Value-Belief-Norm Theory (VBN), connecting Schwartz's value orientation theory, the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP), and the Norm Activation Model (NAM). Within the Norm Activation Model, the awareness of consequences (AOC), the ascription of responsibility (AOR), and personal norms are pivotal concepts that elucidate the development of various pro-environmental behaviors (PEBs). In line with the VBN theory, individuals' values shape their beliefs, which, in turn, shape the norms directly impacting their pro-environmental actions.

Schultz et.al, (2005) underscore that these norms and behaviors are rooted in values concerning the welfare of others (altruistic values), one's self-interest (egoistic values), the well-being of the biosphere (biospheric values), and, more recently, an emphasis on personal pleasure or sensory gratification (hedonic values). Since its inception, VBN has found widespread application in elucidating various specific pro-environmental behaviors in both private and public settings, including green consumer behavior, avoidance behavior, and waste prevention behavior. Although many studies have employed the VBN theory to predict different PEBs, only a few have acknowledged the significant influence of external factors on such behavior.

Paillé et.al, (2016) examined the impact of perceived co-worker support, commitment to colleagues, job satisfaction, intention to help others, and pro-environmental behavior, specifically eco-helping, on employees' engagement in pro-environmental actions in the workplace. Their research was framed within the context of social exchange theory and the ethics of care framework.



**Figure 2 Conceptual Framework**

Additionally, Jonsson & Nilsson (2014), the relationship between individuals’ values, locus of control, and pro-environmental behaviors was explored. The study revealed a positive association between self-transcendent values and an internal locus of control with pro-environmental behaviors. Furthermore, the research indicated that locus of control played a moderating role in the connection between individuals’ values and their behavior, particularly in the case of individuals with low levels of self-transcendence values exhibiting pro-environmental behaviors when possessing an internal locus of control.

**2.2 Big five Personality Traits and Pro-Environmental Behavior**

Numerous studies have investigated the OCEAN model and its connection to workplace behavior and performance prediction. A deeper comprehension of these traits can facilitate trust-building, enhance interpersonal relationships, and foster a more robust workplace culture among co-workers and managers from Essentials of Organizational Behavior.

The OCEAN model, also known as the Big Five Personality Model, posits that human personality consists of five fundamental dimensions. Substantial research corroborates this personality model, with test scores demonstrating a reliable forecast of real-life behavior. A study has observed that these traits exhibited enhanced predictive capabilities for job performance in unstructured, choice-rich work settings.

Furthermore, a New Zealand study identified Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness as personality traits strongly associated with environmental engagement. Conscientiousness stands out as the primary driver of job performance within the Big Five

personality dimensions. Those scoring high in Conscientiousness typically possess superior job-related knowledge due to their propensity for learning. They often show leadership qualities but may prioritize work over adaptability, occasionally struggling with complex skill acquisition and creativity.

Higher Neuroticism scores may signal an increased risk of employee burnout due to difficulties in emotion management. Conversely, elevated emotional stability correlates with enhanced life and job satisfaction, reduced stress, and better handling of workplace demands, particularly in dynamic environments by Essentials of Organizational Behavior. Extroverts naturally take charge in various situations and often exhibit strong leadership potential, although they tend to make impulsive decisions compared to introverts. Individuals characterized by Openness demonstrate ease in adapting to workplace changes, exhibit adaptability, effective leadership qualities, and long-term stability in performance.

Agreeable individuals generally earn higher favourability, follow established rules, exhibit job satisfaction, and have a lower likelihood of involvement in workplace accidents. Conversely, those with lower Agreeableness scores may engage in counterproductive work behavior and may experience diminished career success in the long run. A study affirms that leaders who grasp the variances in individuals' personalities can enhance their leadership effectiveness and, consequently, improve employees' job performance. Leaders who possess insights into their employees' proclivities, strengths, and weaknesses can employ this knowledge to support and motivate their team members. The Big Five can also be utilized by leaders for self-assessment, enabling them to maximize their strengths and learn from their weaknesses while steering the organization toward success.

### 3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Hidalgo-Crespo et.al, (2023) examined the interrelationships between motivations, values, intentions, norms, and behaviors within the context of the value-belief norm theory, which incorporates external influences. They explored three specific pro-environmental behaviors: waste prevention, green consumerism, and avoidance of environmentally harmful practices. Their study investigated how these connections vary based on individual personality traits and personal conscience.

Furthermore, the research sought to understand how tapping into the emotions of the general public could promote environmentally beneficial actions, such as green purchasing and waste reduction. In addressing the enhancement of subjective norms within the population, the study underscored the need for interventions that focus on communication strategies aimed at increasing awareness of the consequences and responsibilities associated with communal benefits.



The central objective of this study revolved around the role of personality traits and pro-environmental behaviors in bridging the gap between framing sustainable human resource policies or environmental sustainability and their adoption by employees within organizations. This gap's significance lies in its resistance to altering employee behaviors within the organizational context. The researchers aimed to identify various factors and their impacts on an organization's environmental sustainability policies. The conceptual framework of the study also took into account factors such as employees' personality traits, motivation, attitudes, intentions to change, and pro-environmental behaviors, assessing how they contribute to improved outcomes. These factors have the potential to effect significant changes in the implementation of sustainable human resource policies, facilitating their continuation until the desired goals are achieved.

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