

A Study on Promoting Environmental Citizenship Behaviours among Faculty Members: The Impact of Organisational Environment and Green Work Engagement

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Abstract: This conceptual study explores the interrelationships among organisational environment, green work engagement, and environmental citizenship behaviours within higher education institutions. As universities increasingly adopt sustainability agendas, understanding the antecedents of pro-environmental conduct among faculty members becomes imperative. Drawing upon theories of organisational climate and employee engagement, the study proposes a framework suggesting that an enabling organisational environment which characterised by supportive leadership, clear sustainability policies, and collaborative culture, cultivates higher levels of green work engagement. In turn, this engagement is posited to enhance voluntary environmental citizenship behaviours, such as resource conservation, advocacy for eco-friendly practices, and the integration of environmental topics into teaching. The study further discusses how institutional norms and values can shape individual attitudes toward environmental responsibility. By synthesising prior research and conceptual models, the paper offers strategic insights for academic leaders aiming to foster sustainable work cultures. Implications for policy formulation, faculty development, and institutional reputation are also examined.

Keywords: Environmental citizenship behaviour; green work engagement; organisational environment; higher education; sustainability culture; pro-environmental behaviour; faculty development.

Introduction

Environmental sustainability has emerged as a critical focus in higher education institutions, prompting scholars and practitioners to examine the factors that influence pro-environmental behaviours among academic staff. Previous research has highlighted that organisational environment plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' attitudes and intentions to engage in environmentally responsible actions (Ramus & Steger, 2000; Robertson & Barling, 2013). Studies on organisational climate suggest that supportive leadership, clear sustainability policies, and visible commitment to green initiatives create conditions that encourage individuals to go beyond formal job requirements and demonstrate environmental citizenship behaviours (Boiral & Paillé, 2012). In parallel, the concept of green work engagement has gained traction as an important mediating factor that connects organisational influences with individual behaviours. According to Saks (2006) and later elaborated by Robertson and Barling (2017), employees who experience high levels of engagement related to environmental values are more likely to participate in voluntary actions such as conserving resources, advocating sustainable practices, and inspiring peers to adopt eco-friendly habits. Furthermore, empirical studies in corporate and educational settings have shown that when faculty members perceive their institution as authentically committed to sustainability, their sense of purpose and intrinsic motivation toward environmental stewardship are significantly enhanced (Ones & Dilchert, 2012; Graves, Sarkis, & Zhu, 2013). Despite growing interest, there remains a gap in synthesising these perspectives to understand how organisational environment and green work engagement interact to foster environmental citizenship behaviours specifically among faculty in higher education. This conceptual study addresses this gap by integrating insights from organisational behaviour, sustainability management, and educational leadership to propose a comprehensive framework explaining the antecedents of pro-environmental citizenship behaviours in academic contexts.

Review Of Literature

The evolving discourse on environmental sustainability in organisational contexts has increasingly focused on the role of individual discretionary behaviours that support ecological objectives. Organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE), first systematically conceptualised by Daily, Bishop, and Massoud (2012), refers to voluntary actions employees undertake to improve environmental outcomes beyond formal role expectations. Research has demonstrated that such behaviours are shaped by a complex blend of personal values, organisational structures, and psychological states (Paillé & Boiral, 2013). Within higher education settings, scholars have underscored the unique influence of academic culture and professional autonomy in enabling or constraining environmental engagement (Tilbury, 2011). For instance, faculty members often exercise considerable discretion in curriculum design and resource use, which positions them as potential change agents for sustainability initiatives (Velazquez et al., 2006). In examining the determinants of green behaviours, several studies have drawn attention to the salience of perceived organisational support for sustainability, which encompasses tangible resources, recognition systems, and policy frameworks that signal institutional commitment (Lamm, Tosti-Kharas, & Williams, 2013). Concurrently, research on pro-environmental psychological climates suggests that shared perceptions of environmental norms can foster collective efficacy and increase the likelihood of citizenship behaviours (Norton, Zacher, & Ashkanasy, 2014). Notably, leadership styles such as transformational and ethical leadership have been linked to higher levels of green work engagement, as they model and reinforce values alignment between individual goals and organisational sustainability priorities (Graves, Sarkis, & Gold, 2019). Emerging contributions also highlight the importance of work engagement specific to environmental tasks. Studies by Kim, Kim, and Qu (2019) propose that green work engagement operates as a motivational resource that channels employees' energy and commitment into eco-centric initiatives, thereby acting as a mediator between organisational factors and behavioural outcomes. Furthermore, meta-analytic evidence indicates that employees with higher ecological self-identity are more likely to respond positively to supportive organisational climates, reinforcing the interaction between individual and contextual antecedents of OCBE (Bissing-Olson, Iyer, Fielding, & Zacher, 2013). Despite the increasing sophistication of this literature, relatively few conceptual models have integrated organisational environment and green work engagement as dual antecedents of environmental citizenship behaviours among faculty members in higher education. This gap underscores the need for further theoretical development to inform institution-specific strategies that leverage faculty engagement as a catalyst for sustainable transformation.

Research Gap

Although extensive research has examined environmental citizenship behaviours in corporate settings, comparatively fewer studies have focused on higher education institutions, where faculty members hold distinctive positions of influence over organisational culture and student attitudes. Existing literature has explored the effects of organisational support, leadership styles, and individual environmental values in isolation, yet there remains a lack of integrative frameworks that simultaneously consider how organisational environment and green work engagement interact to shape pro-environmental citizenship behaviours among academicians. This gap limits the ability of educational institutions to design holistic strategies that foster a culture of environmental responsibility anchored in both structural support and individual motivation.

Objectives Of The Study

- To conceptualise the relationship between organisational environment and environmental citizenship behaviours among faculty members in higher education institutions.
- To examine the role of green work engagement as a mediating factor linking organisational environment to pro-environmental citizenship behaviours.
- To develop a theoretical framework that integrates organisational and individual antecedents of environmental citizenship behaviours in academic settings.

- To provide strategic recommendations for fostering sustainable work cultures within universities and affiliated colleges.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework proposes that the organisational environment—encompassing leadership commitment, policy clarity, and cultural norms supporting sustainability—creates favourable conditions for faculty engagement in environmental issues. Within this environment, green work engagement emerges as a psychological state characterised by enthusiasm, absorption, and dedication to ecological goals. The framework posits that green work engagement serves as a motivational bridge translating organisational support into voluntary pro-environmental actions, such as resource conservation, eco-innovation in teaching, and peer advocacy. The model further recognises that individual factors (e.g., ecological self-identity, perceived behavioural control) may moderate the strength of these relationships, suggesting that faculty members who strongly identify with environmental values are more likely to respond positively to supportive organisational climates and sustain higher levels of engagement.

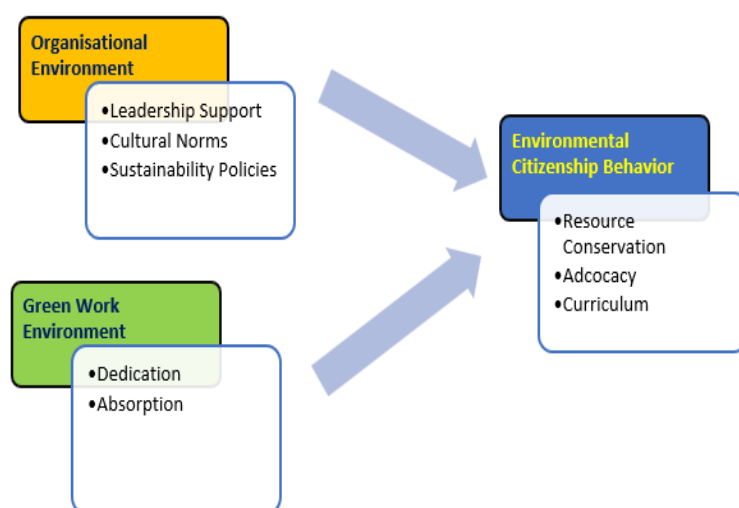


Fig 1 – Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study adopts a **conceptual research design** based on integrative literature synthesis. Relevant peer-reviewed publications, theoretical models, and empirical findings were systematically reviewed to identify key constructs and their interrelationships. The process involved thematic analysis of prior studies on organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment, green work engagement, and sustainability practices in higher education contexts. Conceptual propositions were developed by critically evaluating established frameworks and extending them to the academic setting. The resulting model aims to provide a theoretical foundation for future empirical validation and practical application in university environments.

Propositions Of The Study

Proposition 1: A supportive organizational environment characterized by sustainability-oriented leadership, clear policies, and pro-environmental norms positively influences faculty members' green work engagement.

Proposition 2: Green work engagement functions as a mediating mechanism through which organizational environment translates into environmental citizenship behaviors among faculty members.

Proposition 3: Faculty members with a strong ecological self-identity exhibit a stronger relationship between organizational environment and green work engagement.

Proposition 4: High levels of green work engagement are positively associated with voluntary pro-environmental citizenship behaviors, including resource conservation, environmental advocacy, and curriculum innovation.

Expected Contribution And Implications

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on sustainability in higher education by offering a cohesive framework that links organisational environment and green work engagement to environmental citizenship behaviours. The model underscores the importance of cultivating institutional cultures that not only provide structural support for environmental initiatives but also nurture faculty motivation and identification with ecological values. Practically, the findings offer insights for university administrators seeking to embed sustainability more deeply into daily practices, professional development, and performance recognition systems. By clarifying how individual engagement and organisational support interact, the study informs policies that can drive long-term cultural transformation towards environmental stewardship within academic institutions.

Research Discussion

Research Discussion on ‘Proposition 1’

A growing body of research underscores the influence of organisational environment on employees’ motivation and engagement in sustainability-related practices. The construct of a supportive organisational environment encompasses visible leadership commitment, formalised sustainability policies, and shared norms that prioritise environmental stewardship (Lamm et al., 2013). Such an environment signals to faculty members that sustainability is not only encouraged but is a valued part of institutional identity, thereby fostering a sense of collective purpose. Empirical studies within corporate contexts have demonstrated that when leaders actively model pro-environmental behaviours and embed sustainability into strategic goals, employees report higher engagement levels in ecological initiatives (Graves et al., 2019). In higher education settings, leadership support and policy clarity may be even more salient due to the relative autonomy of academic roles and the importance of institutional mission alignment. Research by Velazquez et al. (2006) suggests that sustainability-focused policies and communication channels enable faculty to see clear pathways for action, reducing ambiguity and reinforcing behavioural expectations. Moreover, perceived organisational support is theorised to fulfil basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which are foundational to work engagement. When faculty feel empowered through resources, recognition, and a collaborative culture, they are more likely to invest cognitive, emotional, and physical energy into environmental goals—a state conceptualised as green work engagement (Kim et al., 2019). In this framework, the organisational environment operates not only as a structural enabler but also as a motivational catalyst that legitimises sustainability efforts and strengthens faculty members’ intrinsic connection to environmental values. Thus, Proposition 1 anticipates that institutions demonstrating consistent, visible, and credible support for sustainability will observe heightened green work engagement among their academic staff.

Research Discussion on ‘Proposition 2’

The mediating role of green work engagement reflects an important theoretical advancement in understanding how supportive organisational contexts drive discretionary environmental behaviours. While organisational environment provides structural and cultural enablers, it is the internalised motivation and psychological activation of employees that ultimately determines whether these resources translate into sustained pro-environmental action (Bissing-Olson et al., 2013). Green work engagement, conceptualised as a state of vigour, dedication, and absorption directed toward ecological goals (Kim et al., 2019), channels institutional support into

active commitment. Empirical research demonstrates that engaged employees are more likely to exert discretionary effort, persist in the face of challenges, and identify innovative opportunities to advance sustainability (Saks, 2006; Robertson & Barling, 2017). In higher education, this dynamic is especially significant because faculty members often operate with substantial professional autonomy and must voluntarily integrate sustainability into teaching and research. A supportive organisational environment can inspire initial interest, but it is green work engagement that sustains faculty willingness to go beyond role requirements—for example, incorporating environmental topics into curriculum, mentoring students on sustainability, or reducing departmental resource consumption. Thus, Proposition 2 posits that green work engagement is a critical psychological mechanism linking institutional support to environmental citizenship behaviours, serving as a conduit through which organisational climate exerts its influence on individual actions.

Research Discussion on ‘Proposition 3’

Ecological self-identity—defined as the extent to which individuals perceive environmental values as central to their sense of self—has been shown to shape how people interpret and respond to organisational signals (Van der Werff, Steg, & Keizer, 2013). Faculty members with a salient ecological identity are predisposed to perceive sustainability policies and leadership behaviours as personally meaningful and aligned with their intrinsic motivations. Research suggests that individuals high in ecological self-identity experience congruence when their work environment affirms their values, leading to increased affective commitment and engagement (Norton et al., 2014). Conversely, when such alignment is absent, employees may remain disengaged or perceive organisational efforts as superficial. In the context of higher education, ecological self-identity may amplify the effects of a supportive organisational environment by reinforcing the psychological processes that underpin green work engagement. Faculty who sees themselves as environmental stewards are more likely to internalise institutional sustainability messages and translate them into personal commitment. Accordingly, Proposition 3 anticipates a moderating effect: faculty with strong ecological self-identity will demonstrate a stronger positive relationship between organisational environment and green work engagement, compared to those for whom environmental concerns are less central to their identity.

Research Discussion on ‘Proposition 4’

The link between work engagement and discretionary behaviour is well established in organisational psychology literature. Engaged employees are more likely to devote personal resources—time, energy, and creativity—to activities that advance organisational objectives (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). When engagement is directed specifically toward environmental goals, it manifests as voluntary behaviours that exceed formal job expectations. Studies in corporate and public sector settings have shown that employees who report higher green work engagement engage more frequently in behaviours such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and promoting sustainability initiatives among peers (Kim et al., 2019). In academic environments, these behaviours may include incorporating environmental themes into lectures, leading sustainability-focused committees, or advocating for green campus practices. Green work engagement thus operates as a motivational driver that energises faculty to take initiative and innovate in the realm of sustainability, reinforcing the positive cycle between engagement and pro-environmental action. Proposition 4 reflects the premise that when faculty experience deep psychological investment in ecological goals, they are significantly more likely to exhibit environmental citizenship behaviours that contribute to institutional and societal sustainability objectives.

Future Scope For This Study

- ✓ The proposed conceptual framework offers fertile ground for a range of future research endeavours aimed at deepening understanding of pro-environmental behaviours in higher education institutions. First, empirical studies can be designed to quantitatively test the propositions advanced in this paper, using validated measurement instruments to assess organisational environment, green work engagement, ecological self-identity, and environmental citizenship behaviours among faculty. Longitudinal research

could further elucidate the temporal dynamics of how sustained organisational support influences engagement and behaviour over time.

- ✓ Second, cross-cultural comparative studies hold potential to reveal how cultural norms and regional policy environments moderate the relationships within the framework. Examining institutions in different countries or cultural contexts can help identify universal drivers of environmental citizenship and context-specific nuances that require tailored interventions.
- ✓ Third, future research could explore additional moderating and mediating variables such as environmental knowledge, perceived behavioural control, or organisational justice perceptions, thereby refining and expanding the model's explanatory power.
- ✓ Finally, scholars might investigate the downstream impact of faculty environmental citizenship behaviours on student attitudes, learning outcomes, and campus sustainability performance. By connecting faculty engagement to broader educational and ecological outcomes, such research could provide compelling evidence for integrating sustainability into core institutional strategies. Collectively, these avenues underscore the potential of this conceptual framework to inform both theory development and practical applications aimed at fostering sustainable academic cultures.

Conclusion

As higher education institutions confront global sustainability challenges, understanding the drivers of pro-environmental citizenship behaviours among faculty has become increasingly critical. This conceptual study proposes that a supportive organisational environment fosters green work engagement, which in turn enhances voluntary environmental actions beyond formal role expectations. By integrating perspectives from organisational behaviour, engagement theory, and sustainability research, the study offers a holistic framework that can guide future empirical investigations and inform strategic initiatives to cultivate a culture of environmental responsibility among academicians. Ultimately, the framework underscores the potential of engaged faculty to act as catalysts for institutional transformation and broader societal change.

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