

## **EMPLOYEE GREEN BEHAVIOUR (EGB) AT WORK: THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF ISLAMIC VALUES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Environmental sustainability issues are one of the major concerns to be addressed by many organizations. As one of the options is by encouraging pro-environmental or green behaviour at workplace which could result to an employee responsibility towards reducing environmental problems. Similarly, Islamic thought also emphasized on the importance of protecting the environment and preserving nature. In fact, elements found in green practices are coherent with the explanation of Allah in the Quran. Nevertheless, the Muslim is less aware of the relationship between environmental behaviour and Islam. Hence, this concept paper is to examine employee green behaviour (EGB) from the Islamic perspectives. This study will provide insights for further research on environmental sustainability and benefits organizations that are interested in encouraging such behaviour with regards of Islamic practice. Although, the study is conceptual in nature, its findings could be used as the foundation for future research in order to identify the most significant Islamic values that influence green behaviour implementations.*

**Keywords:** *Employee behaviour, Green practice, Pro-environmental, Islamic value*

## INTRODUCTION

Climate change has become the most prominent environmental health risk and most crucial issue for the 21st century (World Health Organization, 2015). With the rapid population growth, the increase of energy consumption and the advancement of technology has led to several environmental issues affecting the earth and the well-being of the people. In 2017, SWCorp Malaysia highlighted that Malaysians generated about 37500 tons solid waste per day and involving RM 2.0 billion a year for its management. This critical indicator demonstrates that, there is a need for community to seriously investigated this matter particularly to the young generation. Until now, government and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Malaysia are still doing and promoting communication campaigns and strategies (e.g. Go Green Campaign, No Plastic, No straw, etc.) on the basic assumption that more knowledge to spread that would result to more enlightened behaviour. Besides, environmental degradation is mainly caused by industries directly or indirectly. Statistic from Department of Statistics, Malaysia (DOSM) shows increasing expenditure on environmental protection. The manufacturing sector dominated the overall expenditure on environmental protection expenditure in 2017 which was RM1,734.9 million with 66.9 percent contribution.

Furthermore, several studies addressing the environmental issues in the manufacturing industry have been conducted. For example, Ranitha and Dinethi, (2017) identified the manufacturing sector companies emphasized on sustainability and environmental friendly activities in the workplace but green behaviour of the employees has been reduced with the tenancy of the organization and this indicates that the management of the service sector and the manufacturing sector should motivate employee and develop training program to initiate green behaviour especially to the new employee. Subsequently, minimising the environmental pollution effect consider as an environmental action that will lead to economics benefits, which were alignment with shareholder and stakeholder interest (Chiu et al, 2017). A recent study showed that in the Malaysian food manufacturing industry, employees' green motivation mediates the relationships of environmental ethics, the institutional environment, and managerial support with the company's green behaviour, (Junsheng, H et al, 2020).

In addition, green growth will be one of the attentions in the Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) for sustainability in socio-economic development. For example, Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production) itemized that by 2030 the country is aiming substantially to reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse. To respond with this objective, one of the strategies is to greening the organization through employee behavioural change as specified by Loverock (2010). Employee behaviour at workplace may influence their outside work thus possibly will be effective in sustainable social change. Consequently, some concepts such as employee green behaviour are employed to educate employee practice green activities in workplace.

Islamic lifestyle encourages people to save the environment as according to the Al-Quran and Sunnah. It is Creation of Allah "*Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and*

(other) things of which they have no knowledge." (Quran 36:36). We should be keeping the environment sanitary and maintains the community "Beware of the three acts that cause you to be cursed: [1] relieving yourselves in shaded places (that people utilise), in a walkway or in a watering place." Narrated by Mu'adh, hasan, by Al-Albani. The idea behind this is to show that hygiene and cleanliness (*tahara*) integral deeply with Islam, which a major sub-branch of Muslim belief. Without physical hygiene, prayers are broken. Without clean facilities pollution ruins cities, and without any effort to improve one's own purity, it becomes more difficult to prevent external corruptions like littering.

Suzana Md. S, (2017) discovered that environmental aspect definitely deserves priority either from the perspectives of Maqasid Shariah. For Muslims, it is time to strengthen *hablum minal 'alam* or the relationship with nature through sustainable consumption. While there is a good theoretical understanding of these Islamic concepts and approaches, the reality is that many still do not practice what they know in their individual daily lives as well as in policy formulation. To encourage people embedding green lifestyle it requires change in values, attitude, habits, behaviour and culture. These changes can be achieved through the eco-shift which is thorough changes that involves transformation in people thinking, corporate policies and also changes in individual culture (Ujang, 2018).

In this study, the interrelation between employee environmental knowledge and employee green behaviour (EGB) for organization environmental sustainability is being discussed from an Islamic viewpoint, where Islamic values plays a significant role.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Employee Green Behaviour

Employee green behaviour (EGB) referred to as pro-environmental behaviour, means employees set of behaviours that reduces harm to the environment through minimizing use of energy, reducing waste, conserving water, buying eco-products, etc. (Steg and Vlek, 2009; Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). EGB is defined as a workplace-specific form of pro-environmental behaviour in employees, and it is categorised into required employee green behaviour, and voluntary employee green behaviour, defined as a workplace-specific form of pro environmental behaviour, (Norton et al., 2015). Stern, (2000) define employee green behaviour (EGB) as behavioural intention that propel people to take action to reduce the negative impact of human on the environment.

Next, when pro-environmental behaviour is carrying out in relation to individuals' jobs, therefore employee become more pro-environmental behaviour at workplaces (Ones and Dilchert, 2012) and this will become an organizational culture in environmental awareness which have influence on pro-environmental behavior at workplace (Ujjal & Durba, 2017).

According to Ones and Dilchert (2012) there are two ways employee green behaviour can be studied which depending on the type of industry where employees work. In the green industry, green behaviour are an integral part of work tasks

whereby in the traditional jobs, green behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behavior for the environment (OBCE), is a reflection of employee willingness to protect the environment by avoiding waste or by implementing recycling in the workplace. It was found that employee is more committed and satisfied to engage in OBCEs when organization supported them (Paille & Boiral, 2013) this indicated that perceived organizational support and job satisfaction have an indirect effect on OCBE. Therefore, in order to encourage employee to perform green activities in the workplace, the management and leader role are taking place.

In most studies of employee green behavior, many researchers are using Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB) which proposed by Ajzen (1991). According to this theory, behavioural intention is influenced by the three factors namely attitude, subjective norm, and behavioural control. These factors work together to form a complete theoretical framework for predicting human behavior in engaging green practices (Shwu-Ing Wu & Jia-Yi Chen, 2014, Norton, T. A., et al 2016).

### **Environmental Knowledge**

Environmental knowledge (EK) is an underlying variable that contributes to pro-environmental behaviour. The role of knowledge is important, given that controlling environmental impact is viewed as a responsibility for all employees (Florea, et al 2013). Kollmuss & Agyman, (2002) categorised environmental knowledge and awareness are the internal factors that affect environmental behaviour. Increases in knowledge and having positive thought is not sufficient to lead people pro-environment behaviour (Owens, 2009; Bamberg, 2003; Erten, 2005; Sadik & Çakan, 2010). Environmental knowledge and positive attitude of employee are not sufficient to influence the employee to put them to practice, similar with findings from Sadik, F & Sadik, S, (2014). This shows that changing behaviour is a monumental task. This is to fill the gap that another variable should be study to see how employees act environmentally friendly at work. Hence, as Islamic values may have possibility to influence Muslim employees to act environmentally friendly at work.

### **Green in Islamic Perspective**

Islamic teachings provide guidelines that work in a holistic system which recognizes the relationships between the various aspects of life and modern society, in which green and sustainable development care is also integrated. In Quran and Sunnah there are many Islamic rules that are urging individuals and groups to preserve the environment to keep it clean and in order. Truly, Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean." (Al Baqarah 2:222). Al-Quran has stated that environmental conservation is a religious duty as well as social obligation and not an optional matter (Salman, Z. 2015.)

According to Salih et al, 2012, those people who are practicing Islamic work ethics in the organizations are also likely to feel more attached and responsible for the organizational success. Therefore, it is important for organizations to

implement green practices by practicing Islamic work ethics in sustaining the organization. Nurul Sakinah & Suzzanne, 2015, concluded that majority of the employee recognize the green office however they did not practice and apply towards their organization. Employees feel that green office is not important to which they think it is not affected their daily work routines at all. Ilham, Z in Nur Hidayah AJ, et al., 2015 found that positive correlation between understanding of Islamic concepts and awareness towards the importance of green energy. Respondents have a good understanding on the Islamic green concepts, however the application of these concepts into daily practice is fewer.

In Islam we are encouraged to use effectively the natural resources and waste minimization. “*And do not cause corruption in the earth, when it has been set in order*”, Al-A'raf 7:56. A great way to minimize the pollution and misuse of wild-life environments that are mainly accountable for plant and animal destructions, is to obey another verse of the Qur'an, “Eat and drink, but waste not by excess; “He” loves not the excessive”, Al-A'raf 7:31. This means that as employee also we need to practice waste minimization for example through 3R (reuse, reduce, recycle) activities. Additionally, management and leader roles are to create policy and guideline to ensure the green practice are being implement and be a part of organizational culture.

Beyond that, Muslims are placed in the framework of maqasid syariah. Maqasid syariah is an approach to safeguard and preserve religion, soul, intellect, inheritance and wealth. For the environmental perspective this concept is also an important tool for ensuring the preservation of nature meets the objectives of Islam. As an employee what we can do is being practice green activities in the workplace “And we have not sent you, (O Muhammad), except as a mercy to the worlds. (Al-Anbiya, 21: 107)

Mashitoh, Y. et al (2017) majority of Muslim practice recycling activity as compared to others however the practice of *environmentally ethical behaviour (EEB)* among Muslims in Malaysia does not motivated by the values promoted by Islam but by other factors like economic, social factors, level of education and regulation enforcement. Thus, this shows that Islamic teachings on the environment from the AL-Quran and Sunnah are not the fundamental part of Muslim's daily routine. Therefore, environmental problems among Muslim need an ethical solution, and it is suggested that Muslim should follow the Islamic values and make a positive change in behaviour towards the environment. The real concept of environmental sustainability is to ensure that the natural conditions are protected. Islam strongly emphasizes that human beings play an important role in maintaining the environment. "Do not cause corruption on the earth," they say, "We are but reformers." (Al-Baqarah, 11) in another verse “and do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption.” (As-Syu'ara,183). Figure 1 proposed framework of employee green behavior that show linking between environmental knowledge and Islamic values.

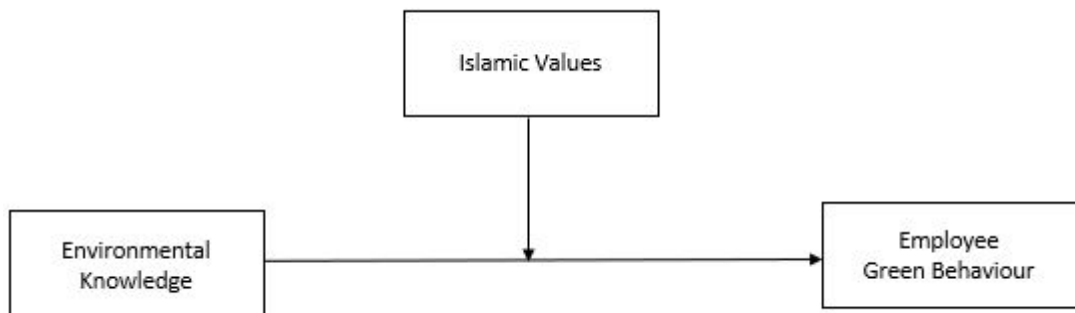


Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework

## METHODOLOGY

A review of literature is conducted by an archival method. This paper includes the articles cited on online databases including Science Direct and Google Scholar with environmental sustainability, pro-environmental behaviour (PEB), employee green behaviour (EGB) and Islamic values as keywords.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concept of human being as a *khalifah* clearly indicates that the environment is the absolute right of Allah S.W.T which is granted to the people as trustworthy to be maintained. The creation of this earth and all its natural resources is a sign of His wisdom, mercy, power and His other attributes and therefore serves to develop human awareness and understanding of this creator.” (Ar-Ra`d, 13: 2-4; 21:79). Although, the research on employee environmentally friendly in developing countries is gaining momentum, very little research attention has been given to the strength of Islamic values in studying the green consciousness and behaviour of employee in Malaysia. Consequently, this study will enhance the body of knowledge of employee green behaviour in Islamic perspective and organizations will benefits from a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship. Therefore, the Islamic value is viewed as a necessary lens to explore employee green practice.

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