

## A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR IN ORGANISATIONS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GREEN KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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<https://doi.org/10.46754/umtjur.v6i4.595>

Received: 26 August 2024

Accepted: 12 September 2024

Published: 15 October 2024

**Abstract:** This study develops a comprehensive conceptual framework of employees' pro-environmental behaviour within organisations, grounded in Social Identity Theory (SIT). The paper examines how green knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and pro-environmental behaviour. The proposed model contributes to organisational greening by fostering engagement in sustainable practices. The findings offer novel insights into evaluating pro-environmental behaviour, which influences the Environmental Management (EM) programmes implemented by organisations. This research enhances our understanding of employee behaviour from an environmental perspective, with significant implications for policymakers, organisational leaders, and society in advancing sustainable development initiatives.

**Keywords:** Corporate social responsibility, green knowledge sharing, pro-environmental behaviour, environmental, sustainability.

### Introduction

Previous research has revealed that environmental pollution is mainly caused by "human activities" (Li *et al.*, 2021; Mi *et al.*, 2020; Tang, 2018). Carbon emissions from both human and organisational actions contribute significantly to the growing environmental consequences of climate change (Al-Swidi *et al.*, 2021). However, encouraging eco-friendly behaviours in the workplace might be especially challenging when people are used to damaging the environment (Michalek *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, the literature implies that improving an organisation's environmental performance requires a focus on developing the environmental skills, attitudes, and behaviours of its workforce (Saeed *et al.*, 2019; Yong *et al.*, 2020; Islam *et al.*, 2021). In light of these improvements in environmental consciousness, many organisations are moving from old operational models to greener frameworks in order to improve their environmental

performance (Mousa and Othman, 2020; Rubel *et al.*, 2021).

Many organisations frequently neglect the significance of guiding the workforce in adopting environmentally friendly behaviours, instead prioritising technological improvements. Notably, encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour among employees can effectively mitigate the adverse effects of workplace activities (Liu *et al.*, 2017; Blok *et al.*, 2015). Employees are considered valuable resources in organisations (Guest, 2011), and their environmentally conscious acts are measurable behaviours that help achieve sustainability in the workplace (Norton *et al.*, 2015; Andersson *et al.*, 2015). These actions are in strong accordance with behaviours that support the environment and promote its long-term sustainability (Wang, 2016). Thus, studies are prioritising the promotion of sustainable

measures, acknowledging their essential functions in addressing environmental issues during operations. As such, integrating green practices into management has a dual effect: it influences employee behaviour and creates a pro-environmental mindset, improving overall environmental performance (Kim *et al.*, 2019).

Pro-environmental behaviour refers to conscious acts intended to reduce harm to the environment, such as habits like reusing materials, minimising waste, and managing energy use (Busse and Menzel, 2014; De Leeuw *et al.*, 2015; Safari *et al.*, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2016). This includes the use of public transportation, the selection of eco-friendly items (Yusliza *et al.*, 2020), and the effective utilisation of natural resources (Ogiemwonyi *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, pro-environmental behaviour in the workplace refers to the measures employees take to promote environmental sustainability (Iqbal *et al.*, 2018). These measures might involve opting for stairs instead of elevators, minimising waste, switching off superfluous lights, developing ideas for environmental efforts (Ansari *et al.*, 2021), printing on both sides of the paper, and preserving an organised work environment (Afsar and Umrani, 2020).

Moreover, extensive studies have indicated that corporate social responsibility activities have a positive effect (Hoque *et al.*, 2018; Afsar and Umrani, 2020; Bansal *et al.*, 2014). Organisations that engage in corporate social responsibility and actively promote environmental protection are usually driven by their commitment to the overall well-being of society. In particular, organisations continually strive to minimise pollution and decrease the wastage of resources (Kim *et al.*, 2017; Levy and Park, 2011). This commitment fosters employee engagement in environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient actions (Afsar *et al.*, 2020; Chaudhary, 2020; Tian and Robertson, 2019). Due to the growing focus on addressing environmental and ethical concerns, corporate social responsibility is becoming widely considered an effective driver for accomplishing these objectives (Kim *et al.*, 2017). Recently, the idea of corporate

social responsibility has grown beyond just including “socially responsible practices” to include aspects that focus on sustainability (Ait Sidhoum and Serra, 2018; Marco *et al.*, 2018).

Prior studies have investigated the exchange of knowledge at both the individual and organisational levels (Vrontis *et al.*, 2021; Bhatti *et al.*, 2022). Individually, employees may develop “collaborative” knowledge by sharing their views with others (Teh & Yong, 2011; Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016; Song, Zhao, & Zeng, 2020). Note that sharing knowledge about sustainable practices is vital for organisations to gain a long-term competitive advantage. Researchers such as Norton *et al.* (2014), Gope *et al.* (2018), and Song *et al.* (2020) have highlighted this strategy. This strategy fosters an organisational culture that values environmental protection and encourages employees to share environmental information. As a result, it improves employee relationships and encourages them to gain information about environmental sustainability. This, in turn, motivates individuals to share their personal experiences and thoughts on environmental issues inside the organisation (Zhang *et al.*, 2021).

On the other hand, Lin and Chen (2017) regarded green knowledge-sharing as the magnitude to which knowledge workers share green knowledge with other members. Thus, it can be postulated that green knowledge sharing is the process of disseminating green-related information among employees to enhance an organisation’s sustainable objectives. Therefore, effective green knowledge management indicates enhanced knowledge infrastructure and transmission capabilities with respect to environmental issues among organisational members (Lin and Chen, 2017). In this context, the current study offers an original perspective on the development of a pro-environmental behaviour framework that examines how green knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and pro-environmental behaviour. Its relevance can be justified as follows:

- a) Develop a conceptual framework to measure pro-environmental behaviour;
- b) Propose a role for corporate social responsibility in this behaviour;
- c) Propose a mediating role of green knowledge-sharing in the relationship between corporate social responsibility and pro-environmental behaviour.

Justifications for this study are as follows:

1. Researchers do recognise the role of knowledge management in workplaces (Dezi *et al.*, 2019). However, how knowledge management affects the organisation has been studied less (Bhatti *et al.*, 2020). It is well established that knowledge management influences various performance outcomes, such as improved customer relationships, service quality (Tseng, 2016), and innovation performance (Bhatti *et al.*, 2020). Indeed, knowledge sharing signifies a core element of knowledge management. The literature examines it at both organisational (Ferraris *et al.*, 2017; Vrontis and Christofi, 2019) and individual levels (Rubel *et al.*, 2018; Bhatti *et al.*, 2020).
2. Recent studies have suggested that the lack of investigation of mediators and moderators may have constrained researchers from coming to comprehensive conclusions about the benefits of green knowledge sharing (Dangelico, 2015; Srinivasan and Swink, 2015). Thus, it is imperative to have an in-depth understanding of the mediating mechanism through green knowledge sharing in the relationship between corporate social responsibility and pro-environmental behaviour.
3. Further, in the context of a developing country, the link between corporate social responsibility and green behaviour at the individual level and workplace pro-environmental behaviour has been neglected. According to Saleem *et al.* (2020), environmental issues should be dealt with through “employees’ volunteering, human,

and selfless efforts.” In other words, corporate social responsibility initiatives potentially represent the secret to preserving and conserving the environment.

Based on the research gap, it is clear that there is a lack of empirical study that relates corporate social responsibility, green knowledge sharing, and pro-environmental behaviour. This study, therefore, will help organisations effectively manage their employees to become greener as well as assist policymakers in improving environmental policies.

### ***Theoretical Background and Proposition Developments***

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals improve their self-concept by classifying themselves and subsequently identifying with those groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). This identification improves further when involvement in groups is associated with positive traits, which reinforces the individual’s self-perception (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Members of a group frequently recognise shared perceptions and behaviours, which develop a sense of belonging (Stets and Burke, 2000). Therefore, SIT is frequently applied in organisational research to understand how employees perceive their identity within the social context of the organisation (Kim *et al.*, 2019). Employees are more likely to embrace organisational beliefs, take pride in the organisation’s initiatives, and exhibit loyalty as members (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Hence, a strong organisational identity can enhance employee commitment, particularly when the organisation positively impacts employee behaviour (O’Reilly and Chatman, 1986).

### ***Corporate Social Responsibility and Green Knowledge-Sharing***

Corporate social responsibility is recognised as a strong predictor of employees’ positive attitudes and behaviours (Asante Boadi *et al.*, 2020; Gaudencio *et al.*, 2021; Tuan, 2015; Nazir and Islam, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2020). However, the link between this variable and knowledge-

sharing is still underdeveloped (Chtioui *et al.*, 2023). In any event, the key to knowledge always lies in individuals. The “people” in an organisation will be the key factor in knowledge sharing. Research by Lee, Park, and Lee (2013) reported that environmental responsibility activities positively influence organisational commitment and trust, which are critical for effective knowledge sharing. Lin (2007) demonstrated that companies with strong environmental responsibility programmes tend to have more robust knowledge-sharing cultures, as employees feel more valued and engaged. Similarly, Salopek and Dixon (2000) posited that knowledge sharing transfers information and knowledge to others to create learning opportunities and encourage others to learn. The current study, therefore, proposes:

Proposition 1: Corporate social responsibility has an effect on green knowledge-sharing

#### ***Green Knowledge-Sharing and Pro-Environmental Behaviour***

Sharing environmental knowledge promotes the dissemination of awareness about green behaviours among employees. Prior studies have demonstrated that the worth of knowledge increases as an outcome of the process of sharing (Steg and Vleg, 1991). In this specific framework, the process of sharing environmental knowledge among employees acts as an opportunity for the development of new environmental perspectives and the improvement of existing knowledge to a higher quality. Consequently, this positively impacts their willingness to participate in green behaviours. Furthermore, the environmental knowledge employees acquire is a significant asset for differentiating between beneficial and detrimental green practices, directing their involvement in environmentally conscious initiatives. Pro-environmental behaviour is the practical implementation of the environmental knowledge that employees have acquired (Zhang *et al.*, 2021). Hence, it can be argued that employees must comprehensively grasp and efficiently apply environmental knowledge in order to significantly impact their green

behaviours. Given this understanding, we put forward the following hypothesis:

Proposition 2: Green knowledge-sharing has an effect on pro-environmental behaviour

#### ***Corporate Social Responsibility and Pro-environmental Behaviour***

Corporate social responsibility has evolved from socially conscious behaviour to include sustainable practices (Ait Sidhoum & Serra, 2018; Marco *et al.*, 2018). Su and Swanson (2019) contended that it is crucial to investigate the degree of green behaviour that employees return to their employers and the social well-being that corporate social responsibility programmes provide for their workforces. Businesses are currently benefiting directly and indirectly from corporate social responsibility’s positive benefits on employee welfare since it has been observed that corporate social responsibility has been embedded in many firms’ everyday operations (Ahmed *et al.*, 2020). Thus, numerous research investigations have examined how employees’ perceptions of their employer’s corporate social responsibility initiatives influence their behaviour at work, which results in positive behaviours (De Roeck & Farooq, 2017). Notably, employees who care more about corporate social responsibility will participate more in voluntary or involuntary activities that support a sustainable environment, enhancing organisational performance, according to recent research by Shah *et al.* (2021). As such, several studies have examined how employees’ perceptions of their employer’s corporate social responsibility initiatives influence their behaviour at work, which results in positive behaviours (De Roeck & Farooq, 2017). According to Farooq *et al.* (2014), an organisation supporting corporate social responsibility initiatives demonstrates to its investors that it cares about the community, environment, and workforce. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

Proposition 3: Corporate social responsibility has an effect on pro-environmental behaviour

**Mediating Role of Green Knowledge-Sharing**

The environmental knowledge that employees acquire is an essential asset for determining effective and ineffective green behaviours, which in turn influences their actions. However, there is a lack of research that particularly examines the extent to which individuals' behaviours of sharing knowledge contribute to sustainable development (Zhou, Govindan, and Xie, 2020). This highlights the significance of sharing knowledge to promote environmentally sustainable and secure practices. Green knowledge sharing is acknowledged as a key factor in motivating employees to participate in innovative behaviours that strengthen their commitment to the environment (Cheng et al., 2019; Abukhait et al., 2018). Additionally, it serves as an essential approach for fostering critical thinking. Furthermore, Eden (1998) suggested that an individual's perception of responsibility corresponds to their engagement with addressing environmental concerns. For example, an activist can exhibit higher levels of environmental responsibility by thoroughly assessing their circumstances in comparison to others (Janmaimool and Chudech, 2024). Therefore, an individual's belief in their pro-

environmental behaviour might impact their sense of responsibility, especially when they perceive themselves as more responsible than others in their community. This association can also be analysed using SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), which proposes that individuals are driven to behave in ways that match their preferred societal values, making valuable contributions to societal and ecological issues. Given the information and theoretical links, we put forward the following hypothesis:

Proposition 4: Green knowledge-sharing mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and pro-environmental behaviour

**Proposed Framework for Pro-environmental Behaviour**

With the SIT as its underlying support, the proposed study maintains that corporate social responsibility influences pro-environmental behaviour. A conceptual framework has been developed, as displayed in Figure 1, that highlights the relationships between corporate social responsibility and pro-environmental behaviour, with green knowledge sharing acting as mediators. See Figure 1.

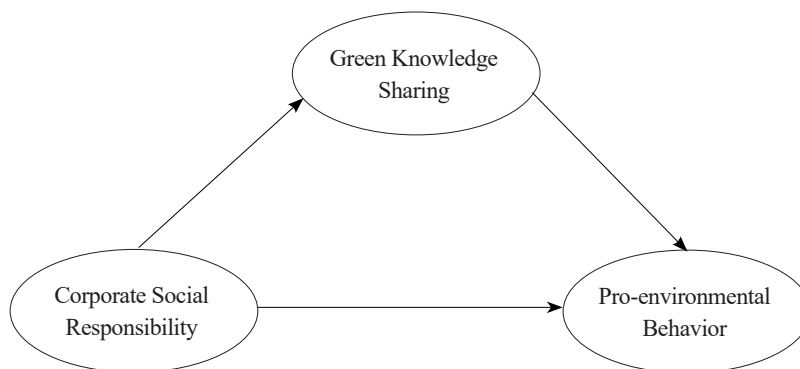


Figure 1: A proposed conceptual model of pro-environmental behaviour

**Implications**

This study underscores the critical role of green management strategies in promoting organisational sustainability and effective Environmental Management (EM). The findings

reveal that businesses implementing sustainable policies benefit from improved environmental performance and encourage employees to engage in environmentally conscious behaviour.



For organisations, this means creating green knowledge-sharing initiatives that foster both individual and collective contributions to social sustainability. Accordingly, these efforts are essential for long-term success in corporate social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

For policymakers, the study highlights the importance of understanding public awareness of environmental responsibilities, challenges faced by communities, and the factors influencing environmentally conscious behaviour. By addressing these issues, government bodies can develop more effective policies that promote sustainable practices across society.

Moreover, the results indicate that incentivising and acknowledging employees' environmental efforts within the workplace can extend such behaviours into their personal lives. This presents an opportunity for government and organisations to collaborate on initiatives promoting environmental education and awareness, ultimately contributing to societal well-being. Therefore, the government and local authorities should prioritise investments in public awareness campaigns and educational programmes that enhance knowledge of environmental issues, driving positive behavioural change among individuals and communities.

### Future Research

Even though this work advances the area, it has several drawbacks. The framework and the emergent hypotheses are not put to an empirical test. Moreover, it is recommended that the conceptual framework for pro-environmental behaviour be used in various contexts to improve comprehension of the impact of pro-environmental behaviour practices on sustainable performance. In addition, this study focused on illustrating the impacts of corporate social responsibility on pro-environmental behaviour using green knowledge sharing as a mediator. For future works, it is suggested to be taken into account to conduct a further study on this topic and test this model empirically.

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