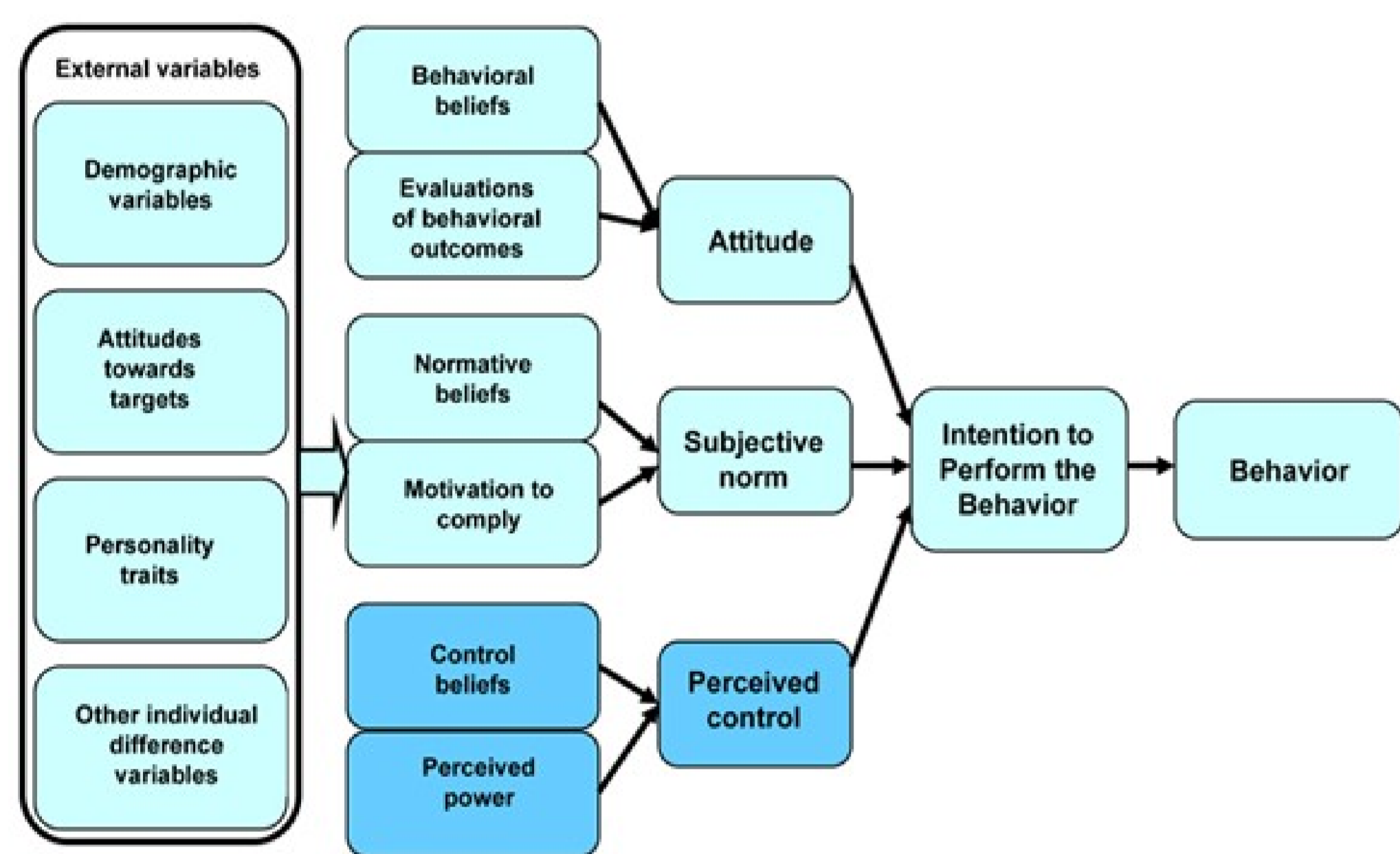


# Investigating the influence of factors inhibiting environmental behavior and their relationship to workplace health

M.K. Pardon, C.J. McShane & A.L. Swinbourne

Department of Psychology, College of Healthcare Sciences, James Cook University (Townsville),  
HABITT (Health and Behaviour Change in the Tropics Research Group)

**Background:** A wealth of research has explored household pro-environmental behavior (PEB), however very little research has explored PEB in the workplace. This constitutes a considerable gap in the literature and in practice. Workplaces provide substantial opportunities for the implementation of behavioral interventions and policies<sup>1</sup>. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)<sup>2,3</sup> as a guiding framework, this study sought to identify the predictive validity of perceived behavioral control, environmental attitudes and norms on work-related PEB. Understanding the predictors of this rational behavior has implications for improving both environmental and health outcomes within the workplace. **Method:** Staff and students (N=198) from James Cook University, Townsville were recruited to participate in an online questionnaire that explored the attitudinal, normative and control factors associated with workplace PEB. **Findings:** The importance of attitudinal, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control factors varied depending on the type of PEB targeted. For example, subjective norms were particularly important for workplace recycling behaviors. **Discussion:** The TPB is useful in explaining some PEB due to the intentional and rational nature of environmental behavior. The findings further suggest that workplaces could act as a medium by which to enhance PEB through policy implementation at a micro level. Moreover, due to the nature of some PEB, this policy implementation may have spillover effects for individual health outcomes. The importance of encouraging home PEB may also have positive effects for workplace environmental behavior.



## Background

### Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

- The TPB<sup>2,3</sup> is a social cognition model examining behavior change, predominantly in the field of health psychology<sup>4</sup>.
- The model has been used to examine home pro-environmental behaviors such as waste management<sup>5</sup>, food waste<sup>6</sup> and environmental activism<sup>7</sup>.
- The TPB has been well supported empirically as a theoretical foundation for the investigation of home pro-environmental behavior.
- It is important to predict pro-environmental behavior in a workplace domain, and more specifically in a domain of both paid and unpaid employees, as this provides information to implement effective environmental policy.

The aim of the study was to develop an understanding of the factors that inhibit pro-environmental behavior and provide recommendations for workplace policy in order to positively influence employee environmental health and wellbeing

## Method

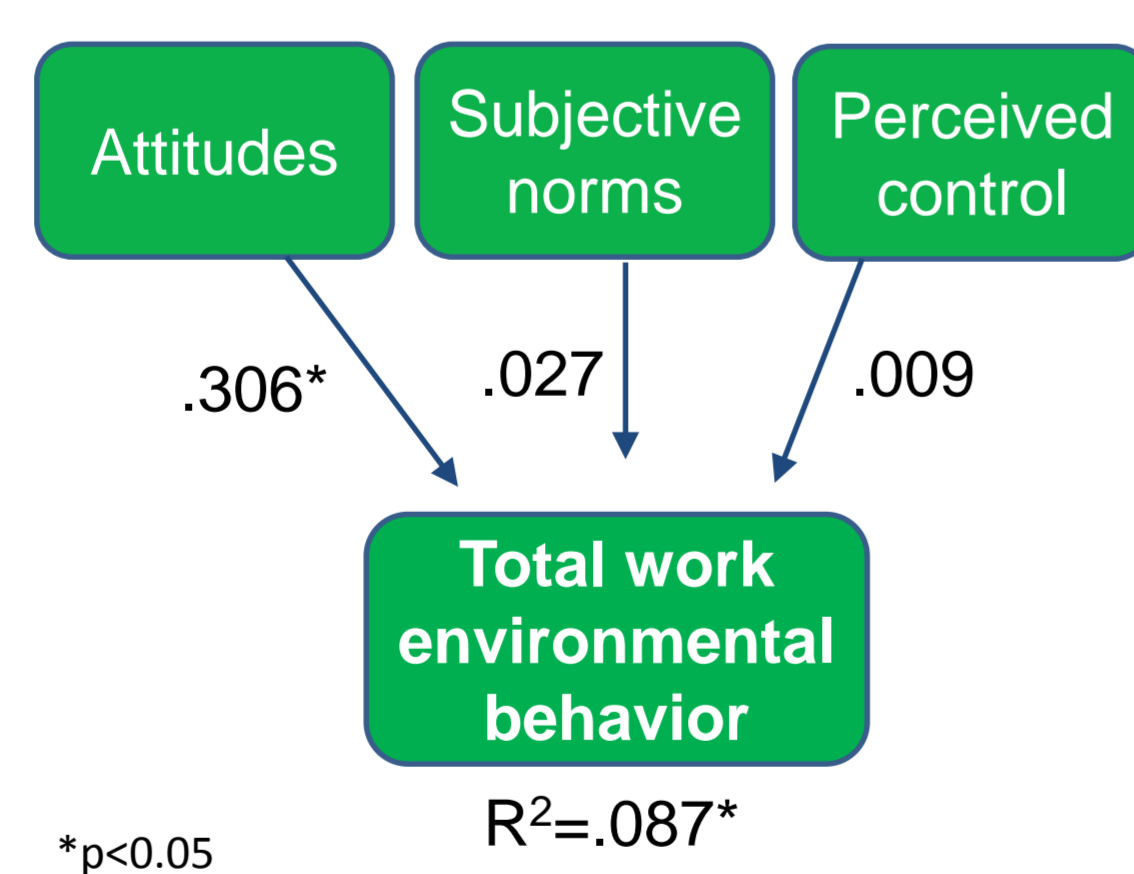
- Staff and students were recruited from James Cook University, Townsville campus (N=198) and were invited to complete an online survey.

Age (years)		Gender		Total
Range	M (SD)	Male	Female	
17 - 66	26.9 (11.2)	47	150	198

## Results

### Predicting work environmental behavior using the TPB model

- Two stage hierarchical regression analysis for total work environmental behavior
  - Block 1: Age, gender, university position (staff or student)
  - Block 2: TPB model components



### Breaking down the model components

- Table below illustrates the significant correlations between all variables

Workplace environmental behavior	Variables				
	Subjective norms	Work subjective norms	Home subjective norms	Attitudes	Perceived control
Total	-	.222	.192	-	-.167
Advocacy	-	.260	.207	.330	-.289
Conservation	-	.222	.160	.148	-
Recycling	.145	-	.164	.348	-.151
Investment	-	-	-	.277	-.164

Significant if  $p < .05$

## Discussion

- The TPB can be applied to the workplace setting to predict environmental behavior.
- Internal influences*, for example family, have a significant impact on work environmental behavior.
- Policy should focus on *micro level interventions*.
- Altering *workplace norms* in order to influence *attitudes* to increase environmental behavior should also be of focus.
- Interventions should encourage employees to *carry environmental behavior from the workplace into the home environment*.
- Future research should examine the implementation of policy that has a focus on employee environmental *attitudes* and also *work and home subjective norms*.

## Implications for employee health and wellbeing

Policy interventions should focus on:

- Home environmental behaviors
- Influencing home subjective norms

**Implementing micro level behavioral interventions will allow workplaces to achieve macro level goals and therefore create a harmonious workplace environment, positively affecting employee health**

This may reduce:

- Environmental behavior and attitude dissonance
- Employee workplace environmental policy resistance

### References

1. Andersson, L., Shivarajan, S., & Blau, G. (2005). Enacting ecological sustainability in the MNC: A test of an adapted Value-Belief-Norm framework. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 59(3), 295-305; 2. Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behaviour. In J. Kuhl & J. Beckman (Eds.), *Action-control: From cognition to behaviour*: Heidelberg: Springer Verlag; 3. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behaviour. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179; 4. Ajzen, I. (2011). The theory of planned behaviour: Reactions and reflections. *Psychology & Health*, 26(9), 1113-1127. doi:10.1080/08870446.2011.613995; 5. Taylor, S., & Todd, P. (1995). An integrated model of waste management behavior: A test of household recycling and composting intentions. *Environment and Behavior*, 27(5), 603-630. doi:10.1177/0013916595275001; 6. Graham-Rowe, E., Jessop, D. C., & Sparks, P. (2015). Predicting household food waste reduction using an extended theory of planned behaviour. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 101, 194-202. doi:10.1016/j.resconrec.2015.05.020; 7. Fielding, K. S., McDonald, R., & Louis, W. R. (2008). Theory of planned behaviour, identity and intentions to engage in environmental activism. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28(4), 318-326. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2008.03.003.