



ADAPTING THEORIES OF PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOURS TO ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM: A REVIEW OF RELEVANT THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of this paper is to review relevant environmental and behavioural theories relating to pro-environmental behaviours and to particularly propose their adaptation to environmental activism. Environmental activism, which refers to advocating and participating in environmental actions and behaviours to foster a sustainable environment, is largely understudied in Africa. By reviewing theories that can potentially explain why individuals may engage in or advocate for environmental actions, this study seeks to revive the interest of African researchers in issues relating to pro-environmental behaviours and, in particular, environmental activism. Theories help to expand understanding of any given phenomena. They can safely be referred to as the social scientist's guide to social investigations as they greatly help in pioneering, predicting, expanding, and critiquing knowledge. The theories reviewed in this study include the Value Belief Norm Theory, Protection Motivation Theory, Health Belief Model, Theory of Planned Behaviour, and the Direct and Buffering Hypothesis of Social Support. This review paper concludes that for a more nuanced understanding of environmental activism and pro-environmental behaviours at large, integration and adaptation of several theories are necessary as they will collectively provide detailed insights into possible remedies for the human and technology-induced environmental issues that plague the world, especially Africa as a continent.*

KEYWORDS: Africa, environmental activism, environmental sustainability, pro-environmental behaviour, theoretical frameworks



INTRODUCTION

Human behaviours substantially impact the natural environment, making environmental problems among the most urgent and pressing social problems in contemporary times (Torkar & Bogner, 2019). For several millennia, the earth's environment has given human beings and other organisms conducive natural habitats, but the activities of human beings and their insatiable needs resulted in the development of various survival and adaptation strategies (Akintunde, 2017; Altunoglu et al., 2017). However, these strategies, most especially technology and industrialisation, continue to produce negative and consequential effects on the natural environment, directly or indirectly, resulting in either the degradation of or damage to the natural environment (Akintunde, 2017), including the emergence of killer diseases (Behera & Samal, 2015). Today, the world faces various environmental problems, which are increasingly becoming serious and hazardous risks requiring immediate and effective intervention strategies (Zeng et al., 2020). These intervention strategies will help to control the menace caused by the environmental problems to the environment as well as their consequential effects on the human beings who inhabit these natural living spaces. Research indicates that people's lifestyles and their approaches to and activities on the environment are responsible for these environmental problems (Atav et al., 2015). Akintunde (2017) suggests that most of the recent environmental problems result from individuals' actions and consumption decisions, including the activities of large and small businesses.

Consequently, the need for environmental sustainability is growing as technology and industrialization progress, and to achieve this, the public's voluntary environmental actions or pro-environmental behaviours are critical, especially those of the youths (Li et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2018; Zeng et al., 2020). This increasing knowledge about the harmful consequences of people's environmental lifestyles in contemporary or modern societies has caused an increase in pro-environmental behaviours, making it the primary focus of not only global environmental policies but has also elicited the interest of applied environmental psychologists (Sawitri et al., 2015). In response to the increasing concerns about problems that plight the environment, such as climate change, many contemporary psychologists are repeatedly researching and promoting environmental sustainability (Alisat & Riemer, 2015). Environmental activism is not only in the interest of psychologists; it has been explored by different disciplines such as sociology, education and political science (Alkahr, 2020). However, the emphasis and efforts of most psychologists revolve around mitigation by enabling changes in the day-to-day personal practices of people, such as waste recycling and composting (Alisat & Riemer, 2015; Dittmer & Riemer, 2012). Authors such as Kenis and Mathijs (2012), Rouser-Renouf et al. (2014), and Alisat and Riemer (2015) buttressed the fact that there exist some structural and institutional hindrances to changing climate-related behaviours. In conclusion, they further suggested that "citizen activism and grass-root organising" is the "most efficacious strategy for emission reduction" (Alisat & Riemer, 2015; Rouser-Renouf et al., 2014). However, researchers such as Alisat and Riemer (2015) and Leiserowitz et al. (2012) have noted that there is a very low prevalence of these types of behaviours (environmental behaviours such as activism) in the general population.

Environmental activism is a form of pro-environmental behaviour targeted toward protecting and conserving the environment. It also refers to advocating and participating in environmental actions and behaviours to foster a sustainable environment. It often involves intentions to act through environmental organisations with common goals (Alkahr, 2020). Environmental activism is also defined as "organised participation in environmental issues, which include



environmentally friendly behaviours rooted in the political realm” (Marquart-Pyatt, 2012). Environmental activism is often expressed collectively with other individuals who share common beliefs and ideologies about protecting the environment (Fung & Adams, 2017; Lee et al., 2014). Membership in environmental groups, engagement in political actions, commitment to environmentalism (e.g., participating actively in environmental organisations), consciously exhibiting difficult environmental behaviours, having the ability to influence policies, or engaging in behaviours that protect the environment are examples of pro-environmental behaviours which are considered as environmental activism (Dono et al., 2010). Researchers in sociology and political science have explained environmental activism as “a process of collective actions to support the environmental movement” (Dono et al., 2010, p. 178).

Theories have been very helpful in explaining social phenomena. In this case, theories can effectively explain why people may engage in environmental activism or not, as well as model factors that might influence people's decision to participate in environmental activism. According to Akintunde (2017), a theory is a well-researched concept that explains a particular feature of the natural world. Theories are based on frequently conducted tests and observations, and they include generally accepted facts, laws, forecasts, and tested hypotheses. As a result, theoretical frameworks offer a structure for presenting a research study's theory. Theories help to expand understanding of any given phenomena. They can safely be referred to as the social scientist's guide to social investigations as they greatly help in pioneering, predicting, expanding, and critiquing knowledge.

For a more nuanced understanding of environmental activism, adaptation of existing theories that explain the reasons people might engage in environmental actions is ultimately essential, as this will give more insights to researchers seeking to examine potential mechanisms and factors that influence pro-environmental behaviours. This paper proposes that the theories reviewed have high explanatory power regarding factors that influence participation in environmental activism and pro-environmental behaviours at large. Although the reviewed theories are not intended to be exclusive (i.e., they are not the only theories that have tried to explain environmental behaviours), they were specifically selected and adapted to environmental activism due to the strong models they have proposed. The theories include Value Belief Norm Theory, Protection Motivation Theory, Health Belief Model, Theory of Planned Behaviour, and the Direct and Buffering Hypothesis of Social Support.

Value Belief Norm Theory

The Value Belief Model (VBN) was developed by Stern (2000) as a theory of environmentally significant behaviour and has been widely used to explain pro-environmental behaviours, including but not limited to environmental activism. The value-belief-norm theory of environmentalism, often shortened and popularly known as the value belief norm theory (VBN), is said to have originated from most earlier theories of environmentalism such as the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP), norm-activation theory and value theory (Akintunde, 2017). The value belief norm theory gives a more comprehensive explanation of the human-environment interaction and how these interactions can have reciprocal effects, taking into account a large variety of variables that influence cause and effect (Akintunde, 2017). Stern (2000) saw the need to arrive at a new and more coherent theory of environmentally significant behaviours. To do this, he proposed the value belief norm theory, which connects the tenets of the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP), norm-activation theory and value theory from

different perspectives (Akintunde, 2017). The central idea of the value belief norm theory is that three important causal variables are factors in environmentally significant behaviours. These three factors include personal values (biospheric, altruistic, and egoistic), beliefs (ecological worldview, perception of adverse consequences or for valued objects, and perceived ability to reduce threats), and pro-environmental personal norms (a sense of responsibility to pursue pro-environmental actions). For Stern (2000), these variables then lead to environmentally significant behaviours (which include environmental activism, non-activist behaviours in the public sphere, behaviours in the private sphere, and behaviours in organisations) (Akintunde, 2017; Stern, 2000).

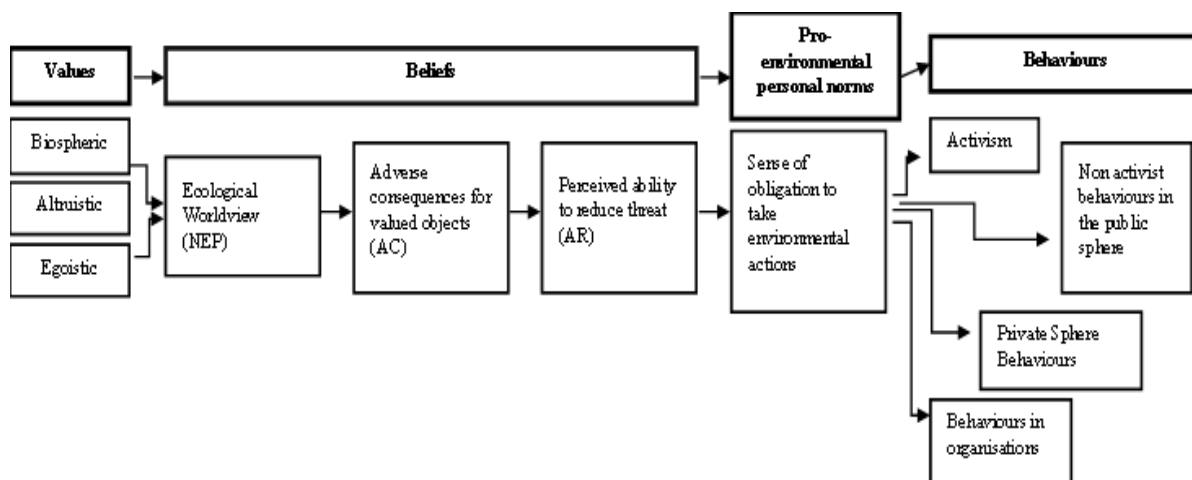


Figure 1: Diagrammatic model of the Value Belief Norm theory of environmental behaviour (Stern, 2000)

From Figure 1, and according to the postulation of Stern (2000), these variables (values, beliefs, pro-environmental social norms, and environmental behaviours) lead to the next. They may affect other variables, which are further down the chain. The values-beliefs-norms theory suggests that prosocial behaviours such as environmental activism is triggered by the activation of helping norms (Sawitri et al., 2015). These norms are based on three factors: (a) personal values, (b) beliefs that these values are threatened, and (c) beliefs that the individual can take steps to mitigate the threat and reinstate those values. Individuals have some values that they are eager to protect. The acceptance of these values further leads the individual to accept numerous beliefs about the values (Sawitri et al., 2015). These beliefs include general ecological beliefs or beliefs about the environment, the belief that there are some risks or adverse consequences that may harm those personal values, and the belief that the individual can play an important role in reducing these risks or adverse consequences. Accepting these beliefs incites the individual's sense of responsibility to take action to reduce the risks or adverse consequences and restore the normal state of their personal values.

According to Stern (2000), the personal values, the beliefs held about these values, and the sense of responsibility to take action altogether lead to four different types of environmentally significant behaviours. These behaviours include environmental activism, non-activist behaviours in the public sphere, and private spheres behaviours and behaviours in the organisation. Furthermore, Stern's theory shows how environmental beliefs (e.g., negative repercussions for valuable things, perceived ability to minimize threat) influence behavioural norms (i.e., intents), which predict actual pro-environmental behaviours (Sawitri et al., 2015).



Some researchers (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014; Liobikiene & Juknys, 2016; van der Werff et al., 2013) have discovered that people can place a high value on nature and the environment. Furthermore, values influence the strength of goals in a given scenario, impacting the perceived importance of environmental challenges, the various repercussions of alternative behavioural options and the anticipated likelihood of these consequences (de Groot et al., 2013; Steg et al., 2014). In drawing a theoretical framework from this theory, it could be said that people may value the environment leading to the accumulation of beliefs about the environment, risks or consequences that may adversely affect the environment (such as climate change), and a belief that the individual can play an important mitigation role. These beliefs may then incite the individual's sense of responsibility to take actions which will finally cause the individual to take the actual actions to protect the valued environment (such as environmental activism).

Health Belief Model

The Health Belief Model (HBM) was first developed by Hochbaum et al. (1952) and was later expanded on by Rosenstock (1974) and Becker (1974). The original purpose of the Health Belief Model was to explain preventive health behaviour (Rosenstock, 1974; Straub & Leahy, 2014). Any activity carried out to prevent or detect disease or enhance one's health and well-being is referred to as a health behaviour (Conner, 2015). The health belief model recognises beliefs, views, or perceptions as what shape individuals' behaviours, especially any health-related behaviour (Akintunde, 2017). The model deals with two components of a person's beliefs about health and behaviour: perception of threats or risks and evaluation of behaviour (Akintunde, 2017; Conner, 2015). Threat perception, also known as perceived risk assessment, is based on one's perceived vulnerability to illnesses and the gravity of the illness's expected effects (Conner, 2015).

On the other hand, evaluation of behaviour implies the appraisal of various behaviours' effectiveness in combating these risks or threats (Conner, 2015). It is this evaluation of possible alternatives that determines the exact action that the individual will undertake. According to Conner (2015), when added together, these two variables (threat perception and behavioural evaluation) affect the likelihood of an individual taking a health-related action, even though demographic factors, social pressure, and personality traits influence their impacts. Behavioural evaluation is based on perceptions about the advantages or efficacy of health behaviour and perceived costs or barriers to executing the action. As a result, people are more likely to engage in a certain health activity if they believe they are prone to a specific condition or illness viewed to be serious and if they believe the advantages of the behaviour performed to combat the condition or illness exceed the risks (Conner, 2015).

Cues to action are thought to be the catalysts for this entire process. Cues to action might be internal (e.g., physical symptoms) or external (e.g., mass media campaigns, advice, and support from others). Cues to action are a variety of stimuli that cause an individual to act (Conner, 2015). According to the Health Belief Model, if an individual's perceived level of risk increases, the likelihood that the individual would adopt recommended preventative behaviours increases correspondingly (Zak-Place & Stern, 2004). Hence, with this model, it can be hypothesised that if an individual's perception of environmental and health risks increases, the likelihood of engaging in pro-environmental behaviour like environmental activism will also increase. Individuals may believe that environmental problems pose a great risk to the environment and their health, and individuals may consequently evaluate various behaviours to adopt to combat these risks. In this process of behavioural evaluation, individuals may resort

to pro-environmental actions, such as environmental activism, to protect their environment and health from such risks. The perception of support from other people (especially close persons) may be subsumed under cues to action. Individuals may take advice from these kinds of persons as support to engage in environmental actions. The principles of this theory could be used in environmental research to predict behavioural changes (Akintunde, 2017), especially in studies that have a health component in terms of some unfavourable or risky environmental problems that can contribute to the prevalence or incidence of illnesses.

The Health Belief Model will ultimately enable researchers to establish if the perception of risks associated with the environment will motivate people to engage in prosocial or pro-environmental actions like environmental activism. Furthermore, because pro-environmental behaviour is a combination of self-interest (e.g., undertaking a strategy that reduces one's own health risk) and consideration for other individuals, the next generation, other organisms, or entire natural systems (e.g., prevention of air pollution that may endanger the health of others or the global climate), this model can serve as a useful foundation for a deeper comprehension of such causal factors and actions (Akintunde, 2017).

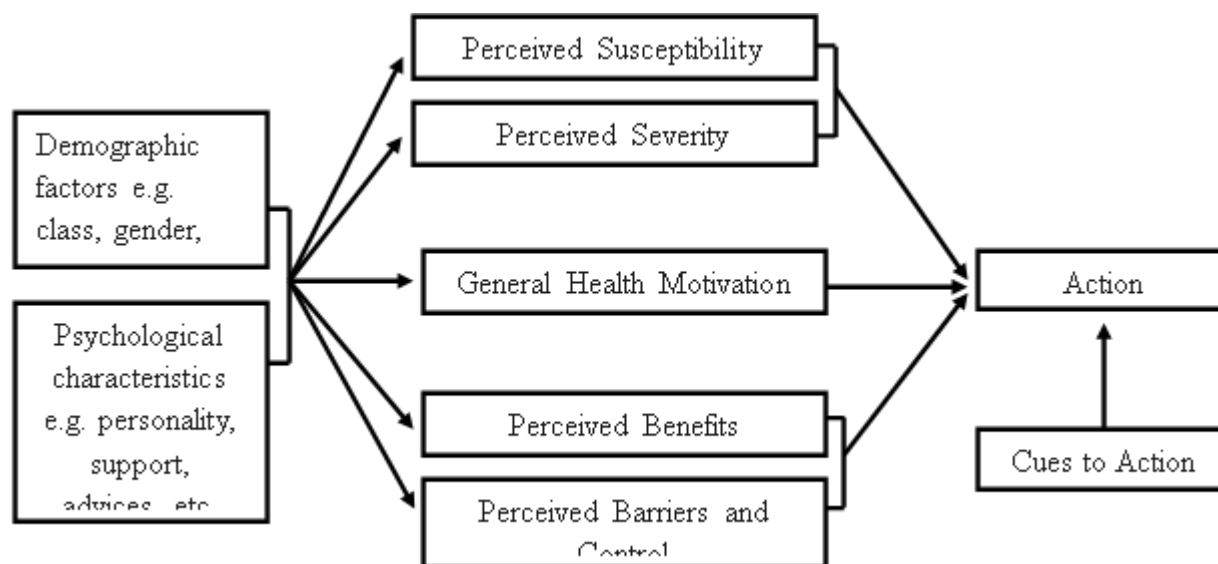


Figure 2: Systematic representation of the Health Belief Model (Hochbaum et al., 1952)

Protection Motivation Theory

Maddux and Rogers (1982) first used the protection motivation theory to explain attitude change and people's intentions to adopt preventive health behaviours. However, Rogers (1975) later used the theory in a broader form to explain an individual's intention to engage in behaviours, especially health behaviours. The Protection Motivation Theory does not differ considerably from the Health Belief Model of Hochbaum et al. (1952), Rosenstock (1974) and Becker (1974); in fact, the most significant difference between both theories is the addition of behavioural intention as the most proximal determinant of behaviour in the Protection Motivation Theory. Again, another major difference is that the Protection Motivation Theory did not account for the likely impacts of demographic variables such as age, class, gender, etc. and psychological characteristics, such as personality, peer and group pressure, and advice from others, etc., as was done by the Health Belief Model. According to Kothe et al. (2019), three main facts are already known about the Protection Motivation Theory. First, the



Protection motivation theory (PMT) is a behavioural paradigm that uses threat-based perceptions and beliefs to explain why people engage in protective health behaviours. Second, following the threats posed by environmental problems such as climate change, some recent studies have attempted to explain the adoption of pro-environmental behaviours using the Protection Motivation Theory. Finally, there is a paucity of coherent findings on the PMT constructs associated with and found to contribute to pro-environmental behaviour. The PMT has recently been applied to pro-environmental behaviours by researchers (e.g., Akhtar et al., 2020; Kothe et al., 2019; Shafiei & Maleksaeidi, 2020; Sahrir et al., 2019).

The main idea of the Protection Motivation Theory is that two processes determine involvement in and adoption of protective behaviours: appraisal of threats and appraisal of coping strategies (Kothe et al., 2019; Maddux & Rogers, 1982; Wang et al., 2019). The theory suggests that individuals intend to engage in protective behaviour (i.e., adaptive response) when confronted with a perceived threat, especially if they believe that taking no action would pose a threat to themselves (high threat appraisal) and that taking preventive efforts would mitigate that threat (Kothe et al., 2019). Hence, individuals' propensity to engage in risk-avoidance practices is based on their desire to protect themselves from risks (Shafiei & Maleksaeidi, 2020). People weigh the costs and benefits of several actions and choose one based on superiority (Westcott, 2017). This comparison is based on threat and coping assessments (Wang et al., 2019). Appraisal of threat is a cognitive process that includes "perceived severity" and "perceived vulnerability" based on the amount of threat (Xiao et al., 2014). "Perceived severity of the threat refers to an individual's perception of the significance of the potential damages," and "perceived vulnerability refers to individuals' judgments of their susceptibility to damages" (Janmaimool, 2017, p. 4). On the other hand, coping appraisal refers to an individual's evaluation of their ability to respond to a perceived threat (Keshavarz & Karami, 2016). According to Shafiei and Maleksaeidi (2020), this appraisal of coping strategies also impacts the adoption of preventive behaviour. Two main processes are subsumed under coping appraisal: self-efficacy and response efficacy (Kothe et al., 2019; Shafiei & Maleksaeidi, 2020). Self-efficacy is the conviction in one's capacity to organize and steer the causes of action necessary to handle particular circumstances in the near future (Tabernerero & Hernández, 2010). On the other hand, the perceived success of the prescribed risk-prevention actions is referred to as response efficacy (Janmaimool, 2017). In the coping appraisal also, individuals evaluate the cost of various preventive behaviours (Wang et al., 2019). Consequently, if the cost associated with adopting the behaviour is exceedingly high, the individual will avoid the behaviour and opt for one that may be significantly less demanding (Bubeck et al., 2018).

According to the theory and previous research, larger perceived threat severity and vulnerability corresponds to a higher propensity to participate in protective behaviour (Kothe et al., 2019). When there is a low reward for a maladaptive response and low response cost, high response efficacy, high susceptibility, high self-efficacy, and high severity, a person is more likely to engage in a behaviour to defend themselves from a threat (Kothe et al., 2019). For example, an individual considering buying an electric vehicle in response to the threat of climate change would consider the severity of the dangers associated with climate change (severity), their level of personal vulnerability to those risks (susceptibility), and whether any unfavourable incentives would benefit them (maladaptive response reward). The maladaptive response reward could be any unfavourable reward associated with climate change or not engaging in actions that would decrease the risk induced by climate change. In addition, the

person would consider whether they believe they are capable of switching to an electric vehicle (self-efficacy), whether they feel that switching to an electric vehicle will decrease the risk induced by climate change (response efficacy), as well as any perceived expenses or obstacles to the use of electric vehicles (response costs) (Kothe et al., 2019).

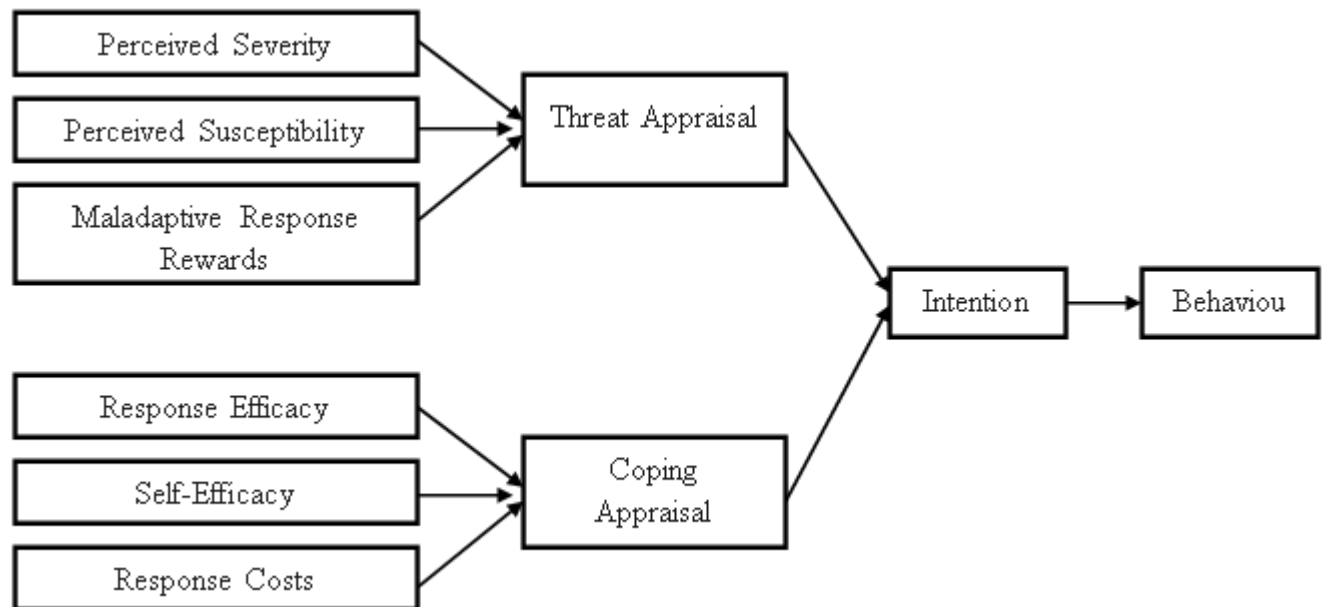


Figure 3: Diagrammatic illustration of the Protection Motivation Theory (Maddux & Rogers, 1982)

Theory of Planned Behaviour

Yuriev et al. (2020) noted that another widely used theory in the explanation of pro-environmental behaviour is Ajzen's (1999) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). It has been demonstrated that the theory of planned behaviour effectively explains various environmental behaviours (Steg & Vlek, 2009). TPB permits researchers to determine the drivers of environmental behaviour and then target these factors in interventions (Yuriev et al., 2020). Since its beginning twenty-five years ago, the TPB has been used to investigate the elements that underpin a variety of pro-environmental actions, including: consumption of low carbon (Jiang et al., 2019), conservation of energy (Allen & Marquart-Pyatt, 2018), saving water (Lam, 2006), waste recycling, (Echegaray & Hansstein, 2017), use of alternative transportation (Muñoz et al., 2016) and other general pro-environmental behaviours (Gkargkavouzi et al., 2019). A growing number of research have recently employed the TPB to investigate pro-environmental behaviour (e.g., Correia et al., 2021; Du & Pan, 2021; Effendi et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2021; Leeuw et al., 2015; Moon et al., 2021).

The theory of planned behaviour was developed as an extension of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), which has also been widely used in explaining pro-environmental behaviours (Akintunde, 2017; Sawitri et al., 2015). The theory of reasoned action seeks to predict behaviours from attitudes and to explain the mechanisms through which attitudes and behaviours are related (Sawitri et al., 2015). Both theories emphasise the importance of the intention to perform a behaviour (Sawitri et al., 2015). In other words, both theories recognise behavioural intention as the most proximal determinant of behaviour (Yang & Ho, 2018). The major difference between the theory of planned behaviour and the theory of

reasoned action is the inclusion of perceived behavioural control in the former as a variable that influences behavioural intentions, which then leads to the actual behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Behavioural intentions was defined by Ajzen (1991) as “indicators of how hard people are willing to attempt ... to accomplish a behaviour” (p. 181).

According to the theory, intentions to act are the most proximal predictors of behaviour. They are influenced by three main important factors: (a) the individual's favourable attitude toward the behaviour (attitudes), (b) the individual's perceptions of the behavioural norms and conventions (i.e., subjective norms), and (c) the extent to which the individual perceives the behaviour to be under their control (i.e., perceived behavioural control) (Sawitri et al., 2015). Perceived behavioural control is an individual's judgment of the viability of accomplishing the behaviour in a particular setting; subjective norm refers to the felt social pressure towards the behaviour; and attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative opinion of the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Yuriev et al., 2020). According to Sawitri et al. (2015), favourable attitudes towards behaviour relate to the individual's belief that their actions or behaviours will effectively meet the desired goals.

Several researchers have established the ability of the theory of planned behaviour to predict pro-environmental behaviours (Sawitri et al., 2015; Steg & Vlek, 2009). For instance, Boldero (1995) discovered that newspaper recycling intentions were directly related to actual recycling and that attitudes toward recycling were directly related to the intentions to recycle. On the other hand, Taylor and Todd (1995) discovered that attitudes toward recycling and perceived behavioural control were positively associated with intentions to recycle and compost.

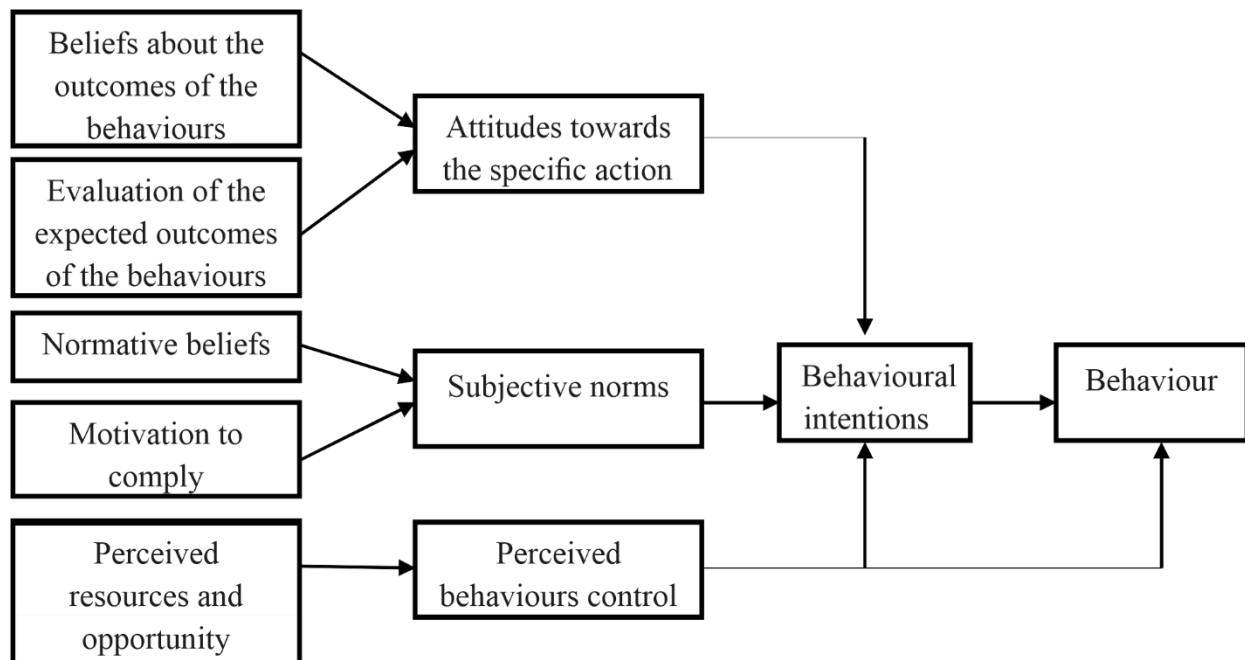


Figure 4: *The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)*



Direct and Buffering Hypothesis of Social Support

The direct effect theory, also known as the main effect hypothesis, asserts that social support is required whether or not the individual is stressed (Cohen & Wills, 1985). According to their hypothesis, one's level of social network membership significantly impacts the amount of social support one receives and how well one feels. As a result, according to this hypothesis, social support offered at all times, regardless of whether or not a stressful event is present, increases one's well being compared to individuals whose social network does not provide support. Hence, it will be plausible to state that individuals whose social networks provide social support may be more inclined to engage in environmentally friendly behaviours like activism to enhance their well being and the wellbeing of others. On the other hand, the buffering hypothesis of social support suggests that individuals provided with a good amount of social support will be able to cope with stressful events and consequently increase their wellbeing. Some studies have found an association between stress and pro-environmental behaviour (e.g., McDonald, 2014; Meloni et al., 2019; Sollberger et al., 2016); hence, individuals may find it stressful and difficult to engage in environmental activism.

According to McDonald (2014), various kinds of stress encountered by individuals while trying to adopt pro-environmental behaviour are emotion-focused and include fear, embarrassment, anxiety, depression, frustration, and excitement (p. 280). This may also suggest that when provided with social support, or when there is the perception that social support is available when required, individuals will be willing to adopt pro-environmental behaviours, especially environmental activism, which appears to be even more stressful. Other studies (e.g., Kaida & Kaida, 2016; Martin et al., 2020; Venhoeven et al., 2013) have found an association between pro-environmental behaviours and wellbeing, suggesting that individuals may adopt pro-environmental behaviour to enhance wellbeing. Conclusively, individuals value their wellbeing and would adopt pro-environmental behaviours to remain healthy. Still, they may encounter some stressors (such as fear or embarrassment), making them unwilling to adopt these behaviours. However, when social support is provided, individuals can cope with these stressors and adopt pro-environmental behaviours to protect their wellbeing. These pro-environmental behaviours can be actions such as environmental activism.

The main underlying idea in this theory is that social support is more beneficial when provided during a stressful situation. Consequently, the support provided during stressful events or situations can be capable of buffering against the negative impacts of stress, enabling the individual to adopt actions to maintain a healthy state more than individuals who receive little or no support when passing through stressful situations. For the direct or main effect hypothesis of social support, the assistance made available regularly, irrespective of whether the individual is currently in need of it or not, has proven very effective in encouraging individuals to adopt positive actions to guard their health. Hence, the theory lays more emphasis on the social network that the individual belongs to, as well as the need for those social networks to assist or provide support for everyone who belongs to them. In other words, this theory points out how support provided regularly by the family, friends, relations, school, and the society irrespective of whether a person needs it or not could be highly beneficial or improve the person's health or wellness. This theory could point to how support provided by family, friends, relations, school and the society could encourage individuals to adopt pro-environmental behaviours to protect their wellbeing, even when they perceive these behaviours as stressful.

A generalized favourable effect of social support could arise, according to Cohen and Wills (1985), since vast social networks offer people with regular positive experiences and a set of stable, socially rewarded responsibilities in the community. When an individual considers a circumstance to be potentially dangerous or otherwise demanding, and does not have a suitable coping reaction, stress develops (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Launier, 1978). Cassel (1976) suggested that stressors that put people at risk for diseases are generally characterized by a lack of or ambiguous social environment feedback. On the other hand, individuals whose network provides them with constant communication of what is required of them, aids with task appraisal of their performance, and gives suitable reward, have less stress. In the same way, it is plausible to state that as a result of the perception of environmental problems (like climate change) as posing risks to both the environment and the health of individuals, stress may arise when trying to adopt preventive behaviours. However, with support provided by close persons, this stress may be reduced, and individuals may be more willing to adopt preventive behaviours.

Cohen and Wills (1985) described how social support might protect people from stressful situations. By preventing stress evaluation, first support can intervene between a stressful incident and a stressful reaction. Second, the perception of support can help to lessen or eliminate the affective response to a stressful experience, as well as decrease the physiological response and prevent maladaptive behavioural responses. Finally, support can intervene by lowering stress levels or affecting physiological processes directly. They proposed numerous sorts of assistance, but the majority of them involve emotional (being cared for and loved), informational (knowledge of stressful events and how to cope with them), and material aid components. Emotional support appears to give more protection in the face of a wide range of stressful events, but other types of support appear to respond more particularly to specific needs aroused by the stressful event, according to evidence (Cohen & Wills, 1985). According to the stress buffering hypothesis, social support can reduce stress assessment (classifying an event as stressful based on its emotional impact), thereby enhancing the rate at which people engage in pro-environmental behaviours like environmental activism.

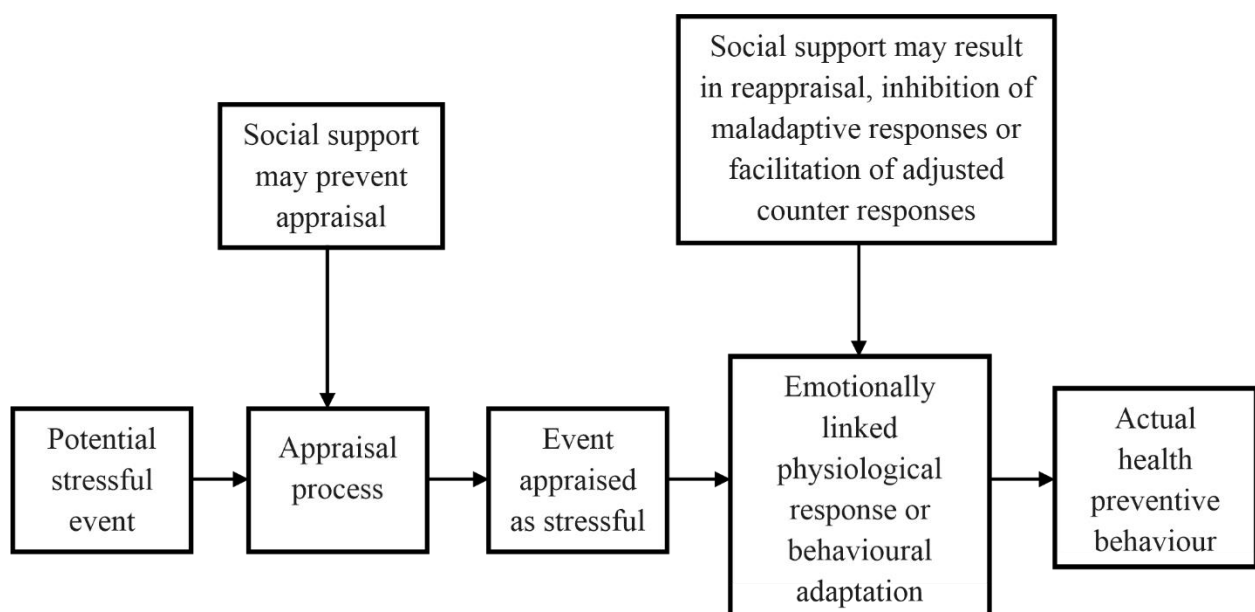




Figure 5: Two points at which social support may interfere with the hypothesized causal link between stressful events and preventive illness/health behaviour adapted from Cohen and Wills (1985)

Summary of the Theoretical Review

Theories regarding factors influencing participation in environmental activism and pro-environmental behaviours were reviewed in this paper. The theories reviewed include: the value belief norm theory of environmentalism (Stern, 2000), health belief model (Hochbaum et al., 1952), the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and the direct and buffering hypotheses of social support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In conclusion, combining these models and theories can lead to the development of relational pathways for addressing the numerous environmental issues brought about by the varied ways that people behave. For instance, the stress buffering hypothesis, which has rarely been adapted to pro-environmental activism, could be used to investigate the potential effect of perceived stress on environmental activism or other pro-environmental behaviours in several contexts, including how the perception of support might affect the relationship between stress and participation in pro-environmental behaviours. The context can include academic (e.g., academic stress, faculty support), family (e.g., parental stress, family dysfunction, family support), work and employment (e.g., work stress), etc. Basing further empirical studies on pro-environmental behaviours, especially environmental activism will help to establish rigid evidence and interventions. Without a doubt, the theories and frameworks presented will be crucial in the effort to develop a community that will interact with the environment in a sustainable manner.

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