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**A STUDY ON TRAVELLING EXPERIENCE AND**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN AMONG UNDERGRADUATE**  
**STUDENTS**

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*Abstract*

The increasing concern over environment impact created by human activities has led to more study to look into how one's travelling experiences might affect their environmental concern. The purpose of this study is to investigate on travelling experience and their environmental concern among undergraduate students from private university in Malaysia. Based on the perspective of Hofstede Cultural Theory, an empirical pilot study of the determinants of environmental concern was conducted. A total of 77 undergraduate students were used as respondents in this study. This study proved that travelling experience may lead to environmental concern of individual. The experience and different culture learning has significant with environmental concern. The findings hopefully will stimulate further research to explore on different travelling experience and culture influence person to be more concern towards environment. This finding agrees with previous literature that is age wise make individual more matured and think wisely, make them smarter in adopting environmental concern culture. The result found out that travelling experience has significant with environmental concern.

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**Keywords:** Environment, travelling, concern.



## **1. Introduction**

It is important for a nation to sustain the ecosystem; the renewal sources can be maximised thus fulfilling human needs (Lele, 1991). The previous scholars reveal that few conditions are considered in making sustaining environmental success; environmental and social conditions (Franson & Garling, 1999). This condition shows that environmental sustainability is success with if human activities done not detrimental or degraded the natural resources or overuse it. Tuncay et al (2011) highly recommended that the feeling of environmental concern of individual may able to help sustain the environment; crucial for future generation.

### **1.1. Environmental concern**

Environmental concern develops individuals' responsible behaviour to the environment. For example, environmental concern may generate the feeling of environmental friendly. In turn, this environmental concern determines the individuals' attitude. In Theory Plan Behaviour theory, individuals attitude is determined by the combination of 1) how individual belief the consequences of particular behaviour and 2) how the individual prioritize the value after the evaluation. This shows that environmental concern is an evaluation process of value towards factual knowledge (Weigel, 1983; Ajzen, 1989; Sjoberg, 1989; Takala, 1991; Tarrant, 1997).

In previous literature, value in environmental concern is classified into four values (Stern, 1992). 1) value of new way thinking or New Environmental paradigm (NEP) 2) value of caring human's health – the degradation of environment may harm human's health (Black et al., 1985; Hopper & Nielsen, 1991; Dunlap & Van Liere, 2000), 3) self-interest environmental related concern (Baldassare & Katz, 1992), and 4) values of religious related (Stern, 1992).

From the values mentioned above, the value no two and three are more considering the environment is protecting due to own consumption and it is called as 'Eco-centric value orientation' and treat it as New Environmental Paradigm. In addition, previous literature (Black et al., 1985; Hopper & Nielsen, 1991) tied value no 2 (as above) with 'Anthropocentric altruism value orientation'. To get a clearer understanding between ecocentric and anthropocentric is crucial due to this understanding is as a platform to translate from environmental concern to ecological behaviour (Thompson & Barton, 1994). Failing to understand may lead to unexpected translation. For this paper purposes, the environmental concern is study its relationship with travelling experience. To explore the differences between travel in domestic and abroad and how it gives impact into environmental concern. The differences may look in aspect of culture and the culture is adopted may differed according to different background of individual.

### **1.2. Culture and travelling experience**

In Hofstede Cultural Theory there are six dimensions describing culture that is 1) power distance, 2) individualism/ collectivism, 3) feminine /masculine, 4) uncertainty avoidance, 5) long-term orientation, 6) restraint/indulgence (Hofstede, 1993). These dimensions represents the culture of each country in the world. From travelling point, if someone visiting those countries, that particular individual may attracted or amazed or learned new culture. In this study, those culture may be referred as culture in taking care the environment. This concern is important as it able in assisting the ecological sustainability. This paper

highlights that the degree of absorbing or learning that new culture is varied according how matured is the individual: may be age can be the indicator in categorising the maturity of individual.

### **1.2.1. Age and travelling experience**

Age plays a role in telling whether the adoption of culture works well or not (Yun & Lachman, 2006). Yun and Lachman categorised their respondents into three group: young, middle and older and they investigated between two cultures (Korean and American). They found significant difference between the age group. Furthermore, Barak (2009) notes that age is identity of the culture. In relation with the above discussion, apparently age able to differentiate the experience level specifically for this paper, travelling experience level. Therefore, it is important to explore the age aspect and travelling experience towards environmental concern.

### **1.2.2. Age, travelling experience and environmental concern**

In previous literature, age and environmental concern is varied according age categories. For example, young age group are more concerned on environmental sustainability as compared to old age group (Van Liere & Dunlap, 1980; Arcury & Christianson, 1990; Blaikie, 1992; Howell & Laska, 1992; Dunlap et al., 2000). Van Liere and Dunlap (1980) has similar thought that is younger people more accepted and attracted to the environmental concern as than older people. However, in travelling aspect, many scholars only explored travelling behaviour such as travel using a car or public transport (Nilsson & Kuller, 2000). And so far in this research knowledge, no research on travelling experience and environmental concern was conducted.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The overuse of nature resources seriously eroded the environment (Stern & Oskamp, 1987; Stern, 1992). Landfill problem getting serious in Malaysia as reported in press. For daily report, out of 30,000 tons waste, only 5% is recycled. When there is no waste separation, it increases of waste degradation, thus it contributes to pollution issues. Waste recycling has now become a serious issue in Malaysia (Moh & Manaf, 2014). This recycling behaviour can be improved when the environmental concern is exist within the individual (Chan et al., 2017). It show that environmental concern is vital for individual due to its pro-environmental consequences (Jaaffar & Amran, 2017). Therefore the problem statement for this paper is to explore to environmental concern among university undergraduate.

## **3. Research Questions**

Does travelling experience relates to the environmental concern? This question is explored to find whether travel experiences give the impact to the environmental concern or not. This research exploration focuses on undergraduate students; to encourage environmental concern thus to improve ecological sustainability.

#### 4. Purpose of the Study

This paper aims to explore the impact of travelling experience towards environmental concern among Finance and Accounting undergraduate students. This group of students is selected because in reality they seem learn more on decision making process, then they will practice in their profession later. As the person had experience in travelling interstate, intra state or outside Malaysia, it presume to learn more about other's countries culture that may lead to environmental concern.

#### 5. Research Methods

The pilot study took place in one of the leading private university in Malaysia. The targeted respondent is a student which currently enrolled in bachelor of accounting and finance courses. Their participation was voluntary. Initially, 80 participants completed the questionnaires, but three of them were discarded from further analysis as they consisted many unanswered questions. The final sample consist of 77 accounting and finance student, of whom 34 (44.2 per cent) were male, and 43 (55.8 per cent) were female. The questionnaire was administered to the participants during the class. Instructions on how to correctly answer the questions were given to participants. Participants were asked to return the completed questionnaire at the end of the class. As for measuring Environmental Concern and Environmental Awareness, this study used a five-point Likert scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree). We adopted the five items for measuring Environmental Concern from Minton and Rose (1997) and the five items for measuring Environmental Awareness from Morgil et al. (2004). The items of environmental awareness consist of the students awareness on 1) the natural gas; 2) recyclable materials; energy saving appliances; and the usage of non-recycle material in consumer good while the items of environmental concern comprised of student's concern on 1) the mandatory requirement for manufacturing industry to use recycled materials; 2) commercial advertising must be included with the disadvantage of the product to environmental; 3) the environmental risk product should be taxed; and 4) environmental education in public school. The last part of the survey instrument covers the demographics of respondents including gender, parent education background, and the number of sibling, hometown and travelling experiences. Table 01 depicts the types of travelling experiences reported by the respondents.

**Table 01.** Results of travelling experiences.

Types of Travelling Experiences	Number	Percent
Travelling in inter-states (within your states) only	15	19.5
Travelling in intra-states (outsides your states) only	26	33.8
Travelling in Asia Countries	21	27.3
Travelling in EUROPE	8	10.4
Travelling in other ASIA or EUROPE Country	7	9.1

To analysed the data collected in this pilot study, the PLS were used. A Partial Least Squares path-modelling approach was occupied employing the SmartPLS 3 software (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). Following the standard recommended by Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011), first the measurement model was presented and second structural model for path testing was highlighted.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Measurement model

Table 02 showed that the lowest value of CR was 0.52 (EC) which was statistically satisfactory. Table 02 also indicated that the loadings of all indicators examined in the study ranged between the lowest of 0.574 (EC5) and the highest of 0.814 (EA3) while the lowest threshold value of AVE of this study was 0.501 (EC) that was still slightly greater than the common threshold value of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The values of the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  that measured the internal consistency reliability were all highly exceeding 0.70 for the latent variables (Hair et al., 2013). The square root values of AVE of the study that displayed in Table 02 indicated that the values were highly different from the values of other constructs, ranging from 0.709(EC) to 0.716 (EA). Overall, the results manifested that the model quality of this study was statistically valid and reliable.

**Table 02.** Measurement Model.

LV	Fornell-Larcker Criterion		OV	IL	Alpha	CR	AVE
	EA	EC					
EA	<b>0.716</b>		EA1	0.694	0.765	0.839	0.512
			EA2	0.744			
			EA3	0.814			
			EA4	0.683			
			EA5	0.628			
EC	0.572	<b>0.708</b>	EC1	0.691	0.752	0.833	0.501
			EC2	0.751			
			EC3	0.79			
			EC4	0.574			
			EC5	0.716			
TravExp			TravExp				

**Note:** IL = indicator's loading, LV=Latent variables, OV=observed variables, Alpha = Cronbach's alpha, CR=composite reliability, AVE=Average variance extracted, Fornell-Larcker Criterion for discriminant validity.

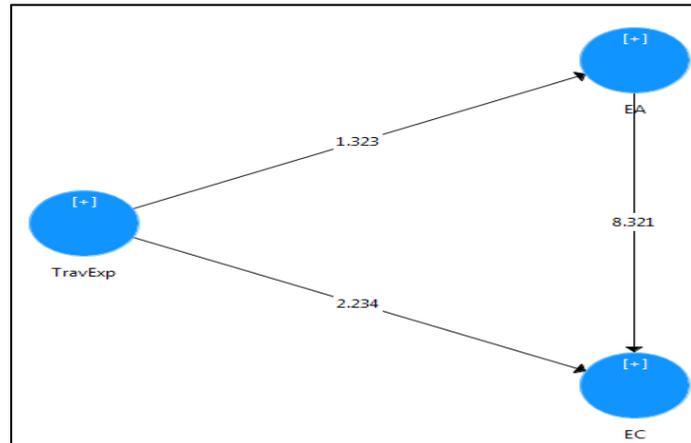
### 6.2. The structural models

The analysis of PLS-SEM revealed that 2 out of 3 hypotheses were supported by significant relationships at  $p < 0.05$  level (Table 03 and Figure 1). EA and TravExp was positively and significantly associated with EC, therefore, the findings confirmed hypothesis H1 and H3. Contrastingly, TravExp was not related to the EA. In this regards, these results rejected the hypotheses 2.

**Table 03.** Results of the structural model path coefficients.

Hypotheses	M	SD	t-value	P Values	Inference
H1 EA -> EC	0.621	0.07	8.581**	0	Supported
H2 TravExp -> EA	0.173	0.124	1.362	0.174	Not supported
H3 TravExp -> EC	-0.187	0.086	2.196**	0.029	Supported

**Note:** M=sample mean, SD=Standard Deviation, t=t-value, p=p-values, \* t-value is sig at  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* t-value is sig at  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* t-value is sig. at  $p < 0.001$ .



**Figure 01.** Path coefficient t-statistics

## 7. Conclusion

As conclusion, travelling experience relates with environmental concern. This paper suggests that it is recommended for student to travel either locally or overseas in order to obtain more knowledge and culture specifically lead to environmental concern. This finding agrees with previous literature that is age wise make individual more matured, make them smarter in adopting environmental concern culture. Travelling experience have significant with environmental concern.

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