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Title: Warm Heart, Green Earth: The Role Of Trait Emotional Intelligence In Pro-Environmental Attitudes And Action

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Abstract

Researchers agree that more effective strategies to improve people's ecological behaviours for sustainable climate change mitigation are needed. However, individual differences and contextual factors play a central role in motivating people's attitudes and behaviour towards pro-environmentalism. There has been a growing interest to examine more closely emotional processes, specifically trait emotional intelligence. This study aims to reveal that emotional intelligence serves as a crucial moderator in the relationship between environmental beliefs and behavioural outcomes.

Data collection was conducted online with 201 adults ($F=49.8\%$; $M_{age}=29.22$) from Germany, Italy and South Africa. A between-subject experimental design with two randomized conditions was administered, depicting a visual image of a beach scene as either clean (gain-framed) or dirty (loss-framed). Self-report measures included: the *New Ecological Paradigm Scale (NEPS)*, *Pro-Environmental Behaviours Scale (PEBS)* and *Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form (TEIQue-SF)*. An open question regarding barriers to environmental behaviours were included. *Demographic control variables* included age, gender, education level and self-reported socio-economic status.

Results revealed that exposure to loss-framed visual stimuli increased pro-environmental behaviour intentions. Trait EI emerged as a moderator of this relationship. Higher trait EI showed stronger pro-environmental responses to the loss-framed stimuli, while lower trait EI showed diminished behavioural intentions regardless of visual framing. Environmental behaviours are interpreted differently based on SES. These findings suggest the importance of developing emotional intelligence interventions to promote environmental behaviour. Future research should focus on designing targeted programs that enhance emotional regulation skills specifically related to environmental decision-making.

Keywords: Environmental beliefs, Pro-environmental behaviour, Trait Emotional Intelligence, Behavioural intention, Climate change

References

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