

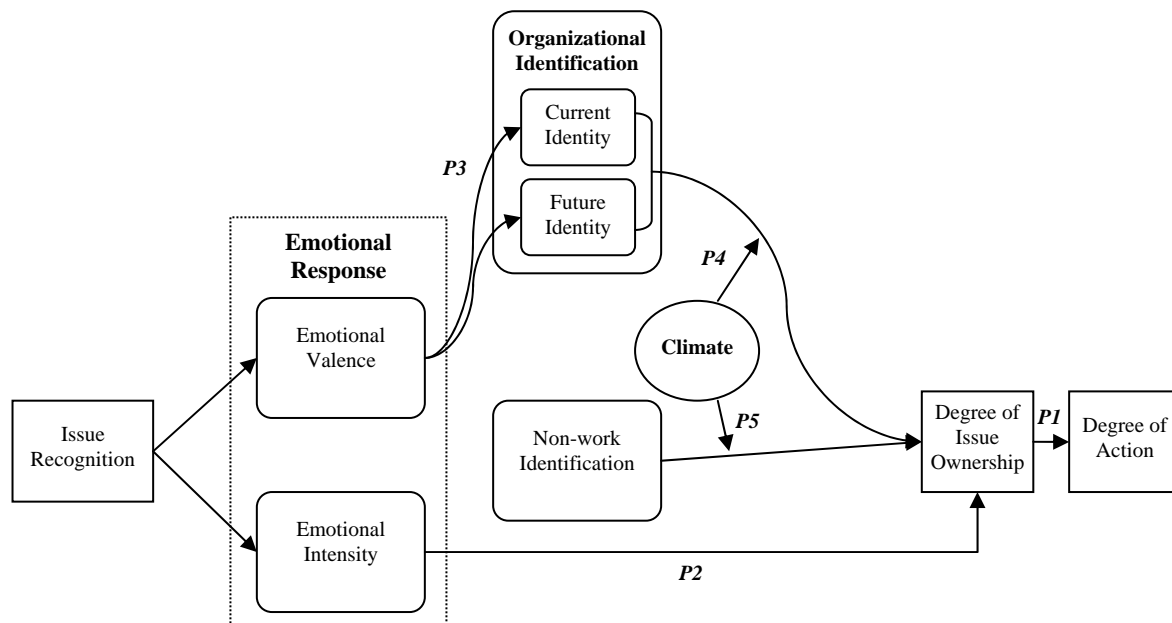
## **Project Proposal For OMT/ODC/MOC Doctoral Student Consortium**

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My research project is aimed at further developing understanding of the antecedents of pro-environmental action. Environmental issues are becoming more commonplace within organizations and research suggests that organizations and their managers are now facing increasing pressure to respond to environmental issues (KPMG, 2005). In line with current calls in the literature I argue for further research that examines the role of the individual in addressing environmental issues. Furthermore, I suggest that there has been a lack of research that examines the affective or emotional dimensions of pro-environmental action. There is much potential for research that investigates this issue, and research in this area will make a unique contribution to management literature and provide unique insights for practice.

Current research findings from within environmental psychology suggest emotions play a core role in driving individuals to adopt pro-environmental actions. This contrasts with empirical findings from within the organizations and the natural environment (ONE) literature which has largely discounted emotion (Andersson & Bateman, 2000), with few exceptions (Fineman, 1996, 1997, 1998). I integrate these contrasting findings by applying the theories of issue ownership (Pratt & Dutton, 2000) and organizational identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). In so doing, I suggest the following model of environmental ownership, from which a set of five propositions are drawn.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Pro-environmental Action**



Source: Based on Pratt and Dutton, 2000.

The propositions drawn from this model are:

**Proposition 1:** *The degree of environmental issue ownership is strongly related to, and a good indication of, the degree of pro-environmental action.*

**Proposition 2:** *Individuals who display greater emotional intensity toward an environmental issue are likely to have stronger ownership of the issue.*

**Proposition 3:** *An individual will have stronger issue ownership when two conditions hold; (a) when an individual's emotional reaction to an environmental issue has a negative valance in connection with their current organizational identity; and (b) when an individual's emotional reaction to an environmental issue has a positive valance in connection with their ideal organizational identity.*

**Proposition 4a:** *Where the pro-environmental climate of the organization is strong, individuals who identify with the organization are likely to have stronger ownership of environmental issues.*

**Proposition 4b:** *Where the pro-environmental climate of the organization is weak, individuals who identify with the organization are less likely to display ownership of environmental issues.*

**Proposition 5a:** *Individuals who identify strongly with pro-environmental values in their non-work identities are more likely to display ownership of environmental issues within their organization.*

***Proposition 5b:*** *The strength of environmental issue ownership within an organization that is based on a non-work identity will be moderated by the strength of the organization's pro-environmental climate.*

These propositions will be tested using a three phased methodology. The aim of the first study is to explore the constructs that I have identified from the literature, and refine the conceptual model (see Figure 1). This will be achieved through exploring each of the key concepts and assessing their importance and relationships. The second aim of the study is to identify the most common and important pro-environmental actions within the organizations studied in order to develop a typology of pro-environmental action in organizations. To date there has been limited classification of pro-environmental action at the individual level, and this is an important determinate for future research in this area. While the literature has helped guide the focus of the research, this study will identify and help classify key emotions and triggers for different types of pro-environmental actions.

Study Two will involve an experimental design in order to test Proposition One and Two. Participants will be randomly allocated to one of six experimental conditions. In each condition the two independent variables, emotional intensity, and emotional valence, will be manipulated. The intensity of emotional response will be manipulated based on the results of Study One. Two salient environmental issues will be selected to inform the vignettes; one will be a highly emotive issue (e.g. land clearing or uranium mining), and the other more neutral (e.g. recycling or paper use). The valence of emotion will be manipulated using the framing of the vignette. For each issue, three different vignettes will be written; one written in a neutral informative tone, one with undertones of positive emotion, and one with undertones of negative emotion. All texts will be as similar in content as possible, except for these experimental manipulations.

Participants will be randomly allocated to one of the six conditions, and given the corresponding vignette. Following their reading of the vignette, participants will be asked to respond to measures of issue ownership and manipulation checks for intensity and valence. Following the administration of these measures participants will then be asked to reread the scenario and then make a decision regarding the environmental issue. This forced-choice decision is the dependent variable, and will be linked to the typology of pro-environmental behaviors resulting from Study 1. I anticipate that participants will be requested to select between four responses, ranging from a strongly pro-environmental action to an action with no environmental concern. Participants will also be given the opportunity to describe their response in an open question format.

The final study, Study Three, will involve a large scale quantitative survey in order to examine the relationships between the variables. This study will bring the results of Study 2 into the contextual setting of the organization. This study focuses on the first part of the model, with the single dependent variable being issue ownership. Specific hypotheses for this study will be developed based on the results of Study 1. I anticipate using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to analyze the results of the survey. This analysis plan will allow me to identify the cross-level effects in my model and will make use of advances in multilevel data analysis (Hoffman, 1997). Furthermore, HLM is considered well suited for analyzing the type of cross-level interactions I have identified in Figure 1 (Hoffman, Morgeson, & Gerras, 2003).

The role of emotions in relation to the pro-environmental action of individuals within organizations is an area worthy of further investigation. I argue that environmental issue ownership is a concept that assists in reconciling empirical findings from environmental psychology and management research. Furthermore, intensity of emotion, identification with the organization, and the strength of the pro-environmental climate within the organization are

important variables in the development of environmental issue ownership. The implications from the study of these concepts is a more in depth understanding of the antecedents of pro-environmental action within organizations.

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