

# The Role Of Self-Identity, Social Influence, and Attitudes in Shaping Water Conservation Intentions

Nombulelo Dilotsotlhe

*University of South Africa, South Africa*

## Abstract

Water scarcity is a pressing challenge for countries like South Africa, requiring the widespread adoption of conservation behaviours. This study examines how self-identity, social influence, and attitudes shape individuals' intentions to engage in water conservation by emphasising the psychological and social drivers of pro-environmental behaviour.

The research explores how individuals' self-identity as environmentally responsible citizens influences their attitudes toward conservation, reinforcing a sense of personal commitment to sustainable water use. Additionally, social influence including perceived social expectations and norms plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes and strengthening conservation intentions. The study investigates whether exposure to useful campaign information enhances attitudes and social reinforcement, leading to stronger conservation intentions.

A cross-sectional, quantitative research design was employed, using a positivist paradigm and a deductive theoretical approach. Data were collected through an online survey with 390 respondents, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was conducted using SPSS Version 28 and SmartPLS.

Findings confirm a significant relationship between social influences, attitudes, and conservation intentions, highlighting the importance of normative pressures in shaping behaviour. Self-identity emerged as a key predictor of conservation attitudes and intentions, demonstrating that individuals who strongly identify with pro-environmental values are more likely to commit to water-saving behaviours.

The study offers theoretical contributions by demonstrating the role of self-identity and social influence in shaping conservation intentions. In practice, this research can assist policymakers and marketing campaign designers create targeted messages that reinforce social norms and encourage individuals to adopt a pro-environmental self-identity, promoting sustainable water conservation.

**Keywords:** self-identity; social influence; attitude; water conservation; South Africa