



## THE FIRST-PERSON EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND RELIGIOSITY

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### ABSTRACT

**Background :** The First-Person Effect theory (FPE), also known as the reversed Third-Person Effect (TPE), posits that individuals are more likely to believe that media content directly influences them but has less impact on others, particularly when the media content is positive.

**Aim:** this aims study to explore the effect of demographic characteristics and religiosity on the self-other perception discrepancy regarding environmental issues on SNS.

**Method:** To explore the perceptual aspect of this theory, a quantitative approach was adopted to gauge how individuals perceive the influence of environment issues on Social Networking Sites (SNS), both on themselves and on others. The survey involved 357 student participants.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that the participants perceive environmental issues on SNS as having a greater influence on themselves than on others, which supports the idea of FPE. However, the results indicated that religiosity did not correlate with the self-other perception discrepancy. Gender was found to have an impact on the self-other perceptual gap for environmental issues on SNS, whereas age and educational level did not. The study's implications suggest that it's essential not to judge others based on our own preferences and biases, and it highlights the tendency to prioritize our own interests over those of others.

**Keywords:** Social Networking Sites, Environmental Issues, First-Person Effect, Religiosity, Self-Other Perceptual Gap.

### O EFEITO DE PRIMEIRA PESSOA NAS QUESTÕES AMBIENTAIS E RELIGIOSIDADE

#### RESUMO

**Antecedentes:** A teoria do efeito de primeira pessoa (FPE), também conhecida como efeito de terceira pessoa invertido (TPE), postula que os indivíduos são mais propensos a acreditar que o conteúdo da mídia os influencia diretamente, mas tem menos impacto sobre os outros, especialmente quando a mídia o conteúdo é positivo.

**Objetivo:** este estudo visa explorar o efeito das características demográficas e da religiosidade na discrepância de percepção entre si e o outro em relação às questões ambientais no SNS.

**Método:** Para explorar o aspecto perceptual desta teoria, foi adotada uma abordagem quantitativa para avaliar como os indivíduos percebem a influência das questões ambientais nos Sites de Redes Sociais (SRS), tanto sobre si próprios como sobre os outros. A pesquisa envolveu 357 estudantes participantes.

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**Resultados:** Os resultados revelaram que os participantes percebem as questões ambientais no SNS como tendo uma influência maior sobre eles próprios do que sobre os outros, o que apoia a ideia de FPE. No entanto, os resultados indicaram que a religiosidade não se correlacionou com a discrepância de percepção entre si e o outro. Descobriu-se que o gênero tem um impacto na lacuna perceptiva entre o eu e o outro relativamente às questões ambientais no SNS, ao passo que a idade e o nível educacional não o fizeram. As implicações do estudo sugerem que é essencial não julgar os outros com base nas nossas próprias preferências e preconceitos, e destaca a tendência de priorizar nossos próprios interesses em detrimento dos dos outros.

**Palavras-chave:** Sites de Redes Sociais, Questões Ambientais, Efeito de Primeira Pessoa, Religiosidade, Lacuna Perceptiva do Eu-Outro.

## EL EFECTO EN PRIMERA PERSONA SOBRE CUESTIONES AMBIENTALES Y RELIGIOSIDAD

### RESUMEN

**Antecedentes:** La teoría del efecto de primera persona (FPE), también conocida como efecto de tercera persona invertido (TPE), postula que es más probable que los individuos creen que el contenido de los medios los influye directamente pero tiene menos impacto en los demás, particularmente cuando los medios de comunicación los influyen directamente. El contenido es positivo.

**Objetivo:** este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar el efecto de las características demográficas y la religiosidad en la discrepancia de percepción entre uno mismo y el otro con respecto a cuestiones ambientales en las redes sociales.

**Método:** Para explorar el aspecto perceptual de esta teoría, se adoptó un enfoque cuantitativo para medir cómo los individuos perciben la influencia de los problemas ambientales en los sitios de redes sociales (SNS), tanto en ellos mismos como en los demás. La encuesta involucró a 357 estudiantes participantes.

**Hallazgos:** Los hallazgos revelaron que los participantes perciben que las cuestiones ambientales en las redes sociales tienen una mayor influencia en ellos mismos que en los demás, lo que respalda la idea de FPE. Sin embargo, los resultados indicaron que la religiosidad no se correlacionaba con la discrepancia en la percepción entre uno mismo y el otro. Se descubrió que el género tiene un impacto en la brecha de percepción entre uno mismo y el otro en cuestiones ambientales en las redes sociales, mientras que la edad y el nivel educativo no. Las implicaciones del estudio sugieren que es esencial no juzgar a los demás según nuestras propias preferencias y prejuicios, y destaca la tendencia a priorizar nuestros propios intereses sobre los de los demás.

**Palabras clave:** Sitios de Redes Sociales, Cuestiones Medioambientales, Efecto de Primera Persona, Religiosidad, Brecha De Percepción Entre Uno Mismo y El Otro.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Media messages, encompassing newspapers, TV shows, advertisements, and the internet, represent a significant role in shaping individuals lives by disseminating various kinds of information, including political, social, or health-related content. Despite individuals possibly denying direct influence by these messages, they tend to believe that others are susceptible to their impact. This phenomenon is referred to as the Third-Person Effect (TPE), which is initially hypothesized by Davison (1983). Communication scholars use various



theories to comprehend people's attitudes and behaviors towards media content, with TPE being one such theory.

TPE proposes that media consumers tend to think that media message has a larger influence on others than on themselves, particularly when the content is negative or socially undesirable, like pornography or violence. Nevertheless, in the case of positive or socially desirable messages, such as those related to health or environmental issues (Jensen & Hurley, 2005), individuals may see themselves as more impacted than others, and this is referred to as the reversed Third-Person Effect or First-Person Effect (FPE). In this context, people engage in biased comparisons to demonstrate their superiority, experiences, and knowledge while highlighting others' vulnerability and weaknesses.

Presently, countries worldwide are directing their attention towards global climate change, environmental concerns, and health issues. The impact of environmental problems on our well-being and health has prompted a recent surge in people's awareness, as they seek to address environmental pollution and related hazards. One of the most pressing challenges confronting the environment today is outdoor air pollution. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), roughly 4.2 to 7 million individuals die yearly as a result of air pollution, and a staggering nine out of every ten individuals are exposed to harmful pollutants in the air.

Another critical issue is deforestation, where an area equivalent to 300 football fields of forests is being lost every hour. If this speed of deforestation continues unchecked, it is predicted that by the year 2030, only 10% of our planet's forest cover will exist. Without effective intervention, there is a real possibility that all forests could vanish within less than a century (Robinson, 2023). These alarming statistics highlight the urgent need for action to mitigate the detrimental effects on the environment and safeguard our health and the planet's well-being.

Traditional media and SNS play a significant role in disseminating a wide range of messages concerning environmental issues, serving as a primary source of information for individuals (Eyal, Winter, & DeGeorge, 1981). These environmental messages in the media are generally viewed as positive, aiming to raise people's awareness and safeguard them from the risks of environmental pollution. Since these issues are socially desirable, individuals may have tendency to think that they are personally more affected by these messages compared to others according to FPE.

Gaining insight into the attitudes of Muslim students concerning global issues, particularly how they perceive the impact of environmental matters on themselves and others, holds significant importance. The First-Person Effect theory suggests that when individuals



view messages as socially desirable, they are likely to overestimate the messages' impact on themselves while underestimating their impact on others. The extent of both Third-Person Effect and FPE can vary based on factors like education, media consumption habits, and age. This research endeavors to investigate how Islamic religiosity influences the magnitude of FPE in relation to environmental issues on Social Networking Sites. The research's findings will contribute valuable insights to the fields of communication and religion, shedding light on the attitudes of the Islamic community towards crucial global issues portrayed in the media.

The research primarily center on the viewpoints of students from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) concerning how environmental issues on SNS affect themselves and others. Additionally, the study will explore whether religiosity represents a role in shaping the self-other perceptual gap regarding environmental concerns. Moreover, the impact of demographic characteristics on the self-other perception discrepancy in SNS-based environmental issues will be investigated.

Social Networking Sites users have the freedom to select and engage with various issues at their convenience, allowing them to actively participate in discussions, sharing, and commenting on content related to environmental issues. This active involvement in the topic enhances the prominence of the First-Person Effect in discussions on environmental issues on SNS. However, when individuals perceive themselves as more affected than others, it can lead to the revelation of biases and subjective judgments that may not align with religious values.

Golan(2002), wrote an initial study to examine the impact of religiosity on the TPE concerning environmental issues depicted in TV programs. However, Golan grouped individuals from various religions together when assessing their religiosity levels. As a result, the current study is specifically focused on examining how Islamic religiosity influences the First-Person Effect in relation to positive environmental messages. The study anticipates that as Islamic religiosity increases; individuals will perceive environmental issues as having a more substantial effect on themselves compared to others. Given that Islamic followers are known for their strict attitudes toward environmental issues presented in the media, they may believe that such environmental concerns have a greater influence on their own lives than on others.

Understanding how Muslim students perceive the impact of environmental issues on themselves and others through Social Networking Sites is of utmost importance from the First-Person Effect perspective, as it provides valuable insights into their attitudes and psychological states. This investigation holds the potential to enrich communication and Islamic studies in several key areas. Firstly, by applying the TPE theory to environmental issues on SNS, this study can contribute to further development of the well-established communication theory that



explores people's perceptions. Secondly, the results of this study can shed light on the reasons behind the differing perceptions of Muslim students regarding environmental issues on SNS when considering themselves and others. Thirdly, by determining the influence of level of religiosity on biased perceptions of impact of media issues on oneself and others, this study can raise awareness of how religiosity shapes attitudes towards media topics, promoting a more balanced approach to religiosity and judgments. Fourthly, as media-related issues in Islamic studies and society necessitate more attention and research, this study's exploration of the impact of Islamic religiosity on FPE regarding environmental issues on SNS can contribute to the development of Islamic studies related to communication and provide deeper insights into the attitudes of the Islamic society towards significant media issues. Lastly, the literature review revealed a gap in studying the influence of demographic characteristics on FPE. By addressing this knowledge gap and examining the impact of age, gender, and education on FPE concerning environmental issues on SNS, this study adds value to both the communication field and TPE theory. In conclusion, this study holds significant importance for understanding perceptions and attitudes in the realms of communication and religion.

Based on the mentioned concerns, this study focuses on individuals' perceptions regarding the influence of environmental issues on both themselves and others within SNS platforms. Furthermore, it seeks to recover the influence of Islamic religiosity on how individuals perceive these environmental issues. By examining the variations in attitudes and perceptions between oneself and others and analyzing the impact of Islamic religiosity on the FPE, this research seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of individuals' psychological and behavioral responses to important issues on Social Networking Sites. The researcher seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To determine the FPE perceptions of environmental issues on SNS.
- (2) To assess the differences in demographic characteristics on the FPE perceptions of environmental issues in SNS.
- (3) To assess the association between Islamic religiosity and the FPE perceptions of environmental issues in SNS.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEWS**

According to the TPE theory, individual tends to believe that socially undesirable or negative message has a greater impact on others than on themselves. On the other hand, FPE theory suggests that positive messages are perceived as having a stronger influence on oneself



compared to others. This phenomenon is particularly evident with positive media messages that promote health awareness or discourage behaviors like drunk driving. People generally consider these messages as socially desirable, leading them to believe that they will be affected by them to an equal or even greater extent than others (Gunther & Thorson, 1992). Boster's (2008) has conducted a study in rural Midwest schools, supports this notion. It found that adolescents believed anti-drug advertisements would have a more significant impact on themselves than on others, providing evidence that positive or desirable messages are perceived as more influential on oneself.

The current subject of interest revolves around the environmental state, which holds significance for countries, scholars, and the media. People turn to the media to stay informed about environmental matters and raise awareness. Jensen and Hurley's research in 2005 revealed that individuals tend to perceive the media's coverage of environmental issues as having a more substantial impact on themselves compared to others, influenced by a social desirability bias. This positive perception of media messages contributes to the occurrence of the First-person Effect.

Moreover, Chung's study in 2018 found that SNS engagement metrics, like likes, comments, and shares, can further intensify the FPE concerning environmental issues on Social Networking Sites. Building upon these findings, this study aims to present additional evidence and posits that environmental messages on SNS predominantly carry a positive tone. Consequently, it is highly likely that individuals over evaluate the influence of these messages on themselves while under evaluate their influence on others, which aligns with the concept of the FPE or reverse TPE. This assumption lays the foundation for the first hypothesis of the study:

H1: There is a perceived effect of environmental issues in SNS on self more than on others.

Prior research identified various factors that impact the two mechanisms of the TPE, and there is a possibility that one mechanism may take precedence over the other (Salmon, Poorisat & Kim, 2019). For example, Douglas and Sutton (2008) discovered that individuals with higher levels of education are more inclined to under evaluate the media's influence on themselves while overestimating its impact on others. Age is also considered an external variable that could affect TPE (Henriksen & Flora, 1999). Additionally, gender can play a role in TPE, as indicated by Heravi, Mubarak, and Choo (2015), who found that males perceive larger privacy risks related to using online social networks compared to females. However,



there is a lack of research on how these demographic variables impact the First-person Effect (FPE).

Given that these factors have been shown to influence TPE and considering that people's interest in environmental issues might vary based on their demographic characteristics, it is highly probable that these variables may also influence FPE. Hence, this study seeks to examine the impact of age, gender, and education on FPE concerning environmental issues on SNS, resulting into the pointing of the following hypothesis:

H2: There is a difference in The FPE on environmental issues in SNS by gender.

H3: There is a difference in The FPE on environmental issues in SNS by age.

H4: There is a difference in The FPE on environmental issues in SNS by education.

## 2.1 RELIGIOSITY AND FPE

The primary aim of this study is to examine how Islamic religiosity influences the way university students perceive environmental issues on Social Networking Sites, both concerning their own perceptions and their perceptions of others. Existing literature on the relationship between religion and media, particularly regarding the Third-Person Effect and religiosity, is limited (Hoover & Lundby, 1997). Therefore, the research seeks to bridge this gap in the literature by investigating how Islamic religiosity impacts individuals' perceptions related the impact of SNS on themselves and others.

Religiosity, as describe by Mcdaniel and Burnett (1990), encompasses a belief in the existence of God and adherence to the rules established by God. It is further described as a system of symbols that give rise to varying levels of commitments and obligations (Baazeem, Benson, & Hand, 2018). In the context of Islamic religiosity, Krauss, Hamzah, Suandi, Noah, Mastor, Juhari, and Manap (2005) have introduced the concept of the Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI), which comprises two primary constructs. The first construct, known as the 'Islamic Worldview', reflects the Islamic doctrine of God's divine unity or oneness, also referred to as *aqidah*. This encompasses beliefs and practices aligned with the *Quran* and *Sunnah*, including faith in God. The second construct is termed 'Religious Personality', encompassing specific *ibadat* (direct acts of worship) in relation to *Allah*, such as prayer, and general *ibadah*, involving one's relationships with oneself and others, such as respecting parents. This study adopts Krauss et al.'s (2005) definition of Islamic religiosity as it provides a comprehensive, clear, and profound understanding of Islamic religiosity.



Cohen and Hill (2007) document that religiosity and religion represent a vital role in affecting moral standards, judgments, attitudes, thoughts, and human behavior. Additionally, religion directly or indirectly forms individuals' thoughts, norms, opinions, socialization, decision-making, beliefs, moral standards, and attitudes, as highlighted by Choi (2010), Fam, Waller, and Erdogan (2004), and Wilkes, Burnett, and Howell (1986). As a consequence, people's perceptions are impacted by their religious beliefs.

According to Golan's (2002) study, religiosity does not influence how individuals perceive the impact of non-moral issues, like environmental matters, on themselves. Golan (2002) challenges the stereotype and argues that individuals with higher religiosity, especially within Protestant and sectarian Christian faiths, believe they are equally susceptible to media influence as non-religious individuals due to the concept of natural sin (p. 116).

Similarly, Muslims also embrace the belief in "we are all sinners." However, Islam promotes the preservation and cleanliness of the environment, which makes environmental issues positive messages among Muslims. Therefore, it is plausible that highly religious Muslims might overestimate the impact of such environmental issues on themselves while underestimating their impact on others. This assumption forms the fifth hypothesis of the study;

H5: There is a positive relationship between religiosity and The FPE on environmental issues in SNS.

## 2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISM OF THE FIRST-PERSON EFFECT

Prior studies have delved into the theoretical mechanisms that underlie perceptions of the First-Person Effect, which include ego enhancement and optimistic bias (Hoorens & Ruiter, 1996). Ego enhancement allows people to uphold or enhance their self-esteem by engaging in behaviors that make them feel positively about themselves (Leone, Peek, Kimberly, & Bissell, 2006; Price, Huang & Tewksbury, 2015). On the other hand, optimistic bias refers to individuals' tendency to believe that their risk is lower than that of others (Klein & Helweg-Larsen, 2002). These mechanisms contribute to individuals believing that positive message has a larger impact on themselves than on others. Consequently, they are more susceptible to being influenced by positive or socially desirable content.

This study specifically concentrates on individuals' perceived impact of environmental issues, which are considered positive and socially desirable, on themselves and others within Social Networking Sites (SNS). Furthermore, this research aims to explore how Islamic religiosity influences FPE towards environmental issues on SNS. By investigating the





differences in attitudes towards these issues between oneself and others, along with the impact of Islamic religiosity on FPE, this study aims to provide insights into people's psychological states regarding these crucial issues on SNS.

### 3 MATERIALS AND METHOD

A specific phenomenon among a particular group of individuals, specifically the students of the Gombak campus at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), was examined using a quantitative research method. Surveys were used to collect numerical data from 357 respondents, who were randomly selected for the survey. Gathering data was straightforward as participants were requested to personally fill out survey questionnaires. The survey distribution and collection took place between December 16, 2019, and December 20, 2019, and the gathered data were subsequently analyzed.

The survey questionnaire included four sections. The first section concentrated on collecting demographic information, containing age (in years), gender, education level, and year of study.

The subsequent section assessed Islamic religiosity by employing a 10-item index adapted from the research conducted by Marhaini, Ahmad, Rahman, Seman, and Ali (2008). Participants used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "never" to "always," to rate the frequency of their involvement with each item. The reliability of this section was established with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.869.

The final part of the survey was devoted to exploring the First-person Effect, with a particular emphasis on understanding how messages from Social Networking Sites impact individuals' perceptions of environmental issues, both personally and for others. This section included a single question, where respondents rated the degree to which they believed SNS messages influenced their own and others' views on environmental issues. Participants used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "no influence" to "great deal of influence," to rate the frequency of their involvement with each item. The reliability of this section was evaluated and verified with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.825.

#### 3.1 DATA COLLECTION

The data that was gathered underwent analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics, like frequency, percentage, mean, and



standard deviations, were utilized to present a summary of the data for each variable. To explore the perception aspect, a paired sample t-test was applied to compare the means of self-perceptions and perceptions of others. Furthermore, the study utilized One-way ANOVA to investigate whether there were any potential variations in First-Person Effects (FPE) concerning environmental issues based on participants' gender, age, and education level. Moreover, the influence of Islamic religiosity on FPE was investigated by evaluating Islamic religiosity through a one-sample t-test with a test value of 3 to determine its level. The elements forming the Islamic religiosity index were consolidated into a unified variable named "religiosity." This variable was subsequently correlated with perceived media influence on oneself and others across variables, employing One-way ANOVA.

## 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The analysis outcomes offer insights into the research objectives and hypotheses. Among the participants, 197 were females, and the remaining were males, with ages spanning from 23 and below to 27 and above.

### 4.1 LEVEL OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOSITY

Islamic religiosity was assessed using a one-sample t-test with a test value of 3. The results reveal that Islamic religiosity holds considerable significance, with a majority of participants acknowledging its importance in their lives. Specifically, 85.1% of students reported integrating Islamic values into their daily routines. Furthermore, participants strongly agreed with the adoption of Islamic religiosity ( $M = 4.257$ ,  $SD = 0.656$ ,  $t(36.184) = 36.184$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

### 4.2 FPE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Table 1 presents the comparison of how individuals perceive the impact of environmental issues on themselves and others through SNS. The results show that environmental issues have a notably stronger influence on oneself ( $M = 3.647$ ,  $SD = 1.057$ ) compared to others ( $M = 3.563$ ,  $SD = 1.052$ ), with a t-value of 1.897 and a p-value of 0.029. These findings align with the first hypothesis, which posited that individuals would perceive environmental issues to have a greater impact on themselves than on others (H1). Therefore,



the students' perception of being affected by environmental issues is significantly more pronounced for themselves than for others. This supports the presence of the First-Person Effect concerning environmental issues through SNS, indicating that students hold a positive perception of content related to environmental matters.

**Table 1**

*Paired sample t-test for the perceived effect of environmental issues on SNS on self and others.*

Variables		<i>N</i>	<i>M*</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Environmental Issues</b>	On self	357	3.647	1.057	.685	.029	1.897	356
	On others	357	3.563	1.052				

\*5-point scale whereby 1=no influence, 2 =a little influence, 3 =some influence, 4 =quite a bit of influence, 5 =great deal of influence.

Table 2 presents the influence of demographic variables, including age, education, and gender, on the perceived impact of environment issues in SNS on oneself and others. The results indicate a significant difference in the First-Person Effect concerning environmental issues based on gender ( $\eta^2 = 0.0172$ ,  $F(1,355) = 6.201$ ,  $p = .013$ ). Specifically, females ( $M = .183$ ,  $SD = .794$ ) perceive themselves to be more affected by environmental issues than males ( $M = -.038$ ,  $SD = .875$ ) (see Figure 1 and Table 3). However, table 4 indicates that there is no significant difference in FPE on environmental issues based on age ( $\eta^2 = 0.0197$ ,  $F(4, 352) = 1.769$ ,  $p = .135$ ) and educational level ( $\eta^2 = 0.0207$ ,  $F(3,353) = 2.482$ ,  $p = .061$ ).

**Table 2**

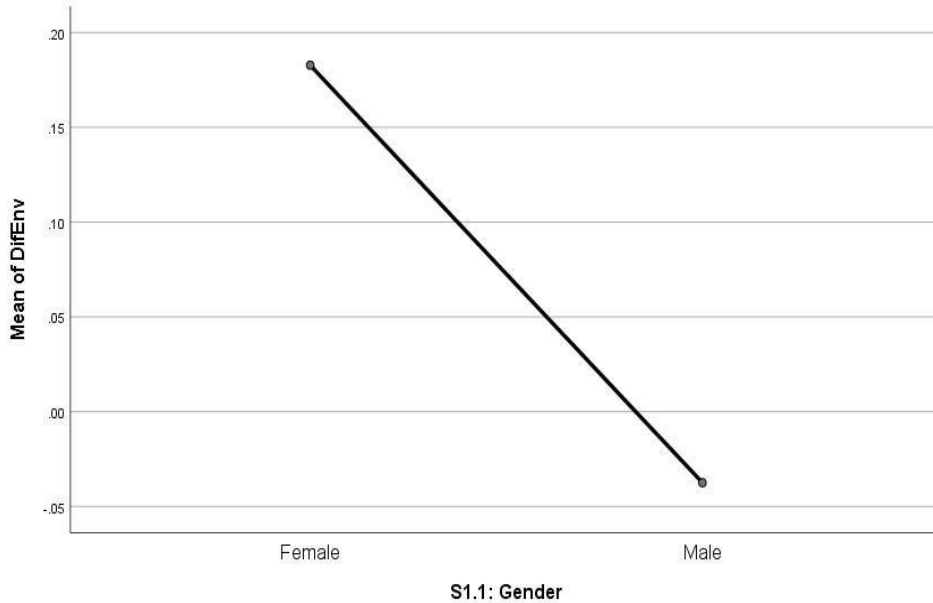
*One-way ANOVA for FPE on Environmental Issues by Gender*

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Between Groups</b>	4.283	1	4.283	6.201	.013	0.0172
<b>Within Groups</b>	245.196	355	.691			
<b>Total</b>	249.479	356				



**Figure 1**

*Mean Plots of One-way ANOVA for FPE on Environmental Issues by Gender*



**Table 3**

*Means of Difference in FPE on Environmental Issues by Gender*

Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Female	.1827	197	.794
Male	-.0375	160	.875
Total	.0840	357	.837

**Table 4**

*One-way ANOVA for FPE on Environmental Issues by Education*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	$\eta^2$
Between Groups	5.154	3	1.718	2.482	.061	0.0207
Within Groups	244.325	353	.692			
Total	249.479	356				

#### 4.3 ISLAMIC RELIGIOSITY AND FIRST-PERSON EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN SNS

H4 proposes that there is a positive association between Islamic religiosity and the First-Person Effect (FPE) on Environmental Issues in SNS. However, Table 5 demonstrates that although there is a positive correlation between religiosity and the perceived effect of environmental issues on oneself and others, it is not statistically significant ( $\eta^2 = 0.0477$ ,  $F(29, 327) = 6.201$ ,  $p = (.968)$ ). Therefore, H5 is not supported, and it can be concluded that as



Islamic religiosity increases, there is no corresponding increase in the perceived impact of environmental issues on oneself and others.

**Table 5**

*One-way ANOVA for FPE on Environmental Issues by Religiosity*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	$\eta^2$
<b>Between Groups</b>	11.893	29	.410	.564	.968	0.0477
<b>Within Groups</b>	237.586	327	.727			
<b>Total</b>	249.479	356				

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the perceptions of university students regarding environmental issues on social networking sites, utilizing the revised perspective of Third-person Effect or First-Person Effects. The main objective was to determine whether individuals perceive themselves as more influenced by media content compared to others, and to explore how demographic characteristics and Islamic religiosity influence this perception. The findings indicated that students perceived themselves to be more affected by environmental issues on SNS than others, suggesting the presence of First-Person Effects. Additionally, the study revealed a significant effect of gender on FPE, with females perceiving themselves as more affected than males. However, age and education level did not significantly impact FPE. Lastly, the study found that an increase in Islamic religiosity did not result in a higher perceived impact of environmental issues on oneself relative to others.

The research's results indicate that the students had a heightened perception of being influenced by environmental issues in comparison to others, aligning with Chung's (2018) research where SNS users similarly perceived themselves to be more affected by environmental messages. This perception could be attributed to the students' positive view of environmental issues as desirable messages. The respondents displayed a strong interest in environmental problems, recognizing their global importance. Additionally, the students may have had a motivation to showcase their knowledge and expertise on environmental issues, which could contribute to self-enhancement.

The study revealed a noteworthy gender disparity in the perceived gap between self and others concerning environmental issues, with females perceiving themselves to be more affected by these issues than males. This finding confirms the influence of gender on the First-Person Effect, suggesting that girls are more inclined towards environmental issues compared



to boys. Previous research has also demonstrated significant differences between males and females in their perception of others being greater influenced by media content than themselves (Third-Person Effect - TPE) (Heravi, et al., 2015). This could imply that females possess higher sensitivity and awareness towards cleanliness and environmental issues, leading them to believe that they are more affected by such matters.

However, the study did not identify any noteworthy variations among different age groups and educational levels concerning the perceived difference in the impact of environmental issues on oneself and others. This indicates that levels of awareness and educational experience did not contribute to increasing the self-other perceptual gap (FPE). Past research has demonstrated that age and education do influence Third-Person Effect (Henriksen & Flora, 1999; Douglas and Sutton, 2008).

The study initially hypothesized that there would be a positive association between Islamic religiosity and the First-Person Effect (FPE) concerning environmental issues on social networking sites (SNS). However, the findings determined that there was no significant association between religiosity and FPE on environmental issues. This suggests that being religious does not influence the disparity between individuals' perceptions of the impact of environmental issues on themselves and others, despite the emphasis on preserving and keeping the environment clean in Islamic teachings. Religious individuals may view environmental issues as universal problems that do not necessarily enhance and support their self-image by claiming to be larger influenced by them than others.

In summary, the research revealed that people perceive themselves to be more impacted by environmental issues on SNS than others, with females having a greater perception of this than males. However, the study did not determine any correlation between religiosity and the perception of FPE on environmental issues. The study provides insights into how people in a Muslim society perceive environmental content in media and how gender influences perceptions of self and others, while age and education did not show any significant impact. The study recommends avoiding biased judgments and self-interest, promoting a more objective viewpoint.

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