

Research Paper

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The effect of green transformational leadership on green behavior with the mediating role of green organizational culture and environmental concerns

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Abstract

The main purpose of the current study is to investigate the impact of green transformational leadership on green behavior with the mediating role of green organizational culture and environmental concerns of employees in industrial units of Shahrekord. This study is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of data collection. Green transformational leadership was measured using the six-item scale developed by Singh (2020), environmental concern was measured using the five-item scale developed by Frang and Martens (2006), green behavior was measured using the sixteen-item scale developed by Hassanpour (2020), and also green organizational culture was measured using the nineteen-item scale developed by Stanstie et al (2021). The statistical population of this study was 510 employees, among which a sample including 219 employees in industrial units of Shahrekord was selected by Morgan table, and the questionnaires were distributed among them by simple random sampling. SPSS and Smart PLS softwares were used to analyze the data as well as hypotheses testing. The results showed that green transformational leadership has a positive effect on green behavior with the mediating role of green organizational culture. The results also indicated that green transformational leadership had a positive effect on green behavior with the mediating role of environmental concerns.

Keywords:

Green transformational leadership,
green behavior,
green organizational culture,
environmental concerns

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The first way to have a sustainable environment is to identify the factors that threaten it and take action to reduce the impact of these factors. Therefore, the environment is currently considered a global issue for everyone, including organizations (Adriana et al, 2020), so that stopping destruction and efforts to increase the quality of the environment are among the challenges considered as the front line of organizations. Recently, the green behavior of employees at the workplace has been in the focus of organizational researchers because the evidence indicates that the individual behavior of employees can play an important role in the environmental performance of the organization and improve it. Behaviors that strengthen or weaken environmental sustainability by employees, which occur voluntarily or involuntarily and are also measurable, are called green employee behavior (Xiao et al, 2020).

Past studies show that when leaders implement green transformational leadership, they positively affect corporate environmental responsibility and green behavior. Green transformational leadership is a style of leadership that inspires its followers to achieve environmental goals and motivates them to perform and behave green beyond expectations. One of the categories that seems to be able to facilitate the effect of green transformational leadership on the green behaviors of employees is the attitude of employees. Attitude is defined as a person's emotional tendency when he evaluates something positively or negatively (Farhadinejad et al, 2019).

According to the mentioned materials, the main problem of the research is whether green transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on green behavior with the mediating role of green organizational culture and environmental concerns in the industrial units of Shahrekord city.

Theoretical Framework

Green transformational leadership, theory-based evidence and experience-based evidence indicate that personal and situational factors are among the factors that can influence the tendency of employees to have environmentally friendly behavior at work. In this regard, researchers name an important factor in the formation of green behavior at work under the title of transformational leadership (Hadi & Rasool, 2017).

When employees go beyond the goals, in order to minimize the positive impact of organizational activities on the environment (Raskooi, 2019), in fact, it is better to say, green management refers to the integrity of the organization's behavior; and the environmental awareness of green management demands that a company adopt tangible and integrated operations to prevent the pollution created in the organization's activity process (Mazarezadeh et al. 2015).

Considering serious environmental problems, such as pollution and resource depletion and increasing polluting gases, companies should change their traditional business model to a sustainable model (Takaudo et al, 2019). However, few companies have the ability to deal with environmental issues using their limited resources (Zhang et al, 2019).

The behavior that positively affects the environment is called green behavior or environmentally friendly behavior (Iqbal et al, 2018). In fact, behaviors that contribute to the sustainability of the environment indicate green behavior, such as saving resources, transforming and turning waste into valuable items, and protecting the environment (Jian et al, 2020).

Singh et al, (2020) in a study investigated the effect of green innovation on organizational performance through the mediation of green transformation leadership and green human resource management. The findings showed that the actions of green human resources

management have a positive and significant effect on the green innovation leadership and then on the environmental performance of organizations.

Lee (2020) investigated the effect of green human resource management on environmentally friendly behavior of hotel employees and environmental performance in a study. The findings showed that paying attention to green human resource management measures increases the organizational commitment of employees, behavior compatible with their environment, and sustainable performance.

Methodology

The current research is an applicable research in terms of the goal, and a descriptive-survey research in terms of the method used. The statistical population of this research is 510 employees of the industrial units of Shahrekord city, 219 people were selected as a sample using Morgan's table, and the questionnaire was distributed among them using simple random sampling. The questionnaire of Kumar Singh, (2020) for the green transformational leadership variable, and the questionnaire of Frang, & Martens (2006) for the environmental concern variable, and the questionnaire of Hassanpour (2020) for the green behavior variable, and the questionnaire of Stanstie et al. (2021) for the green organizational culture variable were used to collect related data.

Discussion and Results

In order to investigate research hypotheses and analyze data, PLS software was used. The results showed that the significance level for the effect of green transformational leadership on green organizational culture is less than 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$); it can be said that green transformational leadership has a significant impact on green organizational culture. Considering that the coefficient of influence of green transformational leadership on green organizational culture is positive and equal to 0.735, it is concluded that green transformational leadership has a positive effect on green organizational culture. The value of the significance level for the effect of green organizational culture on green behavior, which is less than 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), can be said that green organizational culture has a significant effect on green behavior. Considering that the coefficient of influence of green organizational culture on green behavior is positive and equal to 0.496, it is concluded that green organizational culture has a positive effect on green behavior. The significance level value for the effect of green transformational leadership on environmental concerns, which is less than 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), can be said that green transformational leadership has a significant effect on environmental concerns. Considering that the coefficient of influence of green transformational leadership on environmental concerns is positive and equal to 0.804, it is concluded that green transformational leadership has a positive effect on environmental concerns. The value of the significance level for the effect of environmental concerns on green behavior, which is less than 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), can be said that environmental concerns have a significant effect on green behavior. Considering that the coefficient of influence of environmental concerns on green behavior is positive and equal to 0.377, it is concluded that environmental concerns have a positive effect on green behavior. Considering that all 4 sub-hypotheses were accepted, as a result, the main hypothesis is also accepted and green transformational leadership has a significant effect on green behavior with the mediating role of green organizational culture and environmental concerns.

Conclusion

The current research was conducted with the aim of the effect of green transformational leadership on green behavior with the mediating role of green organizational culture and environmental concerns. The results of this research are consistent with the results of Kumar Singh et al, (2019) and Goldberg et al, (2018); environmental challenges put considerable pressure on organizations to behave more environmentally sustainable. A large number of organizations have started to adopt green policies and methods to increase economic benefits and better environmental performance (Ardito & Dangelico, 2018). Nevertheless, the environmental performance of organizations not only depends on strict laws and regulations, but it also requires employees' positive responses to environmental concerns with employees' environmental behaviors (Kim et al, 2017). The success of a company's environmental management depends on the employees' environmental behavior, because their behavior improves the company's environmental performance as a whole (Lu et al, 2017). The environmental behaviors of employees contribute to the optional actions of employees in the environmental sustainability of the organization and the employer, but are not under the control of any policy or formal environmental management system. Environmental behaviors include recycling and reuse, finding sustainable ways of working, developing and applying ideas to reduce the company's negative environmental effects, developing green processes and products, and questioning harmful practices. According to the results of the research, it is suggested that in order to develop a green transformational leadership style, organizations can formulate regulations that encourage managers to display a green leadership style (such as designing special reward programs). In the government domain, policy makers should try to adopt policies in the framework of which the managers of the organizations will be trained in green leadership style and in this way influence the green attitude and behavior of the employees. Organizations may conduct environment-related training to empower employees to achieve environmental goals. Organizations should conduct environmental audits to assess whether suppliers' practices are consistent with the companies' environmental goals or not.