

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract. The globalizing business world is experiencing a transition from the traditional financial structure to the modern economy that is ready to explore the green economic aspects of the business environment. The importance of being environmentally friendly and adopting various environmental management techniques is increasingly recognized in the business world. Although the green movement is still in its infancy, the importance of green issues in organizations has led them to adopt waste management, recycling, reducing carbon footprint, using and producing green products and environmentally friendly practices. The aim of this research is to examine the role of employees' perception of organizational support on sustainability.

Keywords: Organizational support, green movement, green economic aspects.

İŞÇİ YÖNÜMLÜ TƏŞKİLATI DƏSTƏYİN DAYANIQLILIĞA TƏSİRLƏRİ

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Xülasə. Qloballaşan iş dünyası əhəmiyyətli maliyyə strukturundan biznes mühitinin yaşıl iqtisadi aspektlərini araşdırmağa hazır olan müasir iqtisadiyyata keçid dövrünü yaşayır. Ətraf mühiti qorumanın və ətraf mühitin idarə edilməsi üzrə müxtəlif üsulları tətbiq etmənin önəmi iş dünyasında getdikcə daha çox qəbul olunur. Yaşıl hərəkət hələ başlanğıc mərhələsində olsa da, təşkilatlarda 'yaşıl'a duyarlılıq onları tullantıların idarə olunması, təkrar emal, karbon ayaq izinin azaldılması, yaşıl məhsulların istifadəsi və istehsalı, eləcə də ətraf mühiti qoruyan tədbirləri icra etməyə vadar etmişdir. Tədqiqatın məqsədi işçi yönümlü təşkilati dəstəyin ətraf mühitin dəstəklənməsindəki rolunu araşdırmaqdır.

Açar sözlər: Təşkilati dəstək, yaşıl hərəkət, yaşıl iqtisadi aspektlər.

1. Introduction

Sustainability can be thought of as the process of implementing innovative steps in an organization to stand out from the competition. Current concepts such as protecting natural and environmental resources, reducing waste, preventing pollution and social responsibility emerge as important concepts that lead to competitive advantage. The fact that environmental problems have reached such a level that they cannot be ignored has made it important for green management processes to be implemented and be successful. This requires the organization's employees to be empowered and to be sensitive and responsive to the environment and nature.

Employee environmental initiatives are often considered one of the key success factors in corporate greening [1; 5; 6; 11; 12; 19]. Many studies have revealed the close relationship between employee initiatives and the environmental performance of organizations [2]. Other studies have shown the importance of employee participation in various green initiatives (pollution prevention, waste management, environmental committees, etc.) for improving

environmental performance [2; 3; 6; 18]. The success stories of a number of green organizations (Interface, 3M, Patagonia, etc.) have also been linked to employee eco-initiatives and environmental awareness [8; 14; 16].

2. The role of employees in supporting sustainability

Greening organizations does not rely solely on formal management systems, activities or technologies [4]. Discretionary initiatives taken by employees, such as improving energy efficiency processes, separating and recycling waste or establishing a green committee, can also have a significant impact on environmental performance [1; 9; 13]. As noted by Daily et al. [5] “The success of major environmental programs may depend more on employee behavior than on formal reward and performance evaluation systems”.

Despite the importance of strategic initiatives, the role of employees in implementing environmental sustainability is equally important [9]. Employees can develop and advocate for sustainability initiatives in the workplace [13]. Additionally, strategic initiatives cannot be implemented without the active support and participation of employees [7]. In this sense, psychological strengthening of employees is important. Employees' perception of organizational support for the environment will also lead to their psychological empowerment [9].

3. Psychological empowerment of employees

In their study titled “Strengthening Employee Sustainability: Perceived Organizational Support for the Environment”, Lamm et al. [9] state that two separate conceptualizations of empowerment, structural and psychological, have been developed since the 1970s. Structural empowerment focuses on organizational conditions that contribute to power sharing, decision making and control over resources [10]. In contrast, psychological empowerment focuses on “situations or conditions that allow employees or teams to believe they have control over their work” [10]. In his study titled “Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement and validity”, Spreitzer [17] developed a four-dimensional empowerment framework that includes the dimensions of meaning, competence, autonomy and impact. In this framework, meaning refers to the fit between one's work goals and beliefs or values; competence refers to individuals' belief that they can perform their jobs competently; autonomy involves individuals' sense of autonomy or control over their own work behaviors; and impact is the degree to which individuals feel their behavior makes a difference [9].

Lamm et al. [9] also emphasized that two recent studies [10; 15] synthesized empowerment research from the last two decades. In their study titled “Antecedents and consequences of team and psychological empowerment in organizations: A meta-analysis review”, Seibert et al. [15] identified two categories of antecedent variables related to empowerment: contextual antecedents and individual characteristics. One important contextual

antecedent is socio-political support. One source of socio-political support is organizational support. Seibert et al. [15] explain how socio-political support has a direct impact on many dimensions of psychological empowerment. For example, social support will increase the feeling that the work done is meaningful by fostering a sense of acceptance. At the same time, the employee's sense of autonomy will increase thanks to his or her ability to make choices. Finally, feelings of competence and impact will also increase “due to the greater availability of material resources, power and influence needed to accomplish tasks and work-related goals” [15]. Therefore, since it is well known in the literature that sociopolitical support leads to psychological empowerment and since the perception of organizational support towards the environment is a measure of sociopolitical support, it is thought that it should be positively related to psychological empowerment [9].

4. Methodology

In an era of rapidly increasing competition, organizations are trying to maintain their existence while also striving to gain competitive advantage. In addition, while maximizing economic success, it has become inevitable to take nature and resources into consideration and protect them. The aim of this research is to examine the role of employees' perception of organizational support on sustainability.

4.1. Data collection methods and tools

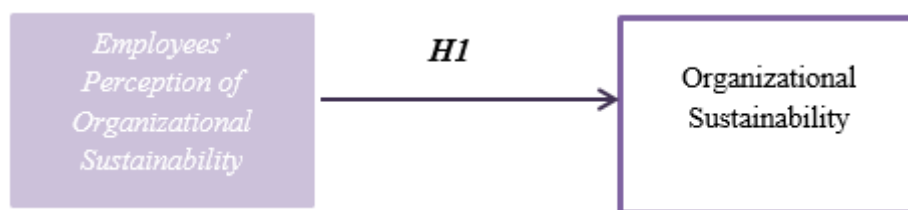
In the study, the survey method was used to collect data, which is one of the quantitative data collection methods. The survey includes a 26-item organizational sustainability scale and a five-item perceived organizational support scale for the environment. Both sections are on a 5-point Likert scale.

4.2. Data analysis methods

Firstly, normality test was applied to test the normal distribution of the data, followed by validity and reliability analyses, then correlation and regression analyses were applied to test the hypotheses. Regression is an analysis performed to define a cause-effect relationship between two variables, one of these variables is independent and another is dependent. This analyse also predicts the value that the dependent variable can take when the independent(s) variables are known. Regression analysis attempts to explain the effect of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable.

4.3. Research hypothesis and model

H1: Employees' perception of organizational support has a positive and significant effect on the companies' sustainability performance.

**Figure 1.** Research model

5. Findings

The aim of this study is to specify the impacts of employees' perception of organizational support on sustainability performance. For this purpose simple linear regression analysis was applied to determine the cause-effect relationship between both variables. In Table 1, we see the variables included and excluded from the analysis. This table shows that a regression analysis was conducted between the EPOS and OS variables and the Enter method was selected. Here, we see that the EPOS variable is independent and the OS variable is dependent.

Table 1.

Model	Variables Entered/Removed ^a		Method
	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	
1	EPOS ^b		Enter
a. Dependent Variable: OS b. All requested variables entered.			

Descriptive statistics for both variables are presented in Table 2. This table shows the number of participants included in the study, their mean scores for the variables and their standard deviations.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OS	1.9942	.33304	277
EPOS	2.1545	.50371	277

Table 3. Pearson Correlation analysis

		OS
EPOS	Pearson r	.610*
	p	<.001
	n	277

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Pearson Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between employees' perception of organizational support and sustainability performance. The findings are presented in Table 3.

As can be seen from the Table 3, a moderately positive ($r=0.610$) and significant ($p<0.05$) relationship was found between employees' perception of organizational support and sustainability performance. In other words, employees' perception of organizational support and organizational sustainability have a moderate relationship and increase significantly together. In addition, the variance explained by the variables on each other is 37%. This means that 37% of organizational sustainability stems from employees' perception of organizational support.

When we look at Table 4, which shows the summary of the regression analysis, first we see the relationship between the variables ($R=0.610$), which also saw in the correlation table. The value of $R=0.610$ shows that there is a significant relationship between both variables. We also see R Square in this table, this is the coefficient of determination or the explained variance. This means that, according to the model we established, we can say that 37% of organizational sustainability is explained by employees' perception of organizational support.

If we pay attention to the ANOVA table, if the significance value is $p<0.05$, the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable. We see in the ANOVA table that this value is 0.001, meaning the model we established is significant.

Table 4.

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.610 ^a	.372	.369	.26447	1.658
a. Predictors: (Constant), EPOS					
b. Dependent Variable: OS					

Table 5.

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.378	1	11.378	162.670	<.001 ^b
	Residual	19.234	275	.070		
	Total	30.612	276			
a. Dependent Variable: OS						
b. Predictors: (Constant), EPOS						

5.1. Reliability analysis

Cronbach's alpha method, one of the most common and widely used reliability assessment methods, was used to determine the reliability of the two scales used in our study. The results of the analysis are shown in the tables below.

Table 6. OS reliability analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.883	.891	26

Table 7. EPOS reliability analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.806	.807	5

As a result of the reliability analysis, the reliability of the Organizational Sustainability scale was 0.883 and the reliability of the Employees' Organizational Support Perception scale was 0.806. Therefore, both scales were accepted as reliable measurement tools because a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 and above is considered sufficient for the reliability of a measurement tool.

Conclusion. Environmental problems and concerns are among the most important issues we face in this century and the effects of which we feel more and more each day. Many various negative factors lead to environmental pollution and disruption of the natural balance. This is a situation that both people and businesses should not ignore and should be concerned about. The aim of this study is to analyse employees' attitude toward this problem and the solutions they offer or apply to prevent it. For this purpose we collected data from employees working mainly in manufacturing sector in Baku, Azerbaijan. The data obtained was analyzed using the required methods in the SPSS program.

In this study, we address the impact of employees' perception of organizational support on sustainability performance. The analyses used show that there is a positive and significant relationship between these two variables. Therefore, when employees feel organizational support for the environment, their sustainability performance increases. Furthermore, employees' perception of organizational support has a positive and significant effect on all sub-dimensions of organizational sustainability. This highlights that supporting employees by their organizations in protecting the environment will have a positive impact on organizational sustainability. At this point, businesses also have a big responsibility. Businesses that have made it their mission to protect the environment and not pollute it are successful in motivating employees in this direction and supporting organizational sustainability by adopting green policies and strategies.

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