



Ranking of factors affecting the ecological behavior of employees in Ahvaz City with emphasis on commitment and green culture

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Abstract

Background and Objective: With the intensification of climate crises, the ecological behavior of employees has become the driving force of organizational sustainability. This necessity is of strategic importance in the metropolis of Ahvaz, due to the acute environmental and industrial challenges. The realization of these behaviors requires more than formal requirements, the internalization of green culture and strengthening organizational commitment to institutionalize voluntary environmental actions in the context of this region. In this regard, the aim of the present study is to rank the factors affecting the ecological behavior of employees in Ahvaz with an emphasis on commitment and green culture.

Methodology: The present research is of an applied type and is descriptive-analytical in terms of methodology. In the first step, by systematically monitoring theoretical literature and international experiences, key indicators promoting green behaviors were extracted. In the operational phase, to analyze the network of internal relationships and determine the final weight of the criteria, the DANP hybrid multi-criteria decision-making approach (combination of DEMETL and ANP) was used. Finally, using the opinions of the expert panel (consisting of 50 environmental management and human resources experts), the final ranking of the indicators was developed to present a native model that is consistent with the industrial ecosystem of Ahvaz.

Results and Findings: The results of the study showed that green organizational culture is the main foundation of ecological behavior in Ahvaz, and the indicators of "green learning" and "awareness of the micro-dust crisis" have the highest priority in the behavioral transformation of employees. Based on the Dematel and Supermatrix analysis, tangible symbols and managerial values are considered as causal factors, the main drivers of the formation of emotional commitments and innovative (deflective) behaviors in the organization. Also; the findings indicate that organizational pride and recognition of the depth of the environmental disaster have a much greater impact on improving ecological performance than external rewards or mandatory laws. Finally, success in ranking the factors affecting the green behavior of Ahvaz employees does not depend on coercion, but on specialized climate training and institutionalizing identity links with the organization's environmental goals.

Keywords: Environmental attitude, ecological behavior, green commitment, green culture, DANP model, Ahvaz.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

The accelerating pace of environmental crises and climate change in recent decades has presented organizations, as major consumers of resources, with a fundamental challenge. Today, nature conservation is no longer a marginal issue, but has become an integral part of business strategies. In this regard, green human resource management has been formed with the aim of institutionalizing ecological measures in the workplace so that organizations can go beyond mere economic development and adhere to their social and environmental responsibilities. Experience shows that deploying new technologies and formulating strict laws alone is not enough to achieve sustainable goals; because the main key to success lies in the voluntary and responsible behaviors of employees. These ecological behaviors, which include waste management and resource recycling, stem from a green organizational culture and internalized values, rather than being subject to administrative instructions. When nature conservation becomes part of the job mission, employee commitment changes from a duty-based to a moral and emotional commitment. In today's competitive ecosystem, green employee behavior is a source of sustainable competitive advantage and organizational credibility. The deep connection between environmental knowledge, green culture, and organizational commitment creates a reinforcing cycle that makes employees devote their creativity and energy to sustainable goals, even beyond their formal roles. This systematic approach transfers responsible behaviors from the operational level to the deep layers of identity and institutionalizes sustainability in all work processes. In a metropolis like Ahvaz, which faces acute challenges such as fine dust and industrial pollution, a paradigm shift towards green management is a vital necessity for the survival of the ecosystem. Despite the announcement of macro policies, there is still a gap between slogans and actual performance of organizations. Therefore, identifying soft drivers such as culture and commitment to transform environmental behaviors from a symbolic state to institutional actions is the main challenge for managers in this region so that they can make responsibility towards nature a part of employees' job identity.

Methodology

This study, with the aim of identifying and prioritizing the drivers of employees' ecological behavior in the metropolis of Ahvaz, used a mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology. In the first stage, through a systematic analysis of scientific literature, key indicators were extracted in three areas: "green organizational culture", "green organizational commitment", and "ecological behavior", which include concepts such as green values, organizational learning, ethical commitments, and voluntary behaviors. These indicators have been localized by focusing on the local characteristics of the region, such as awareness of the micro-dust crisis and sensitivity to industrial pollution, to provide an accurate picture of the environmental status of Ahvaz organizations. In the second phase, the DANP multi-criteria decision-making model was used to analyze the relationship network and rank the indicators, the data of which were collected through a paired comparison questionnaire among 50 experts in the fields of management and environment. The reliability of this tool was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83, indicating high validity of the findings. This scientific approach not only determines the importance of each indicator, but also, by identifying the intensity of the impact and effectiveness of factors, provides managers with a strategic tool to prioritize their management

interventions to promote green behaviors and reduce the carbon footprint in the sensitive ecosystem of Ahvaz.

Results and Findings

Using the DANP hybrid approach, this study has mapped a complex network of relationships between green culture, commitment, and environmental behaviors. The results of the DEMETEL technique show that in the specific climate of Ahvaz, “green organizational culture” plays an underlying and “causal” role. Among them, symbols and artifacts (SA), including tangible infrastructure and pollution-reducing technologies, are the most decisive factors in stimulating other variables. Also, green values (GV) and managers’ beliefs are the center of gravity of organizational interactions that have the greatest exchange of effects with other indicators to shape employee commitment and behavior. Based on the output of the convergent supermatrix, “green learning” (GL) was recognized as the most vital driver of ecological behavior in Ahvaz, with the highest score. This finding emphasizes that raising awareness and a deep understanding of the region’s climate crises (such as micro-dust) is the cornerstone of any behavioral transformation. After learning, the three dimensions of green commitment (continuum, affective, and normative) are ranked next; this indicates that, after training, creating moral attachment and psychological obligation in employees is considered the most powerful tool for protecting the environment in the workplace. At the operational level, the sub-index "Awareness of the micro-dust crisis" (GC7) has the first rank of importance, which indicates the intersection of environmental awareness with organizational identity in this region. Importantly, the low rank of "sensitivity to pollution" in the behavioral section compared to "subjective awareness"; this indicates the existence of a gap between knowledge and objective performance. Finally, the results show that for Ahvaz employees, recognizing the depth of the environmental disaster and pride in the organization's green brand are much stronger motivators than material rewards or rigid administrative rules.

Conclusion

The results of the study showed that green organizational culture is the main foundation of ecological behavior in Ahvaz, and the indicators of "green learning" and "awareness of the micro-dust crisis" have the highest priority in the behavioral transformation of employees. Based on the Dematel and Supermatrix analysis, tangible symbols and managerial values are considered as causal factors, the main drivers of the formation of emotional commitments and innovative (deflective) behaviors in the organization. Also; the findings indicate that organizational pride and recognition of the depth of the environmental disaster have a much greater impact on improving ecological performance than external rewards or mandatory laws. Finally, success in ranking the factors affecting the green behavior of Ahvaz employees does not depend on coercion, but on specialized climate training and institutionalizing identity links with the organization's environmental goals.

Declarations

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Authors' Contribution

Authors contributed equally to the conceptualization and writing of the article. All of the authors approved the content of the manuscript and agreed on all aspects of the work declaration of competing interest none.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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