

Research Paper

eISSN: 2980-8359

Structural modeling of the impact of green transformational leadership on environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness

Asadollah Alirezaei¹ , Asma Abbasgholizadeh² , Abbas Shoul³ , Mehdi Korhani⁴ 

1- PhD in Industrial Management, Young and Elite Researchers Club, Islamic Azad University, Sirjan, Iran

2- PhD student in Public Administration, Department of Management, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran

3- Associate Professor, Department of Management, Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economics, Vali Asr University, Rafsanjan, Iran

4- Master of Public Administration, Department of Management, Sirjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sirjan, Iran

Receive:

16 August 2022

Revise:

06 November 2022

Accept:

06 December 2022

Published online:

06 December 2022

Abstract

The aim of the current research was to investigate the impact of green transformational leadership on environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness in small and medium businesses of Sirjan Special Economic Zone. This research is applied in terms of purpose, and correlative in terms of nature and method. The statistical population of this research consists of all employees in small and medium businesses of Sirjan Special Economic Zone, whose number has reached 721 people in 2022. Out of this number, 251 people were randomly selected. Statistics of all its members have been selected as a sample and studied in the form of a census. Four standard questionnaires: green transformational leadership of Chen and Chang (2013), environmental performance questionnaire of Melnik et al. (2003) and Daly et al. (2007), green human resource management questionair of Renwick et al. (2013), and environmental awareness of Han and Yoon (2015) was used to collect data. The content validity of the questionnaires was evaluated based on the opinion of experts, and its construct validity was evaluated by the method of confirmatory factor analysis. Their reliability was confirmed by calculating composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The collected data were analyzed by structural equation modeling method with PLS software. The findings of the research indicate that, in general, green transformational leadership has a significant effect on environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness.

Keywords:

green transformational leadership;
environmental activist;
green human resource management;
Environmental awareness.

Please cite this article as (APA): Alirezaei, A., Abbasgholizadeh, A., Shoul, A., & Korhani, M. (2022). Structural modeling of the impact of green transformational leadership on environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness. *Journal of value creating in Business Management*, 2(3), 82-108.



<https://doi.org/10.22034/jvcbm.2023.376957.1044>



Publisher: Iranian Business Management Association

Creative Commons: CC BY 4.0



Corresponding Author: Asadollah Alirezaei

Email: alirezaei.emba@gmail.com

Extended Introduction

Studies show that companies' increasing use of environmental management systems, such as obtaining ISO 14001 certification, prevents pollution, minimizes waste, and emits less greenhouse gases, which in turn can be effective in increasing the performance of companies. Scholars have argued that green HR practices are critical to implementing environmental management systems (Jabbour, 2016) and that human aspects are essential to adopting environmental practices (Sarkis, Gonzalez-Torre & Gravis, Sarkis & Zhou, 2013). Based on this, the integration of human resources with environmental management measures is considered important. For example, researchers such as Jabbour & Jabbour (2016) argued that all stages of environmental management systems need to support human resource management methods. In this study, the green transformational leadership factor has been considered as the determining factors in the adoption and approval of green human resources management and environmental performance. As Singh et al. (2020) argue that leadership that emphasizes understanding, predicting and controlling personal and interpersonal dynamics affective on employees to achieve common goals can be the best predictor for strengthening green innovation and green performance in small and medium-sized companies. Environmental orientation shows the level of employees' commitment in protecting the environment, which is suggested as the second determining factor of green human resource management (Singh et. al., 2020).

Previous studies indicate that employees have a significant impact on environmental performance at the performance level and organizational levels. But the main role of the leader is very important because he has a lot of freedom to influence the environmental performance of the company. Environmental management systems in the organization depend on the development and sustainability of their internal competencies and capabilities (Biscotti et al., 2018; Yin & Chimidler 2009) and in that SME due to the lack of capabilities and motivation of employees along with the organizational capabilities necessary to solve the complex challenges of environmental sustainability are known as the biggest main factor. We imagine that leadership and HRM (Leroy et al., 2018) are involved in the development of the company's internal competencies and capabilities, which are necessary from different perspectives for managing people in SMEs (Leroy et al. , 2018).

Environmental awareness is a multidimensional concept and is effective on people's information, knowledge, attitudes, tendencies, behaviors, intentions, attempts and actions. This awareness is connected to the psychological factors and impacts the people's tendency towards doing the activities, creation of environmental attitudes and behaviors (Zhang et al. 2014). According to the definition, green transformational leadership, unlike general transformational leadership, focuses on one goal, which is the environment. Based on available literature, green transformational leadership was first proposed by Robertson and Barling in 2013. They defined green transformational leadership as the emergence of a style of transformational leadership in which the content of leadership behaviors is focused on encouraging pro-environmental initiatives (Robertson & Barling, 2013). One of the categories that appears to be able to facilitate the effect of green transformational leadership on the green behaviors of employees is the attitude of employees. Attitude has been defined as the emotional tendency of a person when he evaluates something positively or negatively. According to this definition and the effect that the attitude of human resources can have on their behavior, in this regard, any research was not conducted in Iran. Also very little research has been done in this field abroad. Based on this, the main question of the current research is whether green transformational leadership has an effect on environmental performance with

the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness in small and medium businesses of Sirjan Special Economic Zone.

Theoretical framework

Green transformational leadership

Transformational leadership improves the performance of companies, but what mediates between these two structures has not been resolved and has been the focus of researchers (Para gonzales et al., 2018). The relationship between transformational leadership and firm performance becomes especially important when firms need to be innovative in their processes and products to gain competitive advantage and superior firm performance (e.g., Della Proveta & et al., 2018). In this study, we define green transformational leadership as a leadership behavior in which the main goal of leadership is a clear vision, inspiration, motivation for employees and also supporting their development needs in order to achieve the organization's environmental goals. (Mittal & Darar, 2016; Chen & Chang, 2013).

environmental function

Today, the issue of protecting the environment and preventing its destruction has been raised as one of the most important challenges facing the world community, and for this reason, numerous meetings and conferences have been held in the past years, and also many regional and international conventions have been concluded to prevent environmental destruction at the world level, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has signed many of them and has committed to act in line with the goals contained in these conventions. Following these developments, several environmental indicators have been proposed by the United Nations and universities to monitor environmental destruction processes (Jafari & Ahmadpour, 2016).

Green human resource management

The word green has its roots in ecological marketing (Vazifehdoust et al, 2013). In the field of green management topics, human resource management measures have been created under the title of green human resource management. Some researchers associate human resource management with environmental management and call it green human resource management or environmental human resource management (Rinwick & et al., 2013). Researchers have developed specific methods to implement resource management practices. The human resource management system has progressed from the old way of working such as the low level of employee involvement to more collaborative and supportive processes in which employees have opportunities to improve their skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Singh et al., 2019).

Environmental awareness

In this century, human environmental behavior has been the focus of scientists as one of the most important factors affecting the environment. While these behaviors are effective on environmental issues and threats, they are also affected by several factors. Environmental awareness from the point of view of Kaiser (1999) is the amount of information a person has about environmental issues and the effective factors in its expansion and knowledge of how to behave in order to improve these problems. In other words, environmental knowledge or awareness refers to people's practical information about the environment, the ecology of the planet, and the impact of human actions on the environment. Expanding knowledge and awareness of environmental issues is one of the best ways to overcome environmental challenges and achieve sustainable environmental development (Azadkhani et al., 2018).

Methodology

This research is descriptive-correlative in terms of its nature and method, and applied in terms of its purpose. Data collection tools; four standard questionnaires; green transformational leadership of Chen & Chang (2013) with 6 questionnaire scales, environmental performance questionnaire of Melnik et al. (2003) and Daly et al. (2007) with 5 questionnaire scales, green human resource management questionnaire of Renwick et al. (2013) with 13 items, and environmental awareness (4 questions) of Han & Yoon questionnaire (2015). The statistical population of this research includes all the employees in small and large companies of Sirjan Special Economic Zone, whose number is 721 in 2022, out of which 251 people were randomly selected.

Discussion and Results

The coefficient of the variable path of green transformational leadership and environmental performance in small and medium companies is 0.921, and the t-statistic is 29.064. The coefficient of the variable path of green transformational leadership and green human resource management in small and medium-sized companies is 0.861 and the t-statistic is 27.671. The variable path coefficient of green transformational leadership and environmental awareness in small and medium-sized companies is 0.782 and the t-statistic is 20.788. The variable path coefficient of green human resource management and environmental performance in small and medium-sized companies is 0.551 and the t-statistic is 8.421. The variable path coefficient of environmental awareness and environmental performance in small and medium-sized companies is 0.470 and the t-value is 7.577. Therefore, green transformational leadership has a significant impact on environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness in small and medium-sized companies.

Conclusion

The aim of this research is to investigate the effect of green transformational leadership on green environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness in small and medium businesses of Sirjan Special Economic Zone. The results showed that green transformational leadership has a significant impact on green environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness. That is, by improving green transformational leadership; green human resource management and environmental awareness will be improved, and so will be the environmental performance as a result. The research results of Darvishmotevali&Altinay (2022) and Singh et al, (2020) are in line with this research and confirm the results of it. There is a significant impact of green transformational leadership on green environmental performance. Our findings show that green transformational leadership plays an important role for the company's environmental performance. Green transformational leadership stimulates a higher level of motivation, trust, cohesion, commitment and performance. Green transformational leadership has a significant impact on green human resource management. Leadership plays an important role in releasing human potential, but from different perspectives. Previous studies have shown different results about whether the leadership in the organization plays a leading role (Singh et al, 2020) in the relationship of the result of green human resource management. Studies have shown that the dimension of transformational leadership significantly affects the management of human resource performance and employees' efficiency (Jia et al, 2020).

Green transformational leadership has a significant impact on green environmental awareness. The company's transformational leadership makes employees with green ability and

motivation feel comfortable through a supportive environment, and have the opportunity to realize their green potential to help the company create green innovation in use their processes and products to remain relevant and competitive in the markets (Darvishmotevali & Altinay, 2022)

There is a significant effect of green human resource management on environmental performance. Also, if the organization has the ability to implement green human resource management policies in the organization and we witness the transfer of cleanliness and health from the organization to the environment, individual and other organizations; this will make the performance improve the environment. The results of the research (Singh et al, 2020) are in line with this research and confirm the result of it. There is a significant impact of green environmental awareness on environmental performance. That is, if the organization is aware of the environment in order to reduce the adverse environmental effects, it will lead to the improvement of the environmental performance. The results of the research (Darvishmotevali&Altinay 2022) are in line with this research and confirm the result of it. If the organization can take environmentally friendly actions, such as: carrying out strategies for awareness of green practices to promote and pursue sustainable business activities that help organizations in the field of creating an environmentally friendly environment; as a result, the company's environmental performance improves.