

# A Conceptual Investigation of “Green Organizational Behaviors” in the Workplace

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## Abstract

In this study, a literature review of green organizational behavior studies exhibited by employees in workplaces was conducted. This study is based on a literature review on green organizational behaviors of employees in the workplace. It has been examined in similar statements and as a result, it has been determined that green organizational behaviors contribute to the environmental sustainability of the enterprise. In addition, the comparison of the concepts of organizational behavior and green organizational behavior is discussed in this section. Although green organizational environmental behaviors are derived from organizational citizenship behaviors, there are important differences between them. Although green organizational behaviors include voluntary behaviors to protect the environment, they contribute less to the profit of the enterprise. Organizational citizenship behaviors, on the other hand, provide more economic benefits to the business.

**Keywords:** Green behaviors, employees, pro-environmental behaviors, workplace

**JEL Classification:** M10, M11

## 1. Introduction

In this study, a literature review of green organizational behavior studies exhibited by employees in workplaces was conducted. The behavior of employees with the green organization has become a frequently researched concept in the business literature. Subjects such as protecting nature, exhibiting attitudes and behaviors towards the environment are frequently examined today. Because our earth globe is in danger of disappearing rapidly. Melting glaciers, global warming, earthquakes and floods have been increasing rapidly since the 2000s. In this respect, individuals, lawmakers, businesses and employees who make up the society have important duties in displaying environmental attitudes and behaviors. Empirical studies draw attention to how important this issue is. The green behavior of employees, which is a sensitive issue, has been examined within the scope of this study. Empirical studies were searched for the word "green organizational behavior" from search engines such as "google academy" and "web of science" and the information obtained from the relevant studies was presented. While trying to explain the concept, conceptual expressions such as "employee organization behavior", "green organizational behavior", "pro-environmental behavior", "environmental citizenship behavior", "green behaviors", which are very similar to each other, were examined within the scope of the study.

Islam et al. (2019) green organizational behaviors are explained as "behaviors that aim to consciously minimize the negative impact of employee behaviors on the natural and built environment" (Islam et al., 20019: 3321). In the definition of another concept, Daily et al. (2009: 243), green organizational behaviors are explained as "voluntary environmental behaviors that are not rewarded and not obligatory by the workplace". In another study, the concept of green organizational behaviors (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002) was explained as minimizing the effects of employee behaviors on the natural environment.

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Encouraging employees to engage in environmental behavior has become an important issue in today's global economy (Cantor et al., 2012: 33). It includes activities such as contributing to environmental sustainability is a moral value (Khan et al., 2019: 2). Unsworth et al. (2013) argue that environmental behavior, pro-environmental behavior, green behavior and environmentally friendly behavior are the same concept, referring to people's quest to reduce negative impacts on nature or contribute to environmental sustainability (Unsworth et al., 2013: 618).

Behaviors such as saving electricity, being careful when using water, keeping the electricity off when not working, using stairs instead of elevators, preferring public transportation instead of private vehicles while commuting can be given as examples of green behaviors. Financial conditions should not be taken into account for the existence of businesses. At the same time, contributing to environmental sustainability is very important for the continuity of businesses. The main problem statement of the study was to try to explain the concept of green organizational behaviors. In this direction, empirical studies have been examined and the subject has been tried to be explained by referring to the theoretical basis of the concept and examining only research articles. After the literature review, the similarities and differences between organizational behavior and green organizational behavior are mentioned in the conclusion part. It is thought that the study will shed light on future studies.

### **Problem Statement**

Empirical studies were searched for the word "green organizational behavior" from search engines such as "google academy" and "web of science" and the information obtained from the relevant studies was presented. While trying to explain the concept, conceptual expressions such as "employee organization behavior", "green organizational behavior", "pro-environmental behavior", "environmental citizenship behavior", "green behaviors", which are very similar to each other, were examined within the scope of the study.

### **Aim**

To clarify the concept of green behavior of employees and to make positive contributions to fill the gap in the literature.

## **2. Literature Review**

Green organizational citizenship behaviors are seen as voluntary and voluntary behavior by employees, which do not provide financial gain in the workplace, contribute to the natural environment, and in this case, businesses indirectly benefit. Therefore, it is possible to explain OCBE as discretionary individual behavior that is not directly or explicitly recognized by the official reward system and that directly benefits the natural environment and thereby indirectly contributes to the organization and benefits certain individuals. Examples of these behaviors are recycling, saving energy in the workplace, and encouraging other employees to engage in environmental behaviors. Boiral (2009) explained green organizational behaviors as voluntary behaviors aimed at improving the natural environment (Robertson & Barling, 2017: 58).

Implementing corporate social responsibility activities in a workplace can provide positive outcomes for employees. For example, in the workplace (which can increase employee well-being), in businesses (which can increase participation in green behaviors in the workplace), it can increase the relationship between business and employees (more organizational trust and greater organizational identity). While corporate social responsibility practices help to increase social value, that is, the welfare of employees, it is claimed that employees can respond to this situation by exhibiting green organizational behaviors. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) suggest that when a person interacts with a stimulus (S), internal states are nurtured (Organism), which in turn will elicit a response (R). In the original S-O-R models, various aspects of the physical environment act as external stimuli (Su and Swanson, 2019: 437-438-440). In the green psychology literature,

green organizational behaviors of employees are examined in the response group.

An example of green organizational behavior in businesses is less energy use and more recycling (Ruepert et al., 2017: 74). In order for businesses to adopt a sustainable corporate structure, they must encourage the green behavior of their employees. The green organizational behavior of employees is formed within the enterprise and is a very important part of corporate sustainability. Today, green organizational behaviors are still in their infancy. However, apart from the organizational behaviors that must be exhibited as a requirement of the work done, it is an approach in which the employees participate voluntarily. Green organizational citizenship behaviors are explained as voluntary activities of employees in the workplace "to improve the natural environment" (Cheema et al., 2020b, 9-11).

There are a number of triggers of green organizational behaviors in workplaces. In this regard, business owners and managers have important duties regarding the green organizational behavior of employees. Environmental social responsibility practices, especially applied in businesses, trigger green organizational behaviors of employees. Businesses participate in CSR activities to increase environmental sustainability (Rupp et al., 2015) and social change (Luu, 2018). Organizational support theory is one of the criteria used to encourage employees' green behavior in the workplace. Organizational support theory gives businesses insight into how employees should be more involved in green organizational behavior. The perception of organizational support for employees' green organizational behavior clarifies the employees' understanding of how much the workplace values the environment and contributes to employees' green organizational behavior. Providing training to employees on this issue, supporting them with a reward system, and motivating employees by managers provide important contributions to businesses for corporate sustainability in the long run. When employees have a high level of organizational support for green behaviors in the workplace, they will feel a stronger obligation to help their workplace meet its environmental sustainability goals. As a result, green organizational support practices applied in businesses increase the emotional commitment, organizational identification and green organizational behavior of employees. Green organizational behavior can be seen as an integral part of the employee's job as a voluntary behavior. This is completely related to managers and organizational policies (Cantor et al., 2012: 33-36).

In empirical studies, it has been found that employees' green organizational behaviors positively affect the environmental performance of their workplaces (Paillé et al., 2014; Kennedy et al., 2015). In another empirical study, it was argued that the ethical leadership attitudes of managers affect the green organizational behaviors of employees (Khan et al., 2019: 2). Zientera and Zamojska (2018) in their empirical study; There is a moderator role in the relationship between green organizational climate, affective organizational commitment and green organizational citizenship. It has been mentioned that individual and group factors underlie the employees' green organizational behaviors in the workplace (Zientera and Zamojska, 2018: 1153). In his study, Chou (2014) showed green organizational behavior of employees as one of the four environmentally important types of behavior. Other types of behavior are environmental activism, non-activist behaviors in the public sphere (such as green purchasing), and private space environmentalism (green behaviors performed daily at home) (Chou, 2014: 437). Cheema et al. (2020a) found in their study that organizational identification is not only predicted by employees' perceptions of CSR, but also affects green behaviors in the workplace. This finding was also reported by Park et al. (2014) explained that organizational commitment is consistent with their study, which found that corporate social responsibility mediates the effect on employees' green behavior. Boiral et al. (2015) found in their study that Green organizational behaviors (norms and attitudes) increase the employee's willingness to engage in voluntary organizational behaviors (Boiral et al., 2015: 534).

Junot et al. (2017) in their scientific research, "emotional factors are considered important for

understanding green organizational behaviors; rational and cognitive perceptions influence green organizational behavior. Individuals' positive emotions and thoughts have an effect on green organizational behaviors" (Junot et al., 2017: 178). Dono et al. (2010) found in their study that there is a significant relationship between social identity and green organizational behaviors (Dono et al., 2010: 184).

### **3. Research Methodology**

Within the scope of this study, a literature review was conducted. In this direction, the concept of environmental behavior of employees has been examined. It has been determined which type of word group the synonyms are composed of.

### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

This study is based on a literature review on green organizational behaviors of employees in the workplace. It has been examined in similar statements and as a result, it has been determined that green organizational behaviors contribute to the environmental sustainability of the enterprise. In addition, the comparison of the concepts of organizational behavior and green organizational behavior is discussed in this section.

Although green organizational environmental behaviors are derived from organizational citizenship behaviors, there are important differences between them. Although green organizational behaviors include voluntary behaviors to protect the environment, they contribute less to the profit of the enterprise. Organizational citizenship behaviors, on the other hand, provide more economic benefits to the business. As an example of organizational citizenship behaviors; It can be explained as the employees attending the meetings ahead of time, establishing positive relations with their colleagues, helping their colleagues in their work, sharing the mistakes they have made with their managers, and constantly praising the workplace they work outside of the workplace, that is, in their private life. Green organizational citizenship behaviors include turning off the lights of the meeting room immediately after the meeting, saving electricity in the workplace, using both sides of the paper when printing out the text, and preferring the stairs instead of using the elevator in the workplace can be given as examples. While organizational citizenship behaviors benefit the workplace more, green organizational citizenship behaviors especially benefit the environment. Workplace interests are secondary in green organizational citizenship behaviors. There are some reasons for green organizational behaviors that are thought to have important contributions to environmental sustainability of businesses. These; First, green organizational behaviors in the workplace are largely based on the voluntary participation of employees and it is difficult to make them part of job descriptions and formal job roles. Second, the formal environmental sustainability activities of businesses often depend on voluntary green behaviors because green organizational behaviors compensate for the weaknesses of systems, technologies and official practices for environmental sustainability (Luu, 2018; cited in Cheema et al., 2020b: 11-12).

After the comparison of organizational behavior and green organizational behavior within the scope of the study, it would be appropriate to claim that the most basic determinant of organizational environmental performance is the green organizational behavior of employees. The fact that the study is completely based on literature review has been very accurate in terms of theoretical examination of the concept and easier understanding of this concept. It would be appropriate to include more applied studies in future studies. For example, quantitative and mixed studies will contribute to the literature. At the same time, developing new scales through qualitative studies for the measurement of green organizational behaviors will contribute to the enrichment of the literature.

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