

EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEES' PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR- AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS IN WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

This paper contributes to the ongoing discussion of pro-environmental behaviour of employees by introducing the construct of leadership or environmentally-specific transformational leadership. We propose and empirically test a relationship between employee green behaviour and transformational leadership. As climate change is one of the biggest concerns of the world, organizational leaderships are constantly facing challenges to make the organizations more environmentally sustainable. It has been cited continuously that human activity is the root cause of climate change and corporate significantly contribute to climate change, but research that investigates pro-environmental organizational behaviours remain limited.

Random sampling technique has been used in collecting data from a sample of 200 employees working in different organizations based in West Bengal. Adapted versions of questionnaires, namely, environmentally-specific transformational leadership by Robertson and Barling (2012) and pro-environmental behaviour survey measure by Zibarras and Ballinger (2011) have been used in measuring transformational leadership and employee green behaviour respectively.

Results of regression analysis indicated a relationship to exist between the two study variables. The findings of this study extend research on the efficacy of environmentally-specific transformational leadership by shedding new light on the mechanisms that link them with employee green behaviour.

Keywords: *Environmental Sustainability, Environmentally-Specific Transformational Leadership, Green Leadership, Organizational Sustainability, Pro-Environmental Behaviour At Workplace,*

I. INTRODUCTION

At present organisations are constantly encouraging employees to engage in pro environmental behaviour. Research interest in pro-environmental behaviour of employees is also on the rise, but bridge between academic work and interventions delivered in the workplace are lacking. Mere adoptions of traditional environmental measure by the organizations are not sufficient to address the concern. It has been well understood that it is everyone's responsibility to preserve environment, in order for us to keep it living. The environmental problems are partly caused by environmental behaviour, which refers to any behaviour that has an impact on the

environment, both good and bad ^[2]. Research has been conducted on understanding and encouraging pro-environmental behaviour, that is, behaviour that harms the environment as little as possible or even benefits it ^[2]. Currently, sustainable behaviour of employees in workplaces is documented through various terms like pro-environmental behaviour (PEB), employee green behaviour (EGB). This pro-environmental behaviour or employee green behaviour can highly depend on the organizational leadership. Organisational leadership and leadership are the two key ingredients of employees' pro environmental behaviour, and suggest companies to adopt further course of action ^[13]. Encouraging workplace pro-environmental behaviours, such as recycling, conservation, and waste reduction behaviours, will not only contribute to the greening of organizations but will also positively affect climate change and prevent further environmental degradation. The need for human behavioural modification toward more pro-environmental behaviours is well recognized by researchers, who point to the need for empirical research that investigates how promoting workplace pro-environmental behaviours can be achieved. It has been argued that in order to fully respond to environmental challenges, organizations will have to undergo significant leadership change and transformation towards environment ^[6]. The central idea is that, organizations will have to develop an environmentally-oriented organizational leadership when moving towards organizational sustainability.

In this study, organizational leadership serves as a framework for the encouragement of environmental awareness and its effect on pro environmental behaviour at workplace, as it is convinced from the studies that organizational leadership influence a spectrum of traditional organizational outcomes, such as employee attitude, commitment, and financial performance of the organization, as a whole it reflects both real and declared values of the company and its members most realistically ^[2]. Similarly, pro environmental behaviour can be defined as a kind of behaviour that consciously seeks to minimise the negative impact of one's actions on the natural and built environment ^[1]. As employees spend about one third of their time in an office, it is expected that pro-environmental behaviour in the workplace will contribute significantly to the minimization of the negative impact of employee's actions on the natural and built environment. In order to enhance pro environmental behaviour in the workplace, the study focuses on specific factor (organizational leadership) that may impact pro environmental organizational behaviour.

II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the past few years, transformational leadership has become the most widely studied of all leadership theories and has been shown to influence diverse behaviours ^[2]. Transformational leadership includes four behaviours: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration ^[3], each of which can be applied to influencing environmental sustainability within organizations. Formerly it was thought that personal traits were the major source of successful leadership, but more recent emphasis is on identifying leadership behaviours. That is, successful leadership depends on appropriate behaviours, skill and action, not personal traits. Leaders' generally use three different types of skills namely, technical, human and conceptual. Although these skills are interrelated in practice, they can be considered differently. If these three behaviours of the leaders are channelized towards green behaviour or environmentally sustainable behaviour, it shapes the form of pro environmental organizational behaviour. Now, firstly, as technical skill refers to a

person's knowledge or technique, leader's technical skill can be environmentally sustainable, (double-sided printing, using recycled products) which will influence the subordinates to act in similar manner. Secondly, human skill is the ability to work effectively with people and to build teamwork which will relate to sustainable thinking of the leader (prioritising environmental-friendly mechanism over cost saving), that will motivate more subordinates in sustainable decision-making. Finally, conceptual skill is the ability to think in terms of models, frameworks and broad relationships, such as long range plans, here leaders environmental friendly cultures and values can be spread among the subordinates in order to make the organization more environmentally sustainable.

Pro-environmental behaviour (or green behaviour, environmentally friendly behaviour) can be defined as a helping behaviour towards the environment ^[8]. Stern (2000) is more specific by defining pro-environmental behaviour as a "behaviour that intentionally pursues reductions of the negative impact of people's actions on the natural world". Any person or organization can behave pro-environmentally by purchasing "green" products, recycling, and not littering, among other behaviours. Although it may seem simple to act more environmentally friendly, not many people do as much as they could, and this has prompted a large number of studies on finding how to motivate people to do so ^[14]. When pro-environmental behaviours are undertaken in relation to individuals' jobs, they become employee green behaviours ^[11]. Ones and Dilchert (2012) define employee green behaviour as "scalable actions and behaviours that employees engage in or bring about that are linked with, and contribute to or detract from environmental sustainability". In other words, employee green behaviour can be a directed behaviour concerning the environment, or the act of bringing attention to this issue in the organizational context.

Based on the literature review, the study examines current empirical perspectives of how environmentally-specific transformational leadership might facilitate more sustainable organizational behaviour. It examines the relationship between environmentally-specific leadership and pro environmental behaviour of employees.

III RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Procedure and Participants

The questionnaire study was conducted among 200 employees from different private and public sector organizations based in West Bengal. Respondents were invited by email to participate in this study. The subjects of the study were both managerial and non-managerial employees (male and female) working across different job levels. Random sampling technique was used for the collecting data. The gender distribution was 69.4 % male and 30.6 % female. The age of the respondents ranged between 25 to 50 years old. The level of education was high, 52% had a master degree and the rest had graduation and engineering degrees. In our sample, we only included responses that had completed the full values scale. The data was collected from December 2016 until February 2017. About 88.2% of our respondents were from private sector organizations (including 40% from Information Technology sector and the rest from various other sectors like banking, sales, and marketing) and 11.8% from government sector organizations. There were variation in the income groups among respondents, within which 40% belongs to the income group of Indian Rupee (INR) 40001-60000, while 30% settles in INR 20001-40000 income group, and remaining 18% & 12% of respondents belong to income groups of below INR

20000 and above INR 60000 respectively. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyze and test the relationship, in order to determine the relative association between the studied variables.

3.2 Questionnaire

To test the relationship we used the scale built by Robertson and Barling (2012) ^[5], which included constructs from, leaders' environmental descriptive norms, environmentally-specific transformational leadership, harmonious passion for the environment and workplace pro environmental behaviours. Leaders' environmental descriptive norms contained questions like; endorsing environmentally friendly behaviour among family, friends and co-workers. Harmonious passion for the environment consisted of several questions like, "I am passionate about environment", and "I enjoy engaging in environmentally friendly behaviour". Workplace pro environmental behaviours scale was based on pro-environmental behaviour survey measure by Zibarras and Ballinger ^[15] (2011). The questionnaire, used in collecting primary data for the study was segmented into three sections. The first section required respondents' demography such as gender, age, annual income and work experience. While the second set of questionnaire was used to measure environmentally-specific transformational leadership and finally third set was used to understand pro-environmental behaviour of employees. The scales consisted of ten questions each. Five-point Likert scale was used for rating the items in both the scales (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

IV FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Employee pro-environmental behaviour being the dependent variable had the mean score of 37.50 and standard deviation of 6.48, environmentally-specific transformational leadership, being independent variable had mean score of 35.00, and standard deviation of 4.72. The Pearson's correlation matrix (table 1) shows that, transformational leadership had correlation of .643 or 64.3, indicating the respondents' agreement that environmentally-specific transformational leadership does have influence on employee pro-environmental behaviour.

To test the predictive ability of the independent variable, the regression analysis was carried out. All assumptions those are pre-requisite for a regression analysis, such as multicollinearity, normality, treatment for outliers and others were all taken into account before the test was conducted. Result from table 2 shows the overall significance of the regression model ($F = 139.58$), implying the existence of a linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The R^2 value (table 3) of .413 means that 41.3% of the changes in the independent variable could be assigned for the variation in the dependent variable.

As we know that, in general, values of the regression coefficient beta represents the change in the outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor and that if a predictor is having a significant impact on the ability to predict the outcome then this b should be different from 0. To determine the influence of the independent variable on the regression model we look at its coefficients. Result shows that environmentally-specific transformational leadership is influential. Environmentally-specific transformational leadership, where employees are consistently related to pro-environmental behaviour at workplace due to the shared values by

leaders, had the influence of .883 (table 4). The outcome of the environmentally-specific transformational leadership factor could be explained by the fact that they are relationship as well as task oriented in nature, compared to other organizational factors which are systematically less engaging. However, we believe that as organizations become more aware and concern with environmental problems that are affecting them, this factor (environmentally-specific transformational leadership) will eventually play a more significant role in contribution towards pro-environmental behaviour at workplace.

The reliability of the scales was tested by Cronbach's alpha to confirm good internal correlation of each item in the scale. A Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 indicates a good internal reliability. The Cronbach's alpha for environmentally transformational leadership scale was .81 (table 5) and for pro-environmental behaviour of employees scale was .77 (table 6) which indicates a standard reliability on both the scales.

V DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary goal of the study was to examine how leaders can affect organizations environmental viability through their influence on employees' pro-environmental passion and behaviours. To this end, the study tested a relationship linking environmentally-specific transformational leadership and their workplace pro-environmental behaviours. The mediating role of employees' environmental passion is emphasized in the relationship. The data provided convincing support for the relationship, and several of the findings offer important contributions to green organizational behaviour and organizational behaviour research more broadly. To begin, our discussions advance our understanding of green leadership with respect to pro environmental behaviour of employees. It also uncovers some of the determinants of employees' workplace pro-environmental behaviours. It points to the role of environmentally-specific transformational leadership, suggesting that leaders influence their followers' workplace pro-environmental behaviours. The existence of the environmentally-specific transformational leadership can potentially play a significant role in dealing with one of the key elements of the current environmental scenario in organizations relating to employees' pro environmental behaviour. The result of this study concludes that there is a relationship between employee green behaviour and environmentally-specific transformational leadership. This implicates to the management and organizations that, environmentally-specific transformational leadership is a vital point of interaction between the employee green behaviour and the organizational sustainability. The environmentally-specific transformational leadership also unwrapped several determinants' like, leaders shared values, convincing followers that they can achieve environmental sustainability within organization, help employees to think about issues in new and innovative ways, and establish a relationship with their employees through which they can exert an influence on pro-environmental behaviours.

Finally, the organisation can be considered environmentally aware if organisational leadership share a common pool of environmental values. The existence of such a pool is a precondition for the success of the entire organisation in meeting expectations. Extending this to an organizational context suggests that engaging in workplace pro-environmental behaviours may positively influence similar organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction and job-related self-esteem, and thereby raises new questions of general interest to the organizational behaviour field.

Appendix A

TABLE 1

Correlations

		pro environmental behaviour	Transformation al leadership
Pearson Correlation	pro environmental behaviour	1.000	.643
	Transformational leadership	.643	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	pro environmental behaviour	.	.000
	Transformational leadership	.000	.
N	pro environmental behaviour	200	200
	Transformational leadership	200	200

TABLE 2

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3460.901	1	3460.901	139.589	.000 ^b
	Residual	4909.099	198	24.793		
	Total	8370.000	199			

a. Dependent Variable: pro environmental behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational leadership

TABLE 3

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.643 ^a	.413	.411	4.979

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational leadership

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	6.599	2.639		2.501	.000	1.395	11.803
Transformational leadership	.883	.075	.643	11.815	.000	.736	1.030

a. Dependent Variable: pro environmental behaviour

b. Dependent Variable: pro environmental behaviour

TABLE 4

TABLE 5

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.812	.817	10

TABLE 6

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.770	.773	10

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