

# The Influence of Corporate Eco-Culture on Employees' Behavior Toward the Environment

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**Abstract:** This study examines the influence of corporate eco-culture on employees' environmental behavior, utilizing a table to highlight key shaping factors. It emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to eco-culture, integrating both mandatory and voluntary elements. Achieving environmental sustainability requires active employee participation and integrating voluntary behavior into professional activities to enhance corporate culture. Engagement in conservation initiatives complements mandatory behavior, demonstrating that eco-culture not only ensures compliance but also inspires voluntary environmental efforts.

**Keywords:** Corporate eco-culture; Behavior toward the environment; Role-based behavior; Voluntary behavior

**Online publication:** February 25, 2024

## 1. Introduction

In today's corporate landscape, the relationship between organizational culture and environmental awareness has been highlighted. This study explores the complex dynamics of corporate eco-culture and its significant influence on employee environmental behavior. With global businesses acknowledging the importance of sustainability, understanding how a company's ethos shapes the ecological actions of its workforce is essential. This research aims to uncover the intricate connections between corporate eco-culture and employees' environmental behaviors, highlighting potential paths to cultivate a more environmentally responsible workplace.

## 2. Employees' behavior toward the environment

Intentional measures are necessary to reduce the negative impact of the employees' activities on the environment <sup>[1]</sup>. In a broader context, this encompasses individual actions contributing to effective environmental management within organizations that do not require formal support or incentive systems <sup>[2]</sup>. Responsibility towards nature becomes a significant component of professional conduct, weaving into the strategies of organizational sustainable development. Employees' behavior toward the environment can take various forms, categorized into two main types: obligatory (role-based) and voluntary (beyond-role) behavior.

## 2.1. Obligatory behavior

Obligatory behavior involves the employee adhering to established standards and regulations and fulfilling professional responsibilities while aligning with the company's environmental requirements and recommendations. In this context, the employee consciously embraces the organization's environmental initiatives, striving for their successful implementation within the scope of their professional activities.

In the quest for sustainable development, modern organizations must increasingly adopt environmentally friendly practices. Analyzing the role of compliance with environmental initiatives in leading corporations is crucial for understanding the interplay between employees' duties and sustainable development strategies. Drawing insights from industry leaders like Patagonia and Tesla, Inc., we highlight role behavior as a key component of organizational culture in achieving environmental responsibility. Tesla, Inc., renowned for its electric vehicles and energy technologies, exemplifies a corporate culture where employees integrate the company's mission into their work, showcasing behaviors focused on achieving sustainable energy goals through innovative solutions and electric vehicle production.

## 2.2. Voluntary behavior

Voluntary behavior means that the staff proactively contributes to the company's environmental initiatives. They willingly take part in supplementary environmental activities and programs organized by the company. Furthermore, they take initiative by proposing improvements to environmental indicators and are ready to assist colleagues in addressing environmental issues in the workplace. Their interest in environmental enhancements and willingness to implement them are important components of voluntary behavior.

In the modern business world, where environmental responsibility becomes a key aspect of successful corporate activity, the role of obligatory and voluntary environmental behavior by employees becomes an integral part of organizational sustainable development strategies.

In the sustainability era, companies prioritize both formal standards and employees' voluntary involvement in environmental initiatives. Modern organizations seek practices that go beyond established norms, as seen in leading corporations like IBM and IKEA, offering insights into shaping environmentally sustainable cultures. Monitoring beyond-role compliance is vital to understanding how employees' voluntary actions drive environmental goals and promote a sustainable future. IBM employees actively exceed mandatory standards, contributing voluntarily to sustainable practices. Their voluntary behavior, including proposing innovative solutions, is integral to achieving the corporation's sustainability goals. IKEA employees go beyond regular duties by actively participating in additional environmental-related activities. They not only demonstrate environmental consciousness based on the company's standards but also integrate environmental initiatives into their daily lives, demonstrating their commitment to contribute personally to the company's environmental responsibility.

## 3. The influence of corporate eco-culture

There are numerous interpretations of the concept of corporate environmental culture, such as organizational environmental culture and going green <sup>[3]</sup>. The general consensus is that this culture influences the environmental performance of organizations. Environmental corporate culture refers to an organizational culture that emphasizes environmental issues and adheres to environmental values, rules, and norms <sup>[4]</sup>.

Researchers have highlighted a distinction in two key aspects of environmental culture within an organization <sup>[5]</sup>. The first aspect is environmental statements, which consist of formal declarations and principles promoted both within the company and in external communications. The second aspect is the implementation of environmental actions, manifested in the actual practices and behaviors of both the company and its personnel.

These two dimensions are interconnected and form the basis for a comprehensive environmental culture that aspires to go beyond mere words and toward tangible, positive environmental actions.

The first dimension of environmental culture encompasses the values and conceptual aspects, evident in a set of rules, recommendations, and requirements aimed at environmental preservation and officially documented at various levels within the organization. These elements constitute the foundation for the formal expression and advocacy of environmental values both within and outside the organization.

The second dimension of environmental culture pertains to the practical aspect that influences employees' attitudes toward environmental issues. It aims to encourage employees to exhibit environmentally conscious behavior while performing their professional duties. Furthermore, it contributes to unlocking the potential and uniting the team to achieve the organization's sustainable environmental goals<sup>[6]</sup>

Indicators of environmental culture encompass not only the company's commitment to environmental goals but also the expression of personal responsibility, leadership qualities, initiative, and employee engagement in addressing environmental challenges. Some studies have emphasized that environmental culture plays a significant role in shaping positive environmental behavior among employees<sup>[7,8]</sup>, making it a key factor in facilitating the adoption of sustainable environmental practices within the organization. This involves not only adhering to the company's formal goals but also actively contributing individually and collectively to solving environmental issues.

Corporate culture encompasses numerous key components, including but not limited to green leadership, a green corporate climate, effective communication, and a feedback system. Additionally, essential elements include work organization and collaboration with staff for active participation in addressing environmental issues, as well as spreading green lifestyle ideas among employees. Research shows that these elements collectively contribute to the formation of strong environmental awareness within the organization<sup>[9,10]</sup>. These aspects are an integral part of successful sustainable development strategies for companies.

In addition to the aforementioned aspects, there are three more crucial elements that influence corporate culture in terms of behavior toward the environment. Green transformational leadership is a key factor in the successful integration of environmental initiatives into the company's strategies<sup>[11,12]</sup>. Green thinking plays a substantial role in shaping innovative and environmentally oriented approaches within the organization<sup>[13]</sup>. Furthermore, green creativity contributes to the creation of sustainable and environmentally friendly solutions. These additional elements demonstrate that there are many aspects that contribute to a comprehensive approach to environmental responsibility within an organization<sup>[11,14,15]</sup> (**Table 1**).

**Table 1.** The influence of corporate eco-culture on employees' behavior toward the environment

Direction	The impact of employees' behavior toward the environment	Environmental culture cultivation
Green leadership	Builds trust in environmental statements and actions of the leadership, enhances the leadership's readiness to address environmental issues raised by employees, and promotes engagement in environmental initiatives and projects within the company.	Inclusion of environmental metrics in leadership development programs; working with managerial reserves in the environmental domain.
Green transformational leadership	Encourages employees to demonstrate environmentally friendly behavior, ultimately cultivating environmental consciousness. This ensures proper use of resources like water and paper. Furthermore, transformational leaders foster a culture that encourages creative ideas, the execution of these ideas, and the creation of a framework that enhances creativity. This impacts the organizational identity of employees, offering a basis for managers to address concerns strategically.	Incorporating training sessions and meetings aimed at developing ecological habits; and individual influence on personnel through personal encouragement and inspiration.

**Table 1** (Continue)

<b>Direction</b>	<b>The impact of employees' behavior toward the environment</b>	<b>Environmental culture cultivation</b>
Green thinking	The act of embracing sustainable environmental practices drives the involvement in eco-friendly activities. Cultivating environmentally conscious thoughts in the workplace empowers employees to showcase their creative abilities in promoting eco-friendly products, processes, and technologies.	Green thinkers care about the environment by engaging in gardening and purchasing environmentally friendly products.
Green creativity	Formulating groundbreaking and valuable ecological concepts involves the exploration and development of innovative approaches and strategies for producing environmentally friendly products, implementing eco-friendly methods, and enhancing sustainable practices throughout the delivery process. This entails fostering creativity and forward-thinking to contribute positively to environmental sustainability.	Encouraging green innovations from employees. Organizations should translate green ideas into their products and services. By integrating green concepts into the core tasks of the firm, companies can gain a competitive advantage over their competitors.
Green corporate climate	Creates favorable conditions for voluntary environmental behavior among employees by strengthening value orientations and drawing attention to environmental issues.	Creating an environment that encourages green practices.
Green communications, information dissemination, and feedback.	Enhances interest in the company's environmental goals, contributes to the expansion of environmental knowledge, skills, and abilities; ensures transparency and understanding among employees of the goals, requirements, and results of their environmentally-oriented practices; and increases the degree of fulfillment of environmental requirements.	Publicization of environmental policies, organizing eco-friendly events, etc.; creating communication platforms for discussing environmental matters.
Organization of work and interaction with personnel in addressing environmental issues.	Enhances individual motivation by recognizing the significance of employees in addressing environmental challenges, allows for the utilization of employees' implicit environmental knowledge, and provides constructive and objective information on issues related to achieving environmental outcomes.	Employee participation (1) Discussing environmental issues in meetings, working groups, consultations, conferences, and seminars, workshops. (2) Meetings and discussions of environmental issues with external stakeholders (3) Organizing informal activities about addressing environmental problems and environmental projects.
Promoting green lifestyles among employees	Fosters voluntary behavior among employees, particularly in terms of addressing environmental issues and implementing environment-oriented activities while fulfilling professional duties.	Social and environmental events involving employees and their families; volunteering in environmental activities; collaboration with employee communities (youth, trade unions, sports events, creative activities, etc.) to promote a green lifestyle.

## 4. Prospects

The table succinctly outlines the intricate relationship between corporate eco-culture and employees' behavior toward the environment. A thriving environmental culture not only encourages voluntary actions but also catalyzes leadership development, transformative practices, innovation, and social responsibility within the organization. The recommendations provided in this paper can significantly contribute to establishing sustainable organizations and fostering heightened awareness of environmental issues in corporations.

It is imperative to investigate the integration of a formal environmental code, which is a critical factor in upholding stringent environmental standards, into corporate culture. This document guides employees by setting precise parameters for environmental behavior and compliance <sup>[4]</sup>. The document should include aspects such as energy conservation, waste management, and responsible resource consumption. Future research may

delve into assessing the code's impact on internal dynamics, its effectiveness in reducing environmental impact and exploring diverse educational models shaping environmental awareness. These studies offer valuable perspectives for enriching corporate eco-culture.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper highlighted the factors that influence employees' behavior toward the environment and practices that shape corporate eco-culture. This analysis provides a better understanding of how corporate eco-culture shapes and directs employees' actions in the realm of environmental responsibility.

In short, the study emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to the formation of corporate eco-culture, encompassing both mandatory and voluntary elements. The development of environmentally sustainable practices requires not only compliance with standards but also active participation from the employees. This is a crucial factor not only for improving the environmental performance of the company but also for fostering a sustainable and responsible corporate culture.

Employees engaged in conservation initiatives complement mandatory (role-based) behavior with active participation in additional environmental events. This shows that corporate eco-culture not only increases compliance with company standards but also inspires voluntary participation in environmental efforts.

Despite the significant efforts made by researchers to understand the impact of corporate eco-culture on employees' behavior toward the environment, there are areas for further improvement. However, it should be acknowledged that not all aspects related to this field were covered in this study. Therefore, further research is needed for a complete understanding of the impact of corporate eco-culture on employees' behavior toward the environment.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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