



Full length article

Employee proenvironmental behavior in Russia: The roles of top management commitment, managerial leadership, and employee motives

Laura M. Graves^{a,*}, Joseph Sarkis^b, Natalia Gold^c^a Clark University, Graduate School of Management, 950 Main Street, Worcester, MA, 01610, United States^b Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Foisie Business School, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA, 01609, United States^c Northeastern University, D'Amore-McKim School of Business, 319D Hayden Hall, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA, 02115-5000, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Russia
 Corporate environmental sustainability
 Employee proenvironmental behaviors
 Leadership
 Motivation
 Self-determination theory

ABSTRACT

Despite Russia's large ecological footprint, there has been limited examination of environmental sustainability initiatives in Russian corporations. Drawing on research on the importance of employee-level behaviors for the success of corporate sustainability initiatives, we focus on the proenvironmental behaviors (PEBs) of Russian employees. We integrate scholarship on employees' PEBs and the Russian cultural context to offer theory regarding three potentially important antecedents of employees' PEBs: top management commitment to sustainability, the immediate manager's environmental leadership, and the employee's motivation. Using self-report data from management development program attendees in Russia ($N = 165$), we examined the links between these factors and employees' PEBs. We also tested whether top management commitment moderated the impact of immediate managers' leadership on employees' PEBs. We found that the immediate manager's active environmental leadership (i.e., transformational, contingent reward, and active management by exception) was positively related to employees' PEBs. Managers' passive-avoidant environmental leadership (i.e., passive management by exception and laissez-faire) was negatively related to PEBs, but only when top management was committed to sustainability. Employees' motives were linked to PEBs, but the nature of the relationship varied across motives. External motivation was negatively related to PEBs, suggesting that using rewards to motivate PEBs may be detrimental. Motivation that came from a desire to fulfill one's values or avoid feeling bad about oneself was positively associated with PEBs. Our work provides a foundation for future research on PEBs in Russia, and suggests new directions for research on employees' PEBs in other settings.

1. Introduction

Russia's environmental record is poor, both during the Soviet years and more recently (e.g., Chernobyl, Aral Sea desiccation) (Crotty and Rodgers, 2012a; Massa and Tynkkynen, 2001). Russia has one of the biggest national ecological footprints, falling behind only the United States, China, India, and Japan, all of which have larger populations or industrial capacity (One Planet Economy, 2011). Its economy is energy-intensive and focuses heavily on oil and gas production (Crotty and Hall, 2014; Thurner and Proskuryakova, 2014). Although some privatized Russian companies operating in international markets (e.g., energy, mining) have implemented environmental management programs to reduce costs, attract foreign partners or customers, and enhance their images, more widespread commitment to corporate environmental sustainability (CES) is critical for protecting Russia's natural resources (i.e., Crotty and Rodgers, 2012b; Salmi, 2008; Thurner and Proskuryakova, 2014; Vikhanskiy et al., 2012).

Currently, the regulatory and economic environment in Russian hinders CES initiatives. Responsibility for environmental regulation and enforcement is distributed across numerous governmental agencies at the federal, state and municipal levels (Crotty and Rodgers, 2012a). Enforcement practices place heavy administrative demands on organizations and typically focus on "end of the pipe" emissions; there is little incentive for companies to be proactive (Crotty and Rodgers, 2012a; Vikhanskiy et al., 2012). Further, difficult economic conditions limit the funds available to companies and constrain their ability to address environmental issues (Crotty and Crane, 2004; Vikhanskiy et al., 2012).

Given Russia's potentially large environmental impact and challenging business context, a better understanding of mechanisms for creating robust CES initiatives in Russian organizations is needed. To date, a handful of studies have identified factors that drive firm-level environmental initiatives in Russia, including management's environmental concerns, the firm's international orientation, and governmental

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: lgraves@clarku.edu (L.M. Graves), jsarkis@wpi.edu (J. Sarkis), n.gold@neu.edu (N. Gold).

supports (e.g., tax relief, public-private partnerships) (e.g., Crotty and Rodgers, 2012b; Thurner and Proskuryakova, 2014; Vikhanskiy et al., 2012). We add to the literature by examining factors that encourage employee-level proenvironmental behaviors (PEBs) in the Russian context; our work complements research on firm-level initiatives and acknowledges the human aspects of CES (Jabbour and Santos, 2008; Jabbour and de Sousa Jabbour, 2016).

Scholars have recently recognized the critical role of employees' PEBs in CES initiatives (e.g., Blok et al., 2015; Graves et al., 2013; Lu et al., 2017; Norton et al., 2014; Robertson and Barling, 2013; Temminck et al., 2015; Wesselink et al., 2017). Although various conceptualizations of employees' PEBs have been proposed (e.g., Blok et al., 2015; Graves et al., 2013; Lu et al., 2017; Norton et al., 2014; Pail e and Boiral, 2013; Wesselink et al., 2017), we view PEBs as a broad set of environmentally-friendly activities that transform work practices. PEBs include recycling and reusing, finding sustainable ways of working, developing and applying ideas for reducing the company's environmental impact, developing green processes and products, and questioning harmful practices (Graves et al., 2013).

To the best of our knowledge, no studies have examined the PEBs of Russian employees. Focusing on Russian employees is desirable because unique aspects of the national culture may affect employees' PEBs or the processes that shape them. Russians report fewer PEBs in their personal lives than individuals in other countries, and are less likely to view environmental sustainability as the responsibility of business (Franzen and Vogl, 2013; Furrer et al., 2010; Marquart-Pyatt, 2012). Further, leadership and human resources practices in Russian organizations may constrain employees' PEBs (Fey, 2008; Fey and Shekshnia, 2011; McCarthy et al., 2008).

The goal of our study is to enhance understanding of processes that facilitate employees' PEBs in Russia. Drawing on existing evidence on the importance of human aspects in evoking PEBs (e.g., Graves et al., 2013; Jabbour and Santos, 2008; Kim et al., 2017; Norton et al., 2014; Pail e and Boiral, 2013; Robertson and Barling, 2013; Wesselink et al., 2017), we focus on several potentially critical antecedents of employees' PEBs in Russia: top management commitment to sustainability, immediate managers' environmental leadership, and employees' motivation for engaging in PEBs. We also extend the literature on PEBs by assessing a broad set of leadership behaviors and considering the impact of alignment or consistency between top and immediate managers' behaviors.

2. Theory

This section explains the importance of the potential antecedents and offers theory regarding their links to PEBs. In developing our theory, we incorporate information pertinent to the Russian context. Fig. 1 provides an overview of the hypothesized relationships.

2.1. Top management commitment

Top management commitment to sustainability is the extent to which top managers demonstrate commitment to protecting nature, drive the firm's environmental strategy, and support its environmental initiatives (Banerjee et al., 2003). The influence of top management commitment on firm-level initiatives has been widely studied (e.g., Banerjee et al., 2003; Colwell and Joshi, 2013; Dubey et al., 2015, 2016). Scholars have argued that top management commitment influences employees' behaviors (Jabbour and Santos, 2008; Norton et al., 2015; Ramus and Killmer, 2007; Young et al., 2015), but evidence is limited.

We focus on employees' perceptions of top management commitment (e.g., Colwell and Joshi, 2013; Dubey et al., 2015); these perceptions are likely to influence their behaviors. Employees attend to the signals top managers "send" about sustainability (Norton et al., 2014; Ramus and Killmer, 2007; Young et al., 2015). Top managers who are

committed to sustainability will signal the importance of making progress on environmental issues. They are likely to communicate why sustainability is important, articulate the organization's direction, and set goals (Banerjee et al., 2003; Colwell and Joshi, 2013; Young et al., 2015). Their actions will increase employees' focus on sustainability (Banerjee et al., 2003; Colwell and Joshi, 2013).

The Russian context may reinforce the links between top management commitment and employees' PEBs. Historically, leadership practices in Russia have been authoritarian (Fey, 2008; Kets de Vries et al., 2008; McCarthy et al., 2008; Michailova, 2002). Although today's leadership practices may be less top-down, employees expect to be told what to do, are likely to follow directions, and may be afraid to violate rules for fear of punishment (Koveshnikov et al., 2012). Their acceptance of top-down leadership accentuates the role of senior managers in evoking employees' PEBs. Thus, we posit that:

Hypothesis 1. Top management commitment to sustainability will be positively related to employees' PEBs.

2.2. Managerial environmental leadership

Although top management is important, employees' direct managers are immediate organizational representatives and have a substantial impact on their PEBs (Graves et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2017; Norton et al., 2015; Ramus and Killmer, 2007; Ramus and Steger, 2000; Robertson and Barling, 2013; Wesselink et al., 2017). In the present study, we use transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985, 1998; Bass et al., 1996) as a framework for studying the immediate manager's environmental leadership. Transformational leadership theory has been the subject of four decades of management research and is perhaps the most dominant theory of leadership today (Lord et al., 2017). It identifies three fundamental leadership behaviors: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire. Management research has consistently linked transformational and some aspects of transactional leadership to employee performance in organizations (Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Lord et al., 2017; Ng, 2017). Some scholars have applied the theory to leadership in Russia and other former countries of the Soviet Union (e.g., Ardichvili and Gasparishvili, 2001; McCarthy et al., 2008).

Sustainability researchers have recently begun to use transformational leadership theory (e.g., Graves et al., 2013; Robertson and Barling, 2013; Robertson, 2017) to better understand leadership of CES initiatives. To date, studies have focused primarily on environmental transformational leadership (e.g., Graves et al., 2013; Robertson and Barling, 2013); environmental transactional and laissez-faire leadership have received little attention. Drawing on the theory, we focus on environmentally-specific transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership.

In **environmental transformational leadership** (Egri and Herman, 2000; Graves and Sarkis, 2012; Graves et al., 2013; Robertson and Barling, 2013; Robertson, 2017), managers act as role models by talking about their environmental values, emphasizing environmental preservation, and taking steps to address environmental issues. They inspire employees by providing an image of a sustainable future, describing what the organization needs to do to realize that image, and demonstrating confidence that they will succeed. Managers' behaviors have a strong moral component; they stress the ethical importance of environmental protection and emphasize ideals such as preserving the planet for future generations (Bono and Judge, 2003; Christensen et al., 2014; Graves and Sarkis, 2012; Robertson and Barling, 2013). This attention to ethics and ideals is likely to resonate with employees, leading them to accept the leader's environmental values and plans. Moreover, environmental transformational managers develop employees' capacity to perform PEBs by providing training and encouraging them to apply diverse perspectives and develop multiple solutions. Thus, environmental transformational leadership is likely to be positively related to employees' PEBs (Graves et al., 2013; Robertson and Barling, 2013).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10154127>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10154127>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)