

Go Green at Work: Environmental Organizational Culture

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Abstract: Environmental point of view is such an important subject for today's business world. Companies have various facilities in order to prevent impacts on environment which mostly depend on executives' and employees' approaches on this issue. Employees' environmental perspective and attitudes have great concern in order to decrease the impact of companies on environment. This paper aims to explore companies' importance to environmental behavior, if they support their employees' environmental behavior or not, what is the main supportive approaches and methods of these companies which encourage environmental behaviors and also to find out that these methods are successful or not. Additionally, facilitators and barriers to environmental applications within the company and role of environmental organizational culture on environmental behavior are evaluated.

Key words: environmental behavior, environmental initiatives, environmental organization culture, green organization

1. Introduction

The impact of our daily activities on the environment and the desire to go green has expanded from just individuals to organizations. More organizations are volunteering to operate in a more environmentally responsible way [1, 2]. Over the last decades, environmental issues have received a growing concern from top managers. External pressures and internal drivers have led executives to consider the environmental variable as a significant competitive priority and, hence, to include it into the overall process of strategy formation [3].

Effective environmental management consists of elements that span all aspects of an organization's operations. Hence, environmental management is more important within organizations and it is becoming a crucial part of business management [4]. Some companies have successfully used their environmentally friendly policies to sell their product and gain media exposure [5].

There are both internal and external factors which plays a critical role for organization to move forward for environmentalism. Motivating concerns could be related to customer needs, competitive requirements, regulations and compliance concerns, and social responsibility and change of employees' environmental awareness [3, 4, 6, 7].

Environment management literature evaluates strategies ranging from passive to proactive and even evangelist strategies taking into account organizations' orientation and activities about the environment [8-10]. Moreover, factors related to the corporate environmental culture, the available financial resources and the type of employees' "green" competences exert a great influence in determining the company's overall strategic orientation. Actually, the company's environmental culture represents one of the most important determinants in the definition of the environmental strategies: it depends on the company's history, the fields where it operates and the country in which it has the headquarters or its plants. Hence, the introduction of such a variable allows us to identify the level of environmental awareness of the company's employees

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and, in this sense, to analyze how it will manage the environmental variable and how it will react to external pressures [3].

In order to fully respond to environmental challenges, organizations will have to undergo significant cultural change and transformation [11]. There is an awareness of a change in the advocated company, as derived from company documentation such as mission statements, strategic plans, company reports, formal statements of policies and internal communiques [7]. In order to drive more sustainable business organizations should develop greener or more socially responsible organizational cultures [12].

Organizational culture is increasingly important and it has been proven to be one of the critical elements to firms' performance and strategic competitive advantage through enhancing adaptability to fit with the environment, guiding procedures, providing solutions to existing problems and facilitating goal achievement. Due to the socially complex nature of itself, organizational culture is difficult to imitate, thus enhances competitiveness [13]. Culture may facilitate the adoption of a specific strategy if there exists strong coherence between them. On the other hand, culture may become an "insuperable barrier", which hinders and delays change [14]. A culture of a group can be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems [15].

Environmental organizational culture" is a symbolic context about environmental management and protection within which interpretations guide behaviors and processes of members' sense making and set of values and norms describing how the company perceives the environmental variable [3, 16]. The definition of Green Organizational Culture can be proposed as an integration of shared basic

assumptions that the organization should go beyond profit consideration and draw a broader view of its own as well as its social and natural environment sustainable development [17]. Green organizational culture is broadly outlined as the extent to which the assumptions, values, symbols and artifacts of the organization reflected a desire or need to operate in an environmentally sustainable manner. It has two dimensions: a) the "greenness" of the officially advocated company line, b) the extent to which this exposed position was seen to be manifested in the form of company artifacts and behaviors [7].

The effective implementation of an advanced environmental approach demands a culture based on ecological values. It includes a deep awareness on the part of the workers. Otherwise, investments and management's efforts could lose part of their value [14]. The measurement of environmental organizational culture includes six items [18]:

- the company concerns the knowledge of environmental management and protection;
- the company concerns the collaboration of environmental management and protection;
- the company concerns environmental agreements;
- the company concerns the change of environmental management and protection;
- the company concerns the responsiveness of environmental management and protection; and
- the company concerns the vision of environmental management and protection.

Shein's levels of culture have three stages. First level is underlying assumptions like, unconscious, taken-for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings. Then second stage includes espoused values such as strategies, goals, philosophies and mission statements. Top stage is artifacts which are visible organizational structures and processes. These three stages can be thought as also levels of green organizational culture [12].

Harris and Crane argued that cultural greening is not a simple one-dimensional concept. First dimension is depth of cultural greening. It explains that, how deeply managers perceived greening to be valued by various organizational members and factions. The degree refers to the extent to which managers felt that green values and sensibilities were manifested in organizational creations and artifacts. Thirdly, the diffusion means that, how widely managers believed these feelings and behaviors to be exhibited throughout the organization [7].

Organizations cannot be green just reducing pollution or producing greener products, they should also think green and to be in essence that they will be green. Effective environmental management depends on the successful integration of greener values throughout the organization and it requires greener corporate culture [12].

2. Materials and Methods

In order to analyze of companies' approach and methods for encouraging environmental behavior in workplace survey method is used. For this aim, Zibbarras and Ballingers's survey named "exploring the approaches that companies take to encourage pro-environmental behavior among their employees" which they applied UK-wide on 2010 and 2012. This survey is translated in Turkish and applied employees who work in companies from different sectors in Turkey. The aim of this study and survey application is summarized and adapted as below [19, 20]:

- To explore the different environmental initiatives those are currently implemented in Turkish organizations.
- To determine the methods that organizations use to encourage their staff to behave in a pro-environmental way and establish the extent to which organizations evaluate the effectiveness of these methods.
- To identify the key facilitators and barriers for effective environmental practice in organizations.

- To explore the role of organizational culture in promoting pro-environmental behavior.

The survey was sent to employees who are working in an organization from different sectors in Turkey. Survey was implemented as using two filling methods both online through survey application and using paper surveys for some people. Survey was applied during September-November 2013 and in total 63 surveys was used from returned surveys which were selected according to criteria as completion and usefulness for the analysis.

Beside main survey questions, there are also some demographic questions which are not obligatory. These questions include organization's sector, size and status, respondent's age, gender and management position in organization in order to find our general structure of respondents and organizations. Different from original survey, company turnover was not asked depending on previous experiences that people sometimes hesitate to give information about company turnover. The sample includes 2 directors, 9 senior managers, 18 middle managers, 17 junior managers and 17 non-management staff. 46% of respondents are female and 54% are male. Most of the respondents are between age of 30-39 with 54% ratio, then with 27% of total are between 24-29, there is no respondent over the age of 60.

On the other hand, regarding organizations status survey results show that most of them are private limited companies and then comes partnerships. A big portion of organizations facilitate in production sector with 47% ratio and 37% of them have 251-1000 employee interval. The demographical & organizational characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Survey has 5 sections. First section is named as organization's green initiatives, which has multiple selection possibility of different kind of initiatives and purposes to find out which green initiatives organizations have currently. It lists 19 green initiatives which have possibility to be used by organizations. This section, also seek the responsible

Table 1 Participants' Demographic Information & Organizational Information

Gender:	N	%	Status of organization:	N	%
Male	33	54%	Charity/not for profit	6	10%
Female	28	46%	Partnership	25	40%
Age:			Limited company	18	29%
<24	4	6%	Public sector	5	8%
24-29	17	27%	Owner managed/sole trader	9	14%
30-39	34	54%	Sector information:		
40-49	7	11%	Banking & Financial services	2	3%
50-59	1	2%	Education	7	12%
>60	0	0%	Electricity, gas and water / energy	3	5%
Managerial level:			Manufacturing	27	47%
Director	2	3%	Hotels & restaurants	1	2%
Senior manager	9	14%	Wholesale and retail	3	5%
Middle manager	18	29%	Transport & Communications	9	16%
Junior manager	17	27%	Health	6	10%
Non-management	17	27%	Employees quantity:		
Role regarding env beh.			0-250	19	32%
Not at all	23	37%	251-1000	22	37%
Secondary role	31	49%	1001-10000	8	14%
Central role	9	14%	>10.000	10	17%

Note: Please note that demographic & organizational characteristics are not obligatory to fill in the survey, so it has not been answered by all of the respondents.

within the organization from implementation and management of green initiatives.

Second section is encouraging pro-environmental behavior which has also sub-sections. This section firstly lists 17 methods and request from respondents to evaluate as using the 5-point likert scale them which are used by their organization to encourage the staff to behave in pro-environmental way. Then comes two other sub-sections which asks three of the most successful and least successful methods according to respondents opinion.

Section three examines facilitators and barriers to environmental behavior within an organization. 14 facilitators and 13 barriers are listed with the 5-point likert scale. Next section includes organizational culture items. Firstly, it asks importance of environmental concerns of respondent's organization. After, it is requested from respondents to bring out their agreement degree according to 5-point likert scale for the 19 statements in total. Last section is not obligatory for the respondent as it is only for demographic information and organization based characteristics.

3. Results and Discussion

With this study, impact to employees of companies'

attention and importance level to environmental behavior is tried to be evaluated. As companies' have different attitudes to environmental behaviors, their practices and support methods also differs on encouraging this environmental behavior among employees.

In order to find out organizations' current mostly used green initiatives asked. As shown in Fig. 1 below, 84% of all respondents make information share and correspondences as electronically by using mails. So paper consumption is decreasing. Respondents also reported that they switching off all PCs at night with 78%, recycling of waste materials with 75% and interestingly having an environmental policy with 68%. On the other hand, least used initiatives are encourage working from home with 11% which is still an utopia for most of the companies. Secondly, making employees aware of how much energy they use at work with 17% ratio is one of the least used initiatives. Then come energy efficient IT, green IT and discourage business travel with 21% and also sustainable sourcing of food with 22%.

Respondents are asked that who is the responsible in their organization from implementation and management of green initiatives. Mostly, this question is answered with more than one item. First of all, most of them declared that all staff is responsible with this job (37%). In the second line, senior management team with 30% and then closely property and facilities team with 27% carries this task. Fig. 2 shows the portions.

Second section contains some methods that can be used in order to encourage the staff for pro-environmental behavior. Pro-environmental behavior is defined here as a deliberate action that seeks to minimize the negative impact of one's actions on the natural and built world [21]. As shown in Fig. 3, according to statements of respondents, the mostly used methods are in organizational vision/mission statement, actively championing by senior management and informal encouragement by line

management. Both senior and line management are play very important role with the mission and vision statements on encouragement for the green behavior within the organization. On the contrary, promotion decisions, organization-based incentives or bonus

schemes that encourage environmental behavior and setting up of green champions/task force/green team are declared to be the least used methods for green behavior encouragement.

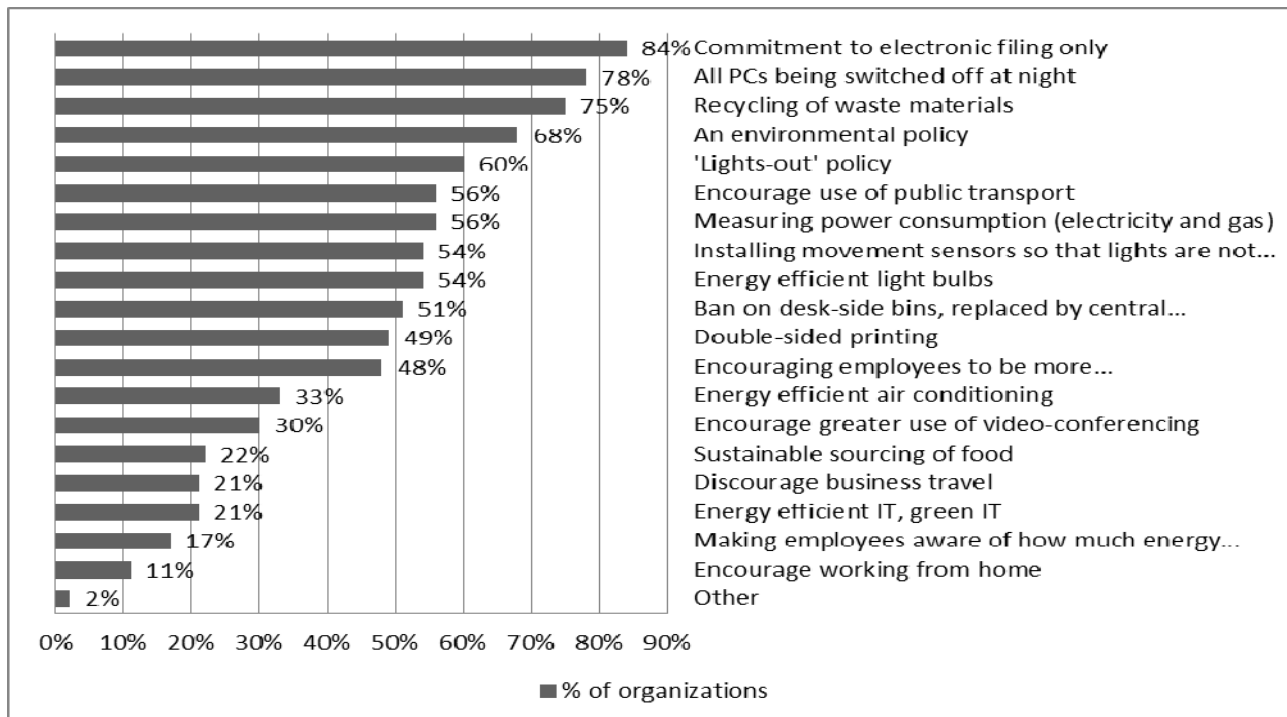


Fig. 1 Current Environmental Initiatives Being Used by Organizations

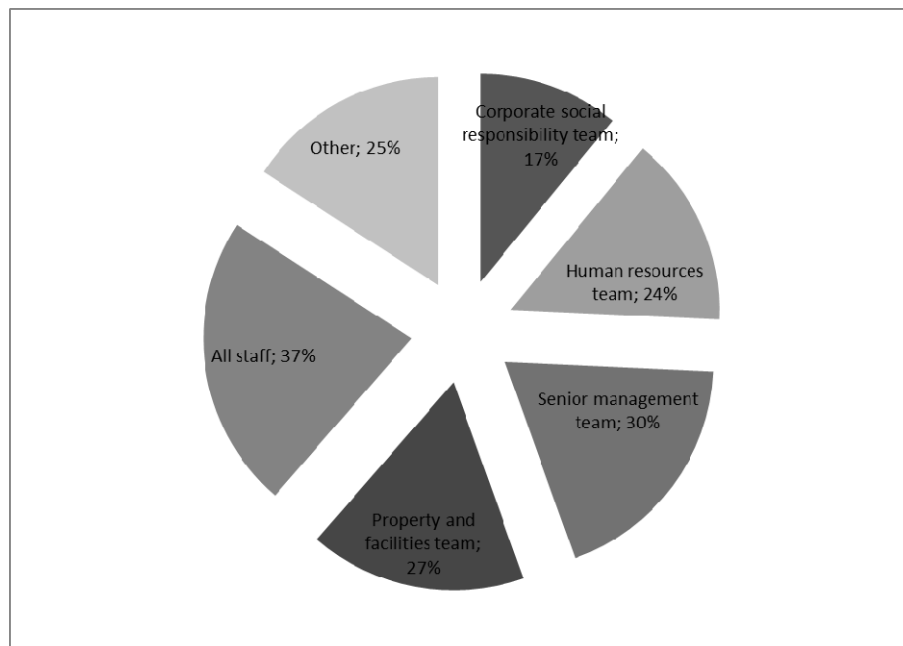


Fig. 2 Responsibility for Managing and Implementing Environmental Initiatives (% Organizations)

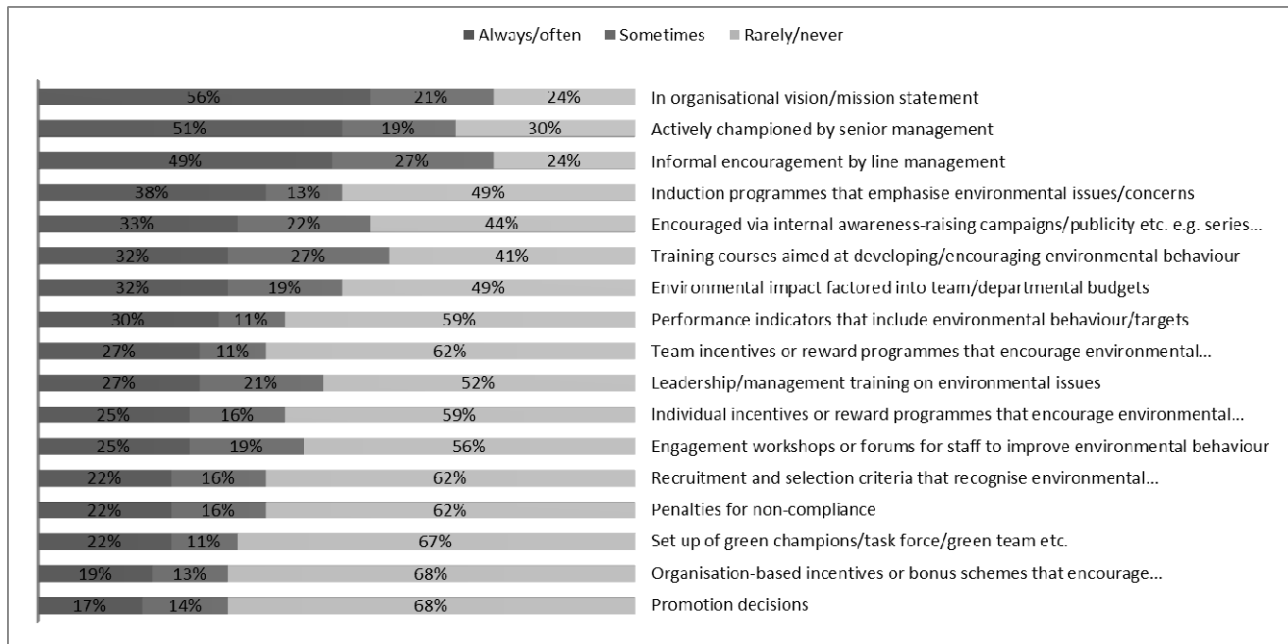


Fig. 3 Practices Used by Organizations to Encourage Pro-Environmental Behavior

Independently from their organizations according to respondents' opinion, most useful methods are found as individual/organization based incentives or reward programs that encourage environmental behavior, actively championed environmental facilities and programs by senior management and training courses aimed at developing/encouraging environmental behavior. Here also stressed the importance of support by senior management. Least useful methods are declared as recruitment and selection criteria that recognize environmental behavior/commitment, penalties for non-compliance, which have same points in total from participants, and promotion decisions.

Another section within the survey searches for basic facilitators and barriers for a successful pro-environmental behavior in an organization. Regarding facilitators, according to participants' answers most important facilitator is senior management commitment. Second line is shared engagement and commitment from staff with managers' support and openness to pro-environmental practices. It is obvious that senior management and line management is very critical facilitator for environmental behavior. However, with the engagement of staff triangle is completed within the

organization. So, all levels of an organization hierarchy should move together for a successful environmental culture. On the other hand, respondents think penalties for non-compliance as least important facilitator. Fig. 4 shows main facilitators for pro-environmental behavior.

Beside some facilitators there are also barriers for an organization to achieve pro-environmental behavior. According to survey results which are shown in Fig. 5, the most important barrier is lack of organizational concern for environmental sustainability. Concern of organization will be the first step for every action. Without any support and interest of organization to the issue there will be no result regarding it. Same thought is valid for also lack of management commitment and/or support which is the second barrier according to participants of survey. Then third one is staff are unaware of organization's pro-environmental concerns, also parallel with the first barrier.

Next section is about organizational culture and firstly asks importance of environmental concerns to respondents' organizations. As shown in Fig. 6, for 57% of them environmental concerns are categorized as very important and important. 29% of participants

answered as moderately important and for remained 14%, the issue has little importance. Nobody answered as unimportant. So, we can say that somehow environmental concerns are important for organizations.

Section continues with some statements which investigate an organization's culture over green issues. On Fig. 7, when we look at the first three lines on the ranking, the results are very interesting and actually show the real statement. The main agreement is about

that organization's main environmental concern is to avoid breaking the law. It is obvious that the most important motivator is regulations for the environmental actions of an organization. So it is not surprising that the first one is avoiding breaking the law. Second one is, "at work, green concerns get squeezed out by other priorities". This is sad but reflects the truth. Organizations give attention to the environmental issues mostly in the second place.



Fig. 4 Facilitators to Pro-Environmental Practices

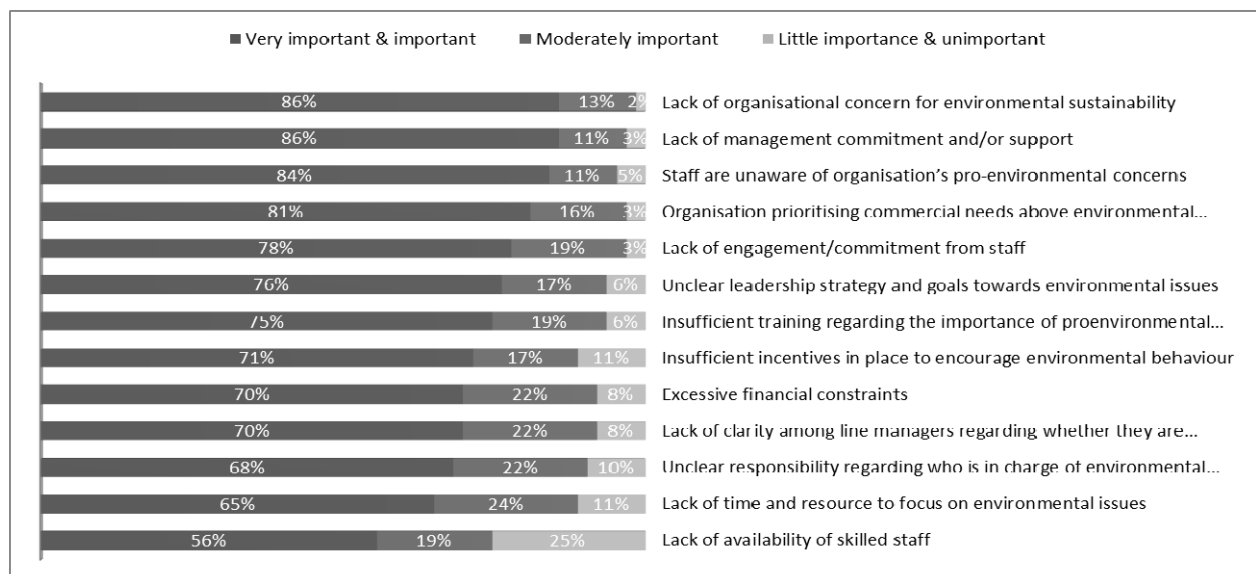


Fig. 5 Barriers to Pro-Environmental Practices

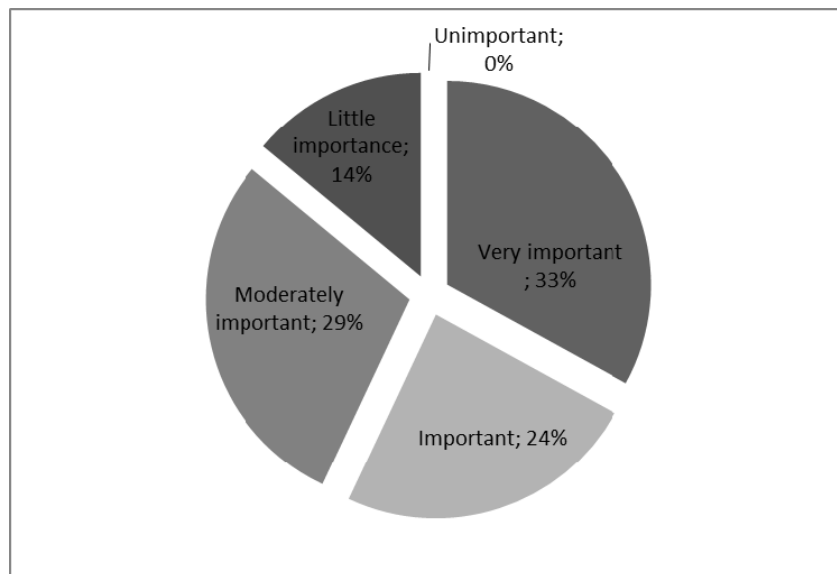


Fig. 6 The Importance of Environmental Concerns to the Organization (% of Organizations)

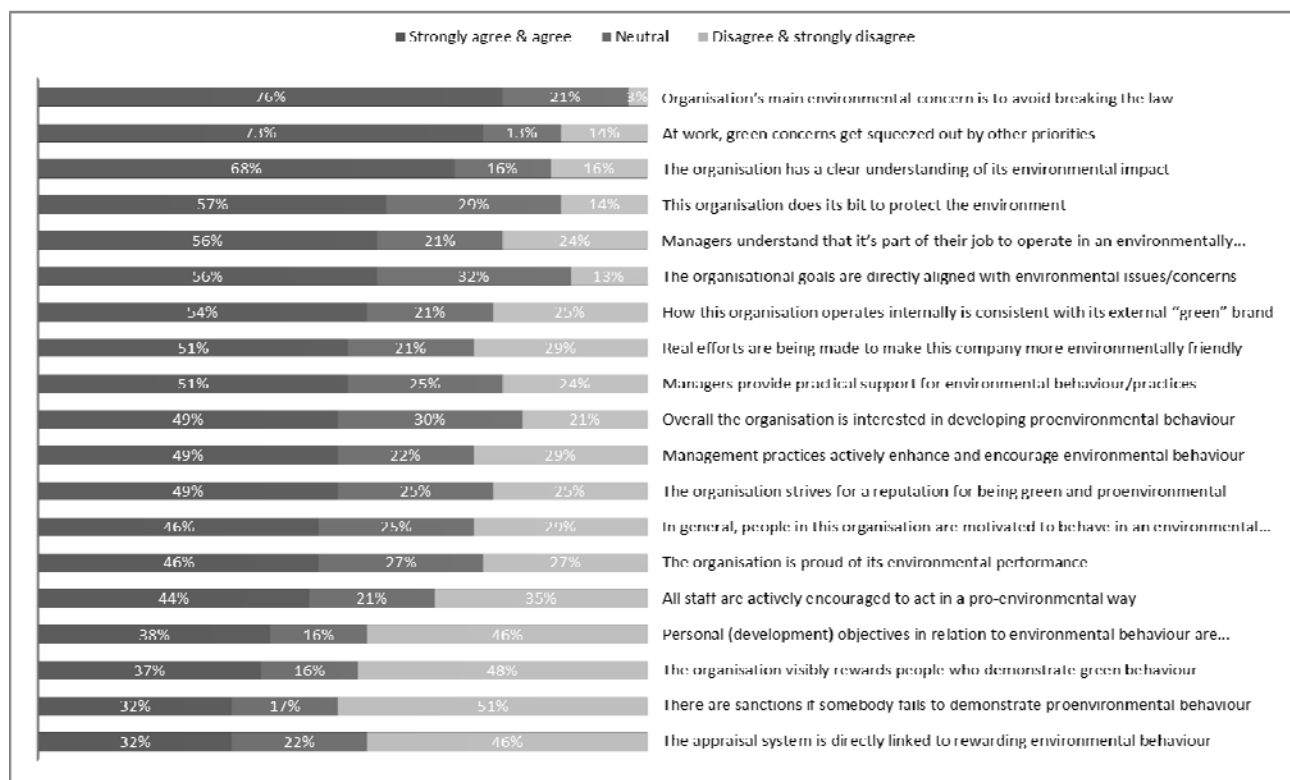


Fig. 7 Percentage of Respondents that Agree/Disagree with Organizational Culture Statements

Third one is “the organization has a clear understanding of its environmental impact”. This is also logical, because organizations are aware of their activities’ results. However, it depends on an organization’s decision to come into action or not. On the other hand, the last three statements are also

important to comment regarding current environmental applications and evaluations.

- The appraisal system is directly linked to rewarding environmental behaviour.
- There are sanctions if somebody fails to demonstrate pro-environmental behaviour.

- The organization visibly rewards people who demonstrate green behavior.
- This means that organizations do not pay attention to reward & penalty system regarding environmental issues and behavior. And also they have very poor appraisal system for pro-environmental behavior evaluations.

4. Conclusion

According to evaluations of answers to environmental behavior questionnaire, this paper presents an important study which shows an analysis about companies' impact on their employees' environmental behavior and environmental organizational culture in Turkey. It is valuable in order to picture the real situation.

We have some recommendations regarding this study. First of all, participation level can be increased for further replications. This study can be repeated in next years. Because we know that our country's and organization awareness is developing day by day. So after some time, the results will be differently comparing this study.

On the other hand, this study can be separated for some special sectors and for each sector this survey can be applied and then compared in order to find differences.

For this study, pre-used survey is used, which is formed in England for English organizations and then adapted and translated to our language. For the next time, a new survey can be developed special to Turkish organizations.

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