IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH THROUGH GREEN COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces a green company as a theory about an integrated view of organizational health. It can deeply affect employees' well-being, their efficiency and effectiveness. It is focused on three main areas of mental and emotional health, social health and physical health to improve public and general organizational health. It makes a positive framework to add values to the organization of caring about both individuals' and groups' health. It surely has effects on staff's satisfaction. As the first area, the mental and emotional health is discussed with focusing on three main views of matching organizational environments to home, matching organizational environment to nature and using anti-stress tools. In the second area, the social and cultural health is discussed and three views of improving the level of social activities, people's informal and formal networks and cultural phenomena are mentioned. At last, in the third area, physical health with subjects of ergonomics, exercise and physical safety of staff is described. These three areas are complementary to each other to create the green healthy company.

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Keywords: Organizational health, Health behavior, Health psychology, Well-being, Emotion, Culture.

Contribution/ Originality

This study originates a new structure to improve the level of organizational health. In this paper, an integrated framework is introduced, which is called a green company. It is used to increase psychological health, social health and physical health of both individuals and groups to raise the level of general and public health in organizations.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on ways of developing organizational health from three standpoints of psychological views, social views and physical views to organize a healthy framework, which is called a green company, in this article. The Green Company's theory formed, based on importance of human resource. It is a practical way for making interrelatedness of positive subjective

experiences, positive individual traits (Ellen *et al.*, 2011) positive units and positive organizations. The platform of this positive situation is provided with the green company by using systems that focus on 3 main areas and their related views. The framework effects individually and collectively on job satisfaction and group cohesion (Ellen *et al.*, 2011). It is also formed based on, this theory that employees and organizations both influence each other.

The green company is a strategic attitude that emphasizes on ways of establishing healthy behavior not only for employees and employers but also for informal and formal groups of organizations. In this paper, the green company is introduced as a solution to improve human resources' internal environment with effects even on external situations. The green company is transformational leadership approaches (Nordin, 2012) that can have the ability of motivating employees, especially in organizations that have professional experts with high level of knowledge, qualifications and skills, that their outcomes are linked to their well-being, commitment and job satisfaction. (Nordin, 2012)

1.1. Contemporary Organizations

During last decades, organizations as the intelligent organisms have undergone many changes. In various fields, by entering Information Technology and extending knowledge, experts have played an important role in the time-life of organizations. Also, new structures and concepts have been generated to handle more complex questions that are discussed about ways of improving organizations. For facing these days' organizational challenges, these organisms not only need to resizing, reengineering or restructuring to compete in the global market (Nordin, 2012) but also have to improve organizations from human resources viewpoints. Despite all inside and outside threats employees are the heart and core of organizations (Nordin, 2012) that can survive organisms, as organs do. How important employees are, their health becomes more vital to be attended. Health of organs ensures the health of organisms.

On the other hand, other changes also happened that make working environments stressful and put employees in difficult situations. Organizations are faced more complexities and uncertainties, which lead to pressures and longer hours of work (Reimara and Vasanthi (2011). Stress is a risk factor of health (Salvador *et al.*, 2011) that can damage health of employees, teams and the organization. Performing multiple roles (Wan Edura *et al.*, 2012) and facing different conflicts such as balance of working and family (Lois *et al.*, 2007) also make stress. All these items and many others modern issues lead to even much pressure. These changes confirm the necessity of working on the health of staff and the organization.

In these years, defusing tensions and increasing level of organizational health is vital for being competitive. Nowadays, concepts like flexibility and job satisfaction are getting more meaning. Meanwhile, the green company tries to make the positive flexibility to increase organizational health and employees' satisfaction by creative ways. Flexibility is one of the main concepts that are represented in the green company. Human resources' Flexibility is a part of organizational flexibility. (Robert Daniel and Carlos Eduardo, 2012) Flexible human resource management is a capability of organizations to be a leader in competitive and dynamic internal and external

environments. (Robert Daniel and Carlos Eduardo, 2012) Human resource's flexibility is manifested by flexible policies and practices (Robert Daniel and Carlos Eduardo, 2012).

1.2. Views of a Green Company

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not simply the absence of illness or infirmity. Health Organization World (n.d) It shows that health has more areas than just physical health. In another definition, Human health has three views of physical, mental and social aspects (Abbaspour, 2008), which is similar to 3 main areas of the green company. There are consequences of unhealthy situations in each of these 3 areas.

Mental and psychological effects (Salvador *et al.*, 2011) of unhealthy situation, can be revealed in extract energy, weaken self-control (Hanyao *et al.*, 2012) inability to concentrate, job dissatisfaction, emotional disorders, depression (Hanyao *et al.*, 2012) and anger (Maureen Dollard *et al.*, 2003). Social and behavioral issues can be raised in cases such as low work performance, high absent rate, staffs' turnover (Maureen Dollard *et al.*, 2003) increasing work family conflicts (Hanyao *et al.*, 2012) increasing anti-social behavior, panic disorder, anxiety. (Maureen Dollard *et al.* (2003) Physical health problems that caused by working related phenomena can appear in situations such as cardiovascular (Salvador *et al.*, 2011) respiratory systems, the immune system and the gastro-intestinal system (Maureen Dollard *et al.*, 2003) the nervous system and ergonomic problems such as skeletal and muscle systems . All these effects show that working on organizational health is one of the most important aspects of organizations.

Organizational Health is defined as abilities of organizations to survive in competitive environments, get adapted and improve abilities. Abbaspour (2008) In the green company, organizational health is defined as a kind of being that makes the organization ready to express the whole abilities and potentials for employees, units and the organization.
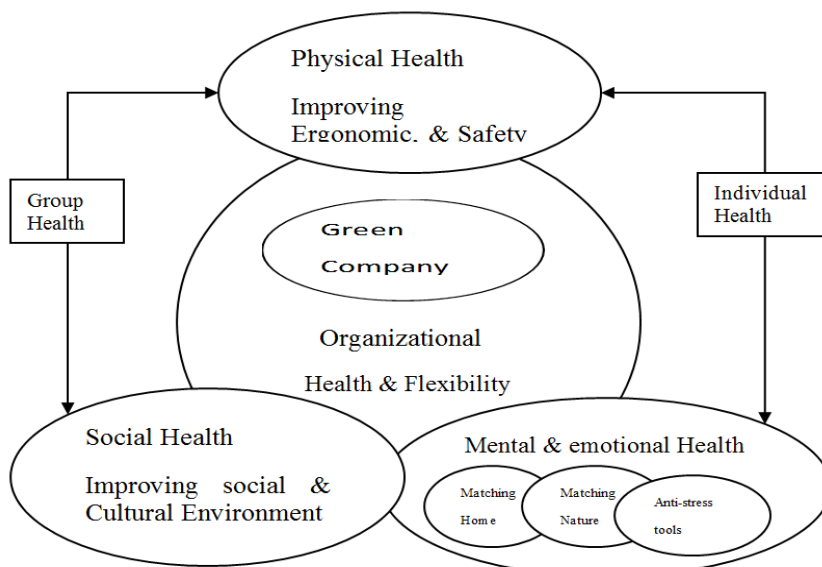

Figure-1. The Green Company Structure

Green Company is a practical way that focuses on organizational health based on three categories of health. The integration of these categories effects Individuals' and Groups' health to improve job satisfaction and group cohesion. Job satisfaction means "the feelings an employee have about his or her work or work experiences related to past experiences, present prospects, or existing alternatives". (Ellen *et al.* (2011) Group cohesion means "the relationship or the sense of relation that group members has to each other and to the group totally" (Ellen *et al.*, 2011) Group cohesion is a result of teambuilding activities and is connected to positive feelings (Ellen *et al.*, 2011). The Green Company is suggested to solving four main problems that parsons named as adoption, goal achievement, integration and latency, (Abbaspour, 2008) that help organizations to gain abilities of not only adopting and surviving, but also expressing their abilities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

An internal appropriate organizational environment leads to continuous improvement. Various researches have been done on organizational health and its effects on organizational context. Unhealthy working situations negatively affect physical health, psychological conditions and social behaviors of employees. Maureen Dollard *et al.* (2003) On the other hand, healthy working environment has positive effects on organizations. In the Oxford dictionary, values are defined as "the values or standards of behavior; one's opinion of what is vital in life." Organizational values are defined as organizations' inner conduct and its connection with the outer environment. Gerard Zwetsloot *et al.* (2013) Values show people good and bad to impact their individual or team behaviors. Health, safety, and well-being are defined as organizational values that influence working culture and also HSW is defined as a culture. Gerard Zwetsloot *et al.* (2013) The World Health Organization and The European Network for Workplace Health Promotion defines health as an important factor that effect culture, leadership principles, and values of organizations. Gerard Zwetsloot *et al.* (2013) The Green Company is a new concept for expanding this value and culture what has 3 main areas with different views on each area to make a healthy framework. In the next 3 literature paragraphs each area are described briefly.

Unhealthy emotions, which are related to the first area of green company, cause deficits in "monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions, to achieve one's goals" Matthias *et al.* (2012). Unhealthy emotions also relate to psychopathological symptoms Matthias *et al.* (2012). With targeting these deficits by specific interventions, increasing the efficiency of psychotherapeutic interventions will happen. Matthias *et al.* (2012) Usually employees with high self-esteem, which is given to them by organizations, are psychologically happy and healthy. They can handle their nervousness, adapt to difficult situation and keep their physical health. Wan Edura *et al.* (2012) Satisfying employee's needs, increase their commitment and their efforts into achieving organizational goals (Nordin, 2012) which leads to emotional health as a value.

Occupational health is a determination of healthy or unhealthy behaviors in social working environment, which is the second area of the green company. It is said that results from healthy activities are an investment that can ensure organizations to have long term competitive advantages based on creating and maintaining innovative employees' wealth (Gerard Zwetsloot *et al.*, 2013). Social and emotional health is called Social and Emotional Effectiveness Constructs (SEECs),

which is a factor of personal and professional success. Katja *et al.* (2013) SEECs are categorized in five main categories of social potency, social appropriateness, social emotion expression, social reputation, and emotional intelligence. Katja *et al.* (2013) Psychosocial work characteristics and health consequences is studied. Their relation is modeled in the Job Demand-Control (JDC) model. Hanyao *et al.* (2012) The model shows that the job conditions can escalate psychosocial health, wellbeing and role balance situation of employees. (Hanyao *et al.*, 2012)

Organizational health has other advantages too. Another positive effect of organizational health is increasing learning level. The organizational roads around health lead to the structures of increasing the level of learning. By healthy organizational context, organizational learning can be developed. Organizational learning causes the development of new knowledge, skills, behaviors, processes and policies. (Lise and Robson, 2011)

The framework of the green company is based on the flexibility for increasing organizational health. Flexibility is an ability of organization to revolutionize the use of the work's factors. Robert Daniel and Carlos Eduardo (2012) It is said that flexible working environment raise self-sufficiency (14), productivity (Robert Daniel and Carlos Eduardo, 2012) job satisfaction (14), improves work–family balance (Reimara and Vasanthi, 2011) and reduce work-stress (Thamar Heijstra and Gudbjörg Linda, 2010). It makes employees to feel secure and think that the organization cares about their wellbeing, needs and issues. Robert Daniel and Carlos Eduardo (2012) Flexibility increases performance of individuals, groups and organizations (Robert Daniel and Carlos Eduardo, 2012). Employees more and more need family friendly working environment (Thamar Heijstra and Gudbjörg Linda, 2010) which can establish by flexible policies.

2.1. A Green Company as A Solution

Stresses and changes are part of our life, which permeate through organizations and employees professional and individual lives. Simona *et al.* (2013) Living different aspects of life, roles and also having good performance at work in which a person can pay enough attention to personal, professional and spiritual development (Reimara and Vasanthi, 2011). It is the intent of a green company. Health in a green company is defined as a balance among employees as a sources and environment, which is seen as an integrated system of inside and outside environment of organization to align and actualize the company's and employees' visions with satisfied personal and social communication. It includes positive thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes and response. In this environment the organization and its employees can express their potential and abilities. This makes a situation, in which people can be their best in both professional and individual life. This is a win-win situation. Also it attentions to Abraham H. Maslow definition of need in five levels of Physiological needs, security Needs, Social needs, the need for respect and the need for self-reassurance. (Simona *et al.*, 2013)

2.2. Concepts of Green Company
2.2.1. Improving Organizational Mental and Emotional Health- HOME

Health in Organizations Mentally and Emotionally is shortly called "HOME" in the green company. Home is the place where people feels safe, secure and happy in it. World Health

Organization (WHO) defines mental health as "a state of well-being that an individual realizes his or her own potential, can deal with the common stresses, can work productively and effectively, and is able to make a relation to her or his community. Health Organization World (n.d) It is said that mental health is the ability to deal well with dispositive emotions to reduce stress and the psychopathological symptoms. Matthias *et al.* (2012) From another point of view it is defined as requirements that a person need to have to engage with existential life challenges, which are categorized in 6 areas of self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy (Santa *et al.*, 2012). These requirements can turn to abilities and skills in appropriate situation, which is prepared by organizations at the green companies.

Home and nature is two misses part of our modern lives, the lacks of them give us the stressful professional and individual lifestyle. Long working time and the changes of technology make more stress with few environments for releasing. Two kinds of good and bad stress are described in previous researches. Lois *et al.* (2007) A good one keeps us safe from harm and makes us conscious, the other one leads to psychological and physical problems. Bringing home and nature into workplace as a value can give employees feel valuable and has results on reducing the bad stress.

2.2.2. Matching to Home

Changes of social structures, increasing the number of dual career couples, single parent families (Reimara and Vasanthi, 2011) and changing ways of caring about a partner, children and elderly parents. These all make "Family-friendly work-place policies" concept to be extended. This view focuses on ways of achieving "work–life balance". Several researches have been done on this field but mostly are focused on time balance and stress than health, flexibility, strategies or development. (Lois *et al.*, 2007)

According to Longman definition home is "the place where you came from or usually live, especially when this is the place where you feel happy and comfortable." Matching to home view means stimulating working environment to home. According to this view employees are coming back to their working home when they back onto their work.

In the view of matching to home, two different sub-views are discussed; firstly, jobs and working environment as a family friendly environment, secondly, working environment as a home and coworkers as a family.

In the first sub- view, organizations do different activities to be placed beside families instead of against them. Social or individual supports include emotional and instrumental supports (Reimara and Vasanthi, 2011) have been done. Instrumental supports can involve different creative welfare activities such as loans with purpose of supporting families or doing social, sporting, cultural and artistic activities with participation of families' members in the form of popular entertainments, matches and charities. For emotional supports different activities can be done, especially in critical personal events such as death of family and illness or even in happy moments such as wedding, graduating, personal success. These are especial moments in employees' life. Engaging families in organizational success or staff's professional success can make a family

friendly working place too. Time working frames for creating work- family balance is discussed in many researches, which are also beneficial for this purpose. Policies of timeframe can be included benefits that support staff to achieve a healthy work family balance (Reimara and Vasanthi, 2011) such as different kind of leaves, flexi time frames, job sharing and telecommuting tools for working remotely.

In the second view, the green companies simulate home environment. In a healthy home, a person feels secure, safe, supported and has a sense of belonging. Home is a place where people lives and feel pleased and comfortable. The simulation can be done through various creative ways, from using things that remind meaning of home to direct interpersonal and social relations for making a working family environment.

2.2.3. Matching to Nature

In Our new world people have few connections with nature. The benefits of health and well-being of contacting with nature is researched in different studies that even are used as one of the main strategies of improving public health (Cecily *et al.*, 2005). Nature is an organic environment where ecosystems processes valid and includes wilderness areas, farms and gardens with referring to elements of natural environment, such as plants, animals, soil, water, air and plants (Cecily *et al.*, 2005). It is said that the nature makes the brain reduce 'excess' circulation and nervous system activities and also can support the activities of the right hemisphere of the brain, and makes a harmony of the brain's functions (Cecily *et al.*, 2005). Also, it is mentioned that contacting with nature promotes psychological well-being through the cultural values related to nature (Natalie Clark *et al.*, 2014).

Connecting with nature in the workplace can reduce job stress and increase levels of job satisfaction (Kaplan, 2002). Three sub-views are discussed in matching to nature; viewing natural scenes (Cecily *et al.*, 2005) being in natural environments (Cecily *et al.*, 2005) and doing natural activities.

Natural views have positive effects on stressful environments. According to Clark's research, windowless offices make employees dissatisfy, however the images of nature can effect positively on health and wellbeing (Natalie Clark *et al.*, 2014). According to Kaplan's research, workers that had windows with sights of nature feel more satisfied and less stressful than others who could only see built environments and also they report fewer physical problems too (Kaplan, 2002).

People who spend more time in natural environments have fewer health issues, more physical and mental health and lower levels of stress (Natalie Clark *et al.*, 2014). As an example, walking in the natural environment can increase the level of wellbeing (Cecily *et al.*, 2005).

Doing activities which are related to nature can affect people's values, which can lead to change the organizational culture (Natalie Clark *et al.*, 2014). Activities such as, growing plants, having the responsibility of pets and caring about environments can impact positively individuals and publics.

2.2.4. Using Anti-Stress Tools

Stress and anxiety lead to job dissatisfaction and poor mental health. In organizations, it leads to low organizational effectiveness, absenteeism and job turnover (Elizabeth *et al.*, 2009). Using anti-stress tools such as art tools, group meditation, calm places for relaxing and other creative tools can make distress environment for employees. In this environment, employees even can have fun and enjoy their moments in a workplace.

In the following, some sub-views are discussed. One of the methods of releasing mental harmful elements and increasing mentally healthy conditions is art Therapy (Nasram *et al.*, 2011). Art is the product or process of consciously arranging objects to influence senses, emotions, and intellect. It includes different creative activities and expressions such as music, literature, film, photography, sculpture, and paintings (Farokhi, 2011). It can affect personal confident, wellbeing, learning and emotional intelligent (Elizabeth *et al.*, 2009). The other method is the meditation method that impacts consciously and unconsciously on negative emotions such as anger and lack of adoption. Manolea (2014) It can also influence negative physiological reactions too. (Manolea, 2014)

2.2.5. Improving Organizational Social Health and Cultural Environment

Human lives socially and have different relations with each other. Having effective communications can affect someone's personal and professional life. Understanding others and social conditions with social skills such as interpersonal skills, communication abilities, social intelligence, political skills and emotional intelligence have a great impact on people's lives (Katja *et al.*, 2013). Social health related to concepts of well relations of   individuals in social environment. It is categorized in 5 views of social contribution, social integration, social actualization, social acceptance, and social coherence (Santa *et al.*, 2012).

Social work environment usually is discussed at the level of teams or departments as a vital health-influencing aspect (Gerard Zwetsloot *et al.*, 2013). Values, culture, socioeconomic, public health and public safety are some contexts, which are related to social health. Social well-being is one of the main aspects of holistic health and well-being that the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare identifies (Cecily *et al.*, 2005).
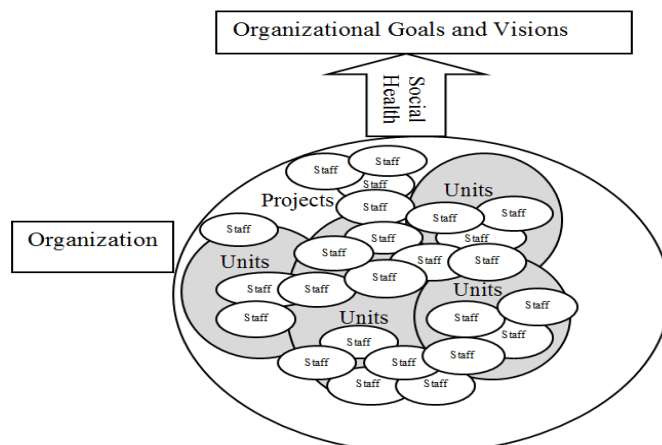

Figure-2. Social Health

In the green company, social health is developed by empowering social and cultural activities structurally and purposely in the organization.

An organization works like a body. The social system is like the circulatory system and the nervous system that relate different parts of the body to each other to keep the general health, transfer vital nutrients from one part to another.

Developing Social and Cultural Activities (DSCA) not only in the organization views, but also in the society views, can make similar values, common language, common attitudes or even positive challenges to improve cultural level. The main issue about DSCA is, to align activities to organizational goals, visions and run activities structurally and purposely.

2.2.6. Improving Organizational Physical Health

Throughout decades, with modernity many new jobs are introduced to society, which have less physical activities. As an example, more than half of the European adults have lack of activities, which leads to high level of obesity and health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer (Esther *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, some jobs have high health risks such as, mining that even have lower life expectancies (Esther *et al.*, 2014). Consequently topics such as, ergonomic harms, health, safety, health risk factors and HSE, are appeared. In the green company, physical health is more than just exercising or reducing risk factors. It is a contiguous set of procedures to prevent work-related injuries and strategies for personal happiness and satisfaction that happen through the effect of body on mind. Making physical health as an organizational culture by different creative ways, can improve not only the level of organizational health but also, it can affect society too.

3. CONCLUSION

Organizational health in companies, as businesses environment, with purpose of increasing efficiency, effectiveness and adding values to raise income of the organization is essential. Organizational health affects employees, as main sources of organizations. It is vital to have an overall and integrated plan for improving the organizational health. Working in one side of health is useful but it is not enough for reaching to the main goals of the green company. In the green company, it is focused on an overall strategy and plan for improving organizational health with working on groups and individuals.

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