



# THE EFFECT OF GREEN LEADERSHIP, ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, AND WORK ETHICS ON SUSTAINABLE WORK BEHAVIOR: EVIDENCE FROM THE EDUCATION OFFICE OF KERINCI REGENCY

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of green leadership, environmental awareness, and work ethics on sustainable work behavior among employees of the Education Office of Kerinci Regency. This research employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. The population consists of all employees, with a total sample of 47 respondents using a total sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with the assistance of statistical software. The results show that green leadership, environmental awareness, and work ethics have a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior, both partially and simultaneously. Work ethics is identified as the most dominant variable. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.569, indicating that 56.9% of sustainable work behavior is explained by the independent variables, while 43.1% is influenced by other factors. These findings highlight the importance of leadership, awareness, and ethical values in promoting sustainable behavior in public organizations.

**Keywords:** Green Leadership, Environmental Awareness, Work Ethics, Sustainable Work Behavior

## INTRODUCTION

In many public offices, daily routines often proceed without much reflection on their environmental impact. Lights remain on even when not in use, paper documents continue to dominate administrative processes, and small inefficiencies accumulate over time. These practices may appear insignificant at first glance, yet collectively they represent a broader challenge in embedding sustainability within organizational behavior. This situation reflects a common reality in many public sector institutions, where sustainability is acknowledged in principle but not consistently practiced in everyday activities.

At the same time, global attention toward environmental sustainability continues to grow. Organizations are increasingly encouraged to adopt practices that not only support operational efficiency but also contribute to environmental preservation. In the public sector, this expectation carries additional weight, as government institutions are expected to act as role models in promoting sustainable behavior. The shift toward sustainability is therefore not merely a policy requirement but a reflection of evolving societal expectations regarding responsible governance (Zhang et al., 2021).

Within this context, the concept of sustainable work behavior (SWB) becomes particularly relevant. SWB refers to employee actions that support environmental sustainability, such as reducing resource consumption, minimizing waste, and adopting environmentally friendly practices in daily work activities (Ones & Dilchert, 2022). However, fostering such behavior is not a straightforward process. It requires more than formal policies; it depends on how employees perceive, internalize, and consistently apply sustainability principles in their work.

The situation at the Education Office of Kerinci Regency illustrates this challenge. Although awareness of environmental issues has begun to emerge, sustainable work behavior has not yet been fully integrated into daily routines. The continued reliance on paperbased administration, inconsistent energysaving practices, and limited employee participation in environmental initiatives indicate that sustainability remains at the level of intention rather than consistent action. This gap highlights the need to better understand the factors that influence employee behavior in this context.

From an organizational perspective, employee behavior is shaped by a combination of structural and individual factors. Leadership plays a central role in setting direction and influencing how employees respond to organizational priorities. Green leadership, in particular, emphasizes environmental responsibility and encourages employees to adopt sustainable practices through guidance and example (Afsar et al., 2020). In addition, environmental awareness determines how well employees understand the importance of sustainability, while work ethics reflects their commitment to act responsibly and consistently (Han et al., 2022).

Despite the growing interest in sustainability, existing studies often examine these factors separately or focus primarily on private sector organizations. Research that integrates green leadership, environmental awareness, and work ethics within a single framework particularly in the context of local government institutions remains limited. This gap suggests the need for a more comprehensive approach to understanding how these factors interact in shaping sustainable work behavior.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of green leadership, environmental awareness, and work ethics on sustainable work behavior among employees of the Education Office of Kerinci Regency. By adopting an integrated perspective, this research is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of sustainability oriented behavior in public organizations and provide practical insights for strengthening environmentally responsible practices.

### **Sustainable work behavior (SWB)**

To better understand the issue, it is important to first consider what sustainable work behavior actually represents in an organizational context. Sustainable work behavior (SWB) reflects how individuals translate sustainability values into concrete actions within their daily work activities. It is not limited to formal responsibilities but extends to how employees consciously manage resources, reduce environmental impact, and contribute to long-term organizational sustainability. In this sense, SWB embodies both professional responsibility and personal commitment toward sustainability goals (Ones & Dilchert, 2022).

More importantly, sustainable work behavior is often expressed through voluntary and proactive actions that go beyond formal job requirements. Employees may participate in energy-saving initiatives, support waste management practices, or engage in environmentally oriented

programs within the organization. These behaviors indicate that sustainability is not merely imposed by policy but is driven by individual awareness and willingness to contribute to broader organizational and societal goals (Paillé et al., 2020).

In a broader perspective, sustainable work behavior also reflects a balance between environmental responsibility, employee well-being, and organizational performance. It is not solely about environmental practices but also involves maintaining productivity while ensuring that work processes do not create negative impacts on the environment or social conditions. This perspective highlights that sustainability in organizations is multidimensional and requires alignment between individual behavior and organizational objectives (Dumont et al., 2017).

Within public sector organizations, the importance of sustainable work behavior becomes even more pronounced. Government employees are not only responsible for implementing policies but are also expected to set an example for the wider community. Their behavior can influence how sustainability is perceived and practiced at the societal level. Therefore, strengthening sustainable work behavior among public employees is essential for supporting regional development agendas and achieving broader sustainability targets (Fauzi & Wicaksono, 2024).

In practical terms, sustainable work behavior can be observed through various forms of everyday actions, such as initiating environmentally friendly practices, actively participating in sustainability programs, supporting colleagues in adopting green behavior, and consistently adhering to environmental standards in work processes. These behaviors reflect a deeper level of awareness and responsibility, where employees are not only following rules but actively contributing to the improvement of organizational sustainability practices (Ones & Dilchert, 2022; Paillé et al., 2020).

### **Green leadership**

Leadership becomes a central element in shaping how sustainability is interpreted and practiced within organizations. Among various leadership approaches, green leadership has gained increasing attention as a style that integrates environmental responsibility into managerial practices. Rather than focusing solely on organizational performance in economic terms, green leadership emphasizes the importance of balancing organizational goals with environmental and social considerations. This approach reflects a broader understanding of leadership, where decision-making is guided not only by efficiency but also by long-term sustainability values (Afsar et al., 2020).

Green leadership is not merely about formal authority or policy enforcement; it is closely related to how leaders influence employee behavior through example and daily interaction. Leaders who consistently demonstrate environmentally responsible actions tend to create a work environment where sustainability becomes a shared value rather than an imposed obligation. Through role modeling, communication, and active involvement, leaders can encourage employees to adopt environmentally friendly practices in their routine activities (Ahmad et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2022).

The effectiveness of green leadership is often reflected in how well it is embedded in organizational culture. When sustainability values are consistently communicated and integrated into organizational policies, employees are more likely to perceive them as part of their professional responsibilities. This alignment between leadership direction and organizational systems helps reinforce sustainable behavior, making it more consistent and less dependent on external supervision (Nguyen et al., 2024).

Green leadership is closely linked to employee engagement in sustainability initiatives. Leaders who provide space for participation, encourage innovation, and recognize environmentally responsible behavior can strengthen employees' sense of ownership toward sustainability practices. This participatory approach not only increases motivation but also fosters a collaborative environment in which sustainable work behavior can develop organically across different levels of the organization (Afsar et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2024).

Green leadership also reflects a shift in how leadership effectiveness is evaluated. Success is no longer measured solely by the achievement of organizational targets but also by the ability to create a sustainable organizational ecosystem. This includes ensuring efficient resource use, minimizing environmental impact, and fostering a culture that supports long term sustainability. In this sense, green leadership serves as a bridge between organizational performance and environmental responsibility, making it a critical factor in understanding sustainable work behavior in public sector institutions.

### **Environmental Awareness**

Environmental awareness is often expressed through small but meaningful actions. Employees who are aware of environmental issues tend to be more attentive to how resources are used, how waste is managed, and how their daily activities contribute to broader sustainability outcomes. This awareness is not purely cognitive; it also involves attitudes and a willingness to take responsibility, which together influence consistent pro-environmental behavior in the workplace (Wijaya & Hidayat, 2022).

The development of environmental awareness is shaped by multiple factors, including education, organizational culture, and prior experiences. Employees who have access to environmental knowledge or have been exposed to sustainability-related training are more likely to recognize the importance of responsible practices. At the same time, a supportive organizational environment where sustainability is encouraged and facilitated can strengthen this awareness and translate it into concrete actions (Alshaabani et al., 2023).

Environmental awareness carries additional significance. Employees are not only expected to perform administrative tasks but also to act as representatives of responsible governance. Their behavior can influence how sustainability is perceived by the public, making awareness a critical

factor in strengthening both organizational credibility and societal trust. In this sense, environmentally aware employees contribute not only to internal efficiency but also to broader public accountability (Fauzi & Wicaksono, 2024).

Environmental awareness serves as a foundation for sustainable work behavior by bridging knowledge and action. Employees who understand environmental issues are more likely to develop positive attitudes, form behavioral intentions, and actively participate in sustainability initiatives. This progression from understanding to action illustrates how awareness operates as a driving force behind consistent and meaningful sustainable behavior in organizational settings (Zhang et al., 2021; Alshaabani et al., 2023).

### **Work ethics**

The role of work ethics becomes equally important in shaping how sustainability is practiced within organizations. While policies and knowledge can guide behavior, it is ethical values that determine whether individuals act consistently and responsibly in their daily work. Work ethics reflects a set of moral principles that influence how employees approach their responsibilities, interact with others, and make decisions in situations that involve both organizational and societal consequences (Keller & Siegrist, 2021).

Work ethics extends beyond traditional notions of discipline and professionalism. It also involves a sense of responsibility toward the environmental and social impact of one's work. Employees who possess strong ethical values are more likely to consider the broader consequences of their actions, including how resource use, waste generation, and work practices affect the environment. This perspective highlights that ethical orientation is closely linked to sustainable behavior in the workplace (Han et al., 2022).

The importance of work ethics becomes even more pronounced. Employees are expected to uphold not only organizational standards but also public trust. Ethical behavior, therefore, is not limited to compliance with rules but also involves accountability, transparency, and responsibility toward society. In this regard, work ethics serves as a foundation for ensuring that sustainability initiatives are carried out with integrity and consistency (Syahrul & Fitri, 2023).

Work ethics is also shaped by a combination of individual and organizational factors. Personal values, educational background, and intrinsic motivation influence how employees perceive their responsibilities, while organizational culture, leadership example, and institutional policies reinforce ethical behavior in practice. When these elements are aligned, employees are more likely to internalize ethical standards and translate them into consistent work behavior that supports sustainability goals (Han et al., 2022; Syahrul & Fitri, 2023).

Employees with strong work ethics tend to demonstrate integrity, discipline, responsibility, and professionalism in carrying out their duties. More importantly, they also show concern for the social

and environmental implications of their work. This combination of professional commitment and moral awareness makes work ethics a critical factor in strengthening sustainable work behavior, particularly in public organizations where accountability and social responsibility are central to institutional performance.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical evidence discussed in the previous section, sustainable work behavior is influenced by several key internal factors, including leadership, environmental awareness, and ethical values. These variables are considered essential in shaping employees' attitudes and actions toward sustainability in organizational settings.

Green leadership is expected to positively influence sustainable work behavior. Leaders who demonstrate environmental commitment, provide direction, and act as role models can encourage employees to adopt environmentally responsible practices in their daily work activities (Afsar et al., 2020). Through guidance and example, leaders play a critical role in fostering a culture that supports sustainability.

Environmental awareness is also hypothesized to have a positive effect on sustainable work behavior. Employees who possess a higher level of awareness regarding environmental issues tend to understand the consequences of their actions and are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior. This awareness serves as a foundation for behavioral change and supports the implementation of sustainable practices (Zhang et al., 2021).

Furthermore, work ethics is expected to positively influence sustainable work behavior. Employees with strong ethical values demonstrate responsibility, integrity, and professionalism in carrying out their duties. These values encourage individuals to consider the social and environmental impacts of their work and to consistently engage in responsible behavior (Han et al., 2022).

Based on the above arguments, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Green leadership has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior.

H<sub>2</sub>: Environmental awareness has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior.

H<sub>3</sub>: Work ethics has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior.

### **METHOD**

This study employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive and associative research design. The descriptive aspect aims to portray the actual condition of sustainable work behavior among employees, while the associative approach is used to examine the relationships between variables. Specifically, this study analyzes the effect of green leadership, environmental awareness, and work ethics on sustainable work behavior.

The population of this study consists of all civil servants working at the Education Office of Kerinci Regency, totaling 47 employees. Given the relatively small population size, a total sampling technique was applied, where all members of the population were included as research respondents. This approach ensures that the findings accurately reflect the actual conditions within the organization and enhances the validity of the results.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires designed to measure green leadership, environmental awareness, work ethics, and sustainable work behavior. The instruments were developed based on established indicators from prior studies. Sustainable work behavior was measured using indicators such as eco-initiatives, eco-civic engagement, eco-helping, eco-conscientiousness, and eco-initiated improvement (Ones & Dilchert, 2022; Paillé et al., 2020). Green leadership was assessed through dimensions including visionary leadership, green role modeling, environmental commitment, employee engagement, and sustainability-oriented decision-making (Afsar et al., 2020). Environmental awareness was measured using indicators such as knowledge, attitude, behavioral intention, and participation, while work ethics was assessed through integrity, discipline, responsibility, professionalism, and social and environmental concern.

All variables were measured using a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In addition to quantitative data, limited qualitative insights were obtained through interviews to support the interpretation of findings. Primary data were collected directly from respondents, while secondary data were obtained from organizational documents and relevant literature.

Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression analysis with the assistance of SPSS software. Prior to hypothesis testing, data quality tests were performed, including validity and reliability tests. Classical assumption tests normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity were also conducted to ensure that the regression model met the required statistical assumptions.

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the t-test to examine the partial effect of each independent variable and the F-test to assess the simultaneous effect of all independent variables on sustainable work behavior. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was used to measure the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

No	Variabel	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	18.034	7.296	2.472	.017
2	<i>Green leadership</i> ( $X_1$ )	.230	.067	3.432	.001
3	Kesadaran lingkungan ( $X_2$ )	.228	.074	3.082	.004
4	Etika kerja ( $X_3$ )	.425	.065	6.566	.000

Source: SPSS Processing Results

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis produce the following equation:

$$Y = 18.034 + 0.230X_1 + 0.228X_2 + 0.425X_3$$

Where Y represents sustainable work behavior,  $X_1$  represents green leadership,  $X_2$  represents environmental awareness, and  $X_3$  represents work ethics.

The partial test results confirm that all independent variables significantly influence sustainable work behavior.

Green leadership has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior ( $t = 3.432$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding suggests that leaders who demonstrate environmental commitment and provide clear direction can effectively encourage employees to adopt sustainable practices. The result supports the argument that leadership plays a crucial role in shaping environmentally responsible behavior in organizations.

Environmental awareness also has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior ( $t = 3.082$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Employees who possess higher levels of awareness are more likely to understand the environmental consequences of their actions and engage in responsible behavior. This indicates that awareness serves as a key driver in translating sustainability concepts into practical actions.

Work ethics shows a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior ( $t = 6.566$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and is identified as the most dominant variable. This finding highlights that ethical values such as responsibility, integrity, and professionalism strongly influence employees' consistency in applying sustainable practices. Employees with strong work ethics tend to demonstrate higher commitment toward environmentally responsible behavior.

### **The Effect of Green Leadership on Sustainable Work Behavior**

The regression results show that green leadership has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior among employees of the Education Office of Kerinci Regency ( $\beta = 0.230$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that better implementation of environmentally oriented leadership is associated with higher levels of sustainable work behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding supports the concept of sustainable leadership, where leaders play a key role in shaping employee behavior through direction, communication, and example. Leaders who demonstrate environmental commitment can encourage employees to adopt environmentally responsible practices in their daily work activities (Afsar et al., 2020).

This result is also consistent with previous studies showing that leadership influences pro-environmental behavior in organizations. In this study, green leadership helps create a work environment that supports sustainability and encourages employees to act more responsibly toward the environment.

Therefore, green leadership can be considered an important factor in improving sustainable work behavior, particularly in public sector organizations where leaders play a central role in shaping organizational values and practices.

### **The Effect of Environmental Awareness on Sustainable Work Behavior**

The regression results indicate that environmental awareness has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior among employees of the Education Office of Kerinci Regency ( $\beta = 0.228$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding shows that higher levels of environmental awareness are associated with increased sustainable work behavior in daily work activities.

From a theoretical perspective, this result is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains that awareness and attitudes influence individuals' intentions and actual behavior. Environmental awareness reflects employees' understanding and concern for environmental issues, which encourages them to act more responsibly, such as using resources efficiently, reducing waste, and supporting environmentally friendly practices (Zhang et al., 2021).

This finding is also in line with previous studies showing that internal factors, such as awareness and attitudes, play an important role in shaping pro-environmental behavior. Employees who are more aware of environmental impacts tend to be more responsive to sustainability initiatives and more consistent in applying environmentally responsible practices.

In the context of this study, environmental awareness acts as an internal driver that encourages employees not only to follow organizational policies but also to take initiative in implementing sustainable practices. Therefore, environmental awareness can be considered a key factor in strengthening sustainable work behavior in public sector organizations.

### **The Effect of Work Ethics on Sustainable Work Behavior**

The regression results indicate that work ethics has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior among employees of the Education Office of Kerinci Regency ( $\beta = 0.425$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Compared to other variables, work ethics shows the strongest influence, indicating that it is the most dominant factor in shaping sustainable work behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding aligns with organizational behavior and work ethics theory, which emphasizes that moral values such as integrity, responsibility, discipline, and professionalism are fundamental in guiding employee behavior. Employees with strong work ethics tend to view their work not only as a formal obligation but also as a moral responsibility toward the organization, society, and the environment (Han et al., 2022).

This result suggests that sustainable work behavior is strongly driven by internal values. Employees who possess strong ethical commitment are more likely to act consistently, take responsibility, and engage in environmentally friendly practices in their daily work activities. In this

study, work ethics plays a central role in ensuring that sustainability is not only understood but also consistently practiced.

Empirically, this finding reflects the condition at the Education Office of Kerinci Regency, where employees with higher work ethics tend to be more disciplined in resource use, comply with environmental rules, and demonstrate greater concern for the impact of their work. This indicates that ethical values function as an internal driver that strengthens sustainable behavior beyond external pressure or supervision.

## CONCLUSION

Green leadership has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior among employees of the Education Office of Kerinci Regency. This indicates that leadership characterized by environmental vision, commitment, and role modeling can effectively encourage employees to adopt sustainability-oriented work practices.

Environmental awareness has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior. This finding shows that higher levels of understanding, concern, and positive attitudes toward environmental issues are associated with stronger sustainable work behavior in daily work activities. Work ethics has a positive and significant effect on sustainable work behavior and is identified as the most dominant variable. This suggests that moral values such as integrity, responsibility, discipline, and professionalism play a crucial role in shaping consistent and sustainable employee behavior. Green leadership, environmental awareness, and work ethics simultaneously have a significant effect on sustainable work behavior. Together, these variables explain 56.9% of the variance in sustainable work behavior, while the remaining 43.1% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. The findings indicate that the integration of environmentally oriented leadership, enhanced environmental awareness, and strong work ethics forms a complementary strategy in promoting sustainable work behavior within public sector organizations, particularly in the education sector.

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