

Research Paper

The Effects of Valued-cultural Orientations and Environmental Concern on Soil Conservation Behavior of Farmers: Case of villages in Miandoab County

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of present study was to investigate the effects of valued-cultural orientations (fatalistic, individualistic, egalitarian, and hierarchical) and environmental concern on farmers' soil conservation behavior. Present study is an applied research which was carried out through a cross-sectional survey. The statistical population under the study was the villages of *Miandoab* County (N= 22750) from which 378 farmers were selected as a sample using Krejcie and Morgan sampling table. A multi-stage stratified random sampling method was employed in order to select the samples. Research tool was a questionnaire which its validity confirmed by a panel of academic experts. A pilot test and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to examine the reliability of the questionnaire ($0.73 \leq \alpha \leq 0.91$). The results revealed that environmental concern towards soil conservation had significant positive effect on soil conservation behavior of farmers. Moreover, egalitarian and hierarchical value orientations towards soil conservation had also significant and positive effects on environmental concern towards soil conservation. However, individualistic and fatalistic value orientations towards soil conservation had significant and negative effects on environmental concern towards soil conservation. The results revealed that independent variables within the framework could account for 42.5 % of variance change in dependent variable (soil conservation behavior).

Key words:

Soil conservation, Environmental concern, Farmers, *Miandoab* County

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

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oil degradation is one of the most important negative impacts of agricultural activities which poses a serious chal-

lenge to achieving agricultural sustainability. In other words, due to soil erosion and reduction of soil nutrients, the destruction of agricultural lands are of the most dominant obstacles to sustainable agriculture, sustainable food security, and national security. Despite such issues, unfortunately, many countries including Iran have focused on application of economic and technical tools to reduce vul-

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nerability and protect the lands. However, technical and economic strategies alone cannot motivate farmers to develop soil conservation behaviors, thus it is necessary to use human and behavioral motivation strategies as well. One of the ways that can provide logical insights for the successful design of soil conservation programs is to analyze the role and impact of cultural value orientations and environmental concerns on soil conservation behavior of farmers. To fill this gap, the main purpose of present study was to investigate the effects of cultural value orientations (fatalistic, individualistic, egalitarian, and hierarchical) and environmental concern on farmers' soil conservation behavior.

2. Methodology

Present study is an applied research which was carried out through a cross-sectional survey. The statistical population under the study was the villages of *Miandoab* County (N= 22750) from which 378 farmers were selected as a sample using Krejcie and Morgan sampling table. A multi-stage stratified random sampling method was employed in order to select the samples. Research tool was a questionnaire which its validity has been confirmed by a panel of academic experts. A pilot test and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to examine the reliability of the questionnaire ($0.73 \leq \alpha \leq 0.91$).

3. Results

The results revealed that environmental concern towards soil conservation had significant positive effect on soil conservation behavior of farmers. Moreover, egalitarian and hierarchical value orientations towards soil conservation had also significant and positive effects on environmental concern towards soil conservation. However, individualistic and fatalistic value orientations towards soil conservation had significant and negative effects on environmental concern towards soil conservation. Finally, independent variables within the framework could account for 42.5 % of variance change in dependent variable (soil conservation behavior). It should also be mentioned that four cultural value orientation (individualistic, fatalistic, egalitarian, and hierarchical) could also account for 56.2 % of variance in the variable environmental concerns towards soil conservation.

4. Discussion

Based on the results, not only did egalitarian value orientation towards soil conservation have a positive effect on farmers' environmental concerns towards soil conservation, but also the severity of its impact was higher

than other independent variables. This conclusion suggests that from the viewpoint of farmers, the existence of egalitarian value orientation can more appropriately lead them to being more concerned for soil conservation and consequently, favorable soil conservation behaviors. In addition, hierarchical value orientation was the second most powerful variable affecting environmental concerns towards soil conservation which had a positive impact on it. This conclusion means that farmers appreciate developing and enforcing laws and practices to protect soil resources. Besides, they believe that government laws and legal mechanisms presented by scientists and decision makers in Soil conservation area is beneficial to farmers.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that egalitarian and hierarchical value orientations are two suitable and useful values for increasing farmers' concerns about soil issues and thus strengthening soil conservation behaviors among rural farmers. It is also worth mentioning that environmental concern towards soil conservation should mediate the effects of egalitarian and hierarchical value orientations on soil conservation behavior.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest