EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF GREEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON GREEN CREATIVITY WITH EMPLOYEE VOICE AS A MEDIATOR

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between green transformational leadership, employee voice, and green creativity in the manufacturing industry in Sindh, Pakistan. Drawing on social learning theory and the concept of pro-environmental behavior, we hypothesized that green transformational leadership would positively influence employee voice and green creativity, and that employee voice would mediate the relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity. We collected 170 usable questionnaires from employees in the manufacturing industry and used structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data. Our results support the proposed model, showing that green transformational leadership has a positive and significant association with both employee voice and green creativity. Additionally, employee voice has a positive and significant association with green creativity. Moreover, employee voice mediates the relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity. The findings of this study suggest that organizations can promote green creativity by adopting green transformational leadership behaviors that encourage employee voice and participation. Overall, this study provides theoretical support for the importance of green transformational leadership and employee voice in promoting pro-environmental behaviors and creativity in organizations. These findings have practical implications for managers and leaders seeking to foster a culture of environmental sustainability and innovation in their organizations.

Keywords: *Green Transformational Leadership; Green Creativity; Employee Voice.*

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations around the world are facing increasing pressure to protect the environment from the negative impact of industrial waste and pollution. As a result, companies are developing new tactics to decrease their environmental footprint and promote sustainable practices. One way to achieve this is by fostering green creativity among employees, which can lead to the development of innovative and environmentally sustainable ideas. Therefore, industries have been formulating new policies intending to decrease industrial waste, raise healthy environmental practices, and save energy, and this is the ultimate aim of organizations to reduce negative environmental effects and increase green practices (Vandenbrande, 2021). So, the development of green creativity among employees is the foundation of sustainable development and it also helps to reduce environmental pollution.

Green creativity is essential for organizations to excel in the development of green products (Chen et al., 2016). Several recent studies have emphasized the importance of specific human resource management practices that are directly linked to green creativity and eco-friendly performance. Authors and researchers generally claim that creativity is critical for innovation and challenges that are being confronted by many organizations. For the sake of organizational performance in environmental management, its employees must play their role in introducing and implementing creative ideas for the protection of the environment.

In the organization, leaders and stakeholders play a crucial role by highlighting and fighting ecological issues through organizational transformations and maintaining vigorous human capital (Çop et al., 2021). Organizations engage their employees in teamwork to enhance environmentally friendly practices and this is only possible when team members have positive relationships. Transformational leadership plays a vital role in increasing employees' positive relations in teams (Sommer et al., 2016). For increasing organizational green performance green transformational leadership is believed as a critical element (Nisar et al., 2017). By adopting green transformational leadership style organizations can create an environment that will raise green intrinsic motivation in employees. For example, green transformational leadership promotes employee motivation and commitment by inspiring employee beliefs, abilities, and values which in return enhances innovation and green performance (Chen & Chang, 2013a; Zhou et al., 2018)

However, the literature on the relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity is limited. This study aims to fill this gap by creating a conceptual framework that explores how green transformational leadership influences green creativity directly and

indirectly through the mediation of employee voice. While previous studies have examined the direct relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity, little research has investigated the role of employee voice as a mediator in this relationship. Therefore, our study will provide insights into the mechanisms through which green transformational leadership affects green creativity, as well as the conditions under which this relationship is strengthened or weakened by employee voice.

The main research question of this study is how does green transformational leadership influence green creativity, and how does employee voice mediate this relationship? To answer this question, we will conduct a survey of employees and managers working in different companies in Sindh. We propose that our study will add value to the existing literature by highlighting the importance of employee voice in fostering green creativity in the workplace. Specifically, our study will contribute to a better understanding of how green transformational leadership can be used to enhance employee voice and promote green creativity, ultimately leading to improved environmental performance in organizations. By doing so, our study will provide practical implications for managers and practitioners who aim to foster green creativity among employees and create a more sustainable work environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green Creativity

In the contemporary business environment, organizations thrive for long-term survival, are engaged in continuous improvement, and prepare their workforce for implementing novel ideas (Li et al., 2020). Current studies suggest that researchers and practitioners turn their focus on greening computer practices and information technology which, according to them, can help to minimize wastage, save energy consumption, and decrease disposal activities (Bai et al., 2017; Ojo et al., 2019). Therefore, in educational institutions and industries, emphasis is given to greening the functional area, such as green human resource management (Yong et al., 2019), green innovation (Zailani et al., 2015), and green creativity (Awan et al., 2019). Excess production of conventional and hazardous products is considered to be a great concern for researchers and industry experts, to reduce this threat researchers and industry experts moving to adopt strategies of green management and green organizational philosophies (Li et al., 2020). Sustainable growth is crucial for today's organizations, and for attaining green competitive advantage organizations are bound to follow green practices (Hsieh, 2012; Park & Kim, 2014). The promotion of green creativity among employees is the foundation of sustainable development and it also helps to reduce environmental pollution. So, organizations need to

promote green creativity with full zest and energy (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2020). Engaging employees in activities where they are inspired to participate in green creativity and enhancing employees' sense of green identity will lead firm's competencies of sustainable development (Song & Yu, 2018). Previously organizations considered sustainability as an additional cost to operate but today it is viewed to be one of the most important strategies for creating value. In addition, it has been disclosed by previous researchers that if we creatively handle sustainability-related issues it will lead to creativity (van Holt et al., 2020). Vigorous environment-related revolutions for the sake of initiatives for novel practices before competitors, to reduce costs, to grab opportunities, to gain competitive advantages, and to get the edge in the market is known as "proactive green innovation." (Chen et al., 2012). In recent years eco-friendly awareness is getting so much importance, organizations that are emphasizing profit maximization must shift their consideration to environmental sustainability in accordance with environmental management policies.

Green Transformational Leadership

The emerging involvement of leaders' activities in inspiring employee commitment is highly acknowledged by practitioners and researchers (Bal et al., 2013; Schmitt et al., 2016). Organizations engage their employees in teamwork to enhance environmentally friendly practices and this is only possible when team members have positive relationships. Leaders that are following a transformational style of leadership, encourage workers to find out solutions for organizational issues in a creative way and motivate workers to think out-of-the-box (Chen et al., 2014). Green transformational leadership helps to inspire workers to green creative behavior which possibly supports lessening water and paper usage (Mittal & Dhar, 2016). For employees' green motivation green transformational leaders develop employees through a shared vision and specialized development programs (Chen et al., 2015; Mittal & Dhar, 2016). By adopting green transformational leadership style organizations can create an environment that will increase green intrinsic motivation in employees.

Employee Voice

Employee voice has received significant consideration since the 1980s in different fields such as Human Resource Management and Organizations Behavior and it has attracted researchers to highlight its importance for organizations' change and stability. For organizational change or improvement, it is important to encourage and highlight employees' suggestions, ideas, and opinions (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). Transformational leadership plays a very important and positive role in employee voice and if the relationship between the transformational leader and the employee is strong then it creates more positive impacts (Duan et al., 2017). Employee

voice is upward communication to enhance organizational operations (Morrison, 2014). For necessary outputs, the behavior of employees expressing their opinions, ideas, and concerns (i.e., voice behavior) is closely tied to both individual job performance and the overall effectiveness of a work unit. (Frazier & Bowler, 2015). The immediate supervisors are inspired by the high-performance work system which in return enables them to manage voice, subsequently in the praise of both organizations and worker interest forms of voice (Mowbray et al., 2020). Organizations, where employee voices are recognized, can produce an atmosphere where employees will be extremely inspired and their job satisfaction will be on peek (Alfayad et al., 2017). Voice opportunity leads to performance improvement, but it is not a single practice for improving performance (Mowbray et al., 2020). Organizations must include a package of activities (Macduffie, 2016). Employees may be unable to express their ideas, opinions, and expressions unless the organization makes sure employees that sharing their views, opinions, and voices will be effective and they will be safe in doing so (Kwon & Farndale, 2020). Most of the researchers especially those who are working on industrial relations emphasize voice to help individual employees by reducing frustration, as a result, organizations in return will get the benefit of new ideas and suggestions for meeting their problems (Mowbray et al., 2020). Hence, from the above literature following hypotheses have been developed:

H1: *Green transformational leadership has a positive and significant association with green creativity.*

H2: *Green transformational leadership has a positive and significant association with employee voice.*

H3: *Employee voice has a positive and significant association with green creativity.*

H4: *Employee voice mediates the relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity.*

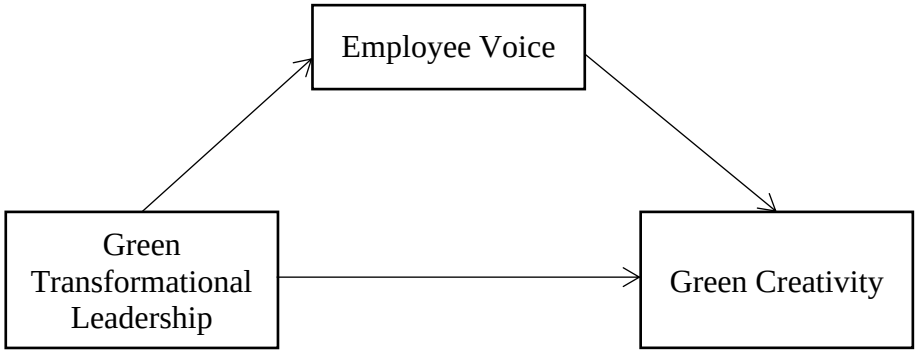

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants in this study were employees from the manufacturing industry in Sindh, Pakistan, who were surveyed from July to December 2022. The participants were selected using a convenience sampling method, and the questionnaire was circulated online. The covering letter provided information about the purpose of the study and assured respondents of confidentiality. The language used in the questionnaire was English, as it is widely understood in the study area. A total of 180 responses were received, out of which 170 were usable. Demographic information about the participants was not collected in this study because it did impact the research results.

Sampling and Data Collection

The primary source of data collection method was used in this study, as this study is based on primary data, and questionnaires with multiple questions were asked from respondents. The design of the questions has been influenced by issues discussed in the conceptual framework above and by previous work on green transformation leadership by (Podsakoff et al., 1996) and (Chen & Chang, 2013b) and for green creativity, we have referred to (Rego et al., 2007) and (Barczak et al., 2010), (Chen & Chang, 2013b). Employee voice questions are adopted from (Ruck et al., 2017). The sampling method used in this study was convenience sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method. The participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. Permissions were obtained from the management of the manufacturing companies before distributing the questionnaire to their employees.

Measures

Green Transformational Leadership

To measure green transformational leadership, measurement includes six items adapted from (Podsakoff et al., 1996) and (Chen & Chang, 2013b). *(i) "The leader of the green product development project inspires the project members with the environmental plans"; (ii) "The leader of the green product development project provides a clear environmental vision for the project members to follow"; (iii) "The leader of the green product development project gets the project members to work together for the same environmental goals"; (iv) "The leader of the green product development project encourages the project members to achieve the environmental goals"; (v) "The leader of the green product development project acts with considering environmental beliefs of the project members"; (vi) "The leader of the green product development project stimulates the project members to think about green ideas".*

The model was tested for fit using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and it was found to be a three-factor model. The model fit indices were as follows: ($x^2(6) = 27.615$, $p < .001$, KMO = .893; standardized root mean square residual [SRMR] = .033; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .111; Tucker-Lewis Index [TLI] = .947; Comparative Fit Index [CFI] = .968). The internal consistency of the variable is 0.90.

Green Creativity

To measure green creativity measurement includes six items: adapted from (Podsakoff et al., 1996) and (Chen & Chang, 2013a). *(i) "The members of the green product development project suggest new ways to achieve environmental goals"; (ii) "The members of the green product development project proposed new green ideas to improve environmental performance"; (iii) "The members of the green product development project promote and champion new green ideas to others"; (iv) "The members of the green product development project develop adequate plans for the implementation of new green ideas"; (v) "The members of the green product development project would rethink new green ideas"; (vi) "The members of the green product development project would find out creative solutions to environmental problems".*

The model consists of three first-order factors the model fit indices were as follows; ($x^2(6) = 58.705$, $p < .001$, KMO = .870; standardized root mean square residual [SRMR] = .039; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .181; Tucker-Lewis index [TLI] = .869; comparative fit index [CFI] = .921). The internal consistency of the variable is 0.90.

Employee Voice

To measure employee voice the questions are adopted from the previous research work of (Ruck et al., 2017). Which suggests two questions:

RQ1: How satisfied are employees with opportunities for upward employee voice?

RQ2: How receptive are senior managers in terms of listening and responding to employees?

To answer the first research question; "How satisfied are employees with opportunities for upward employee voice?", three items were used: *i) "Opportunities to feed my views upward" ii) "Ways for me to pass on criticisms" and iii) "Ways for me to communicate ideas to senior management"*. The first of these items is based on a participation item in employee attitudes and engagement instruments (Truss et al., 2007) and the other two items are derived from organizational dissent measures (Kassing, 1998).

The second question, "How receptive are senior managers in terms of listening and responding to employees?" was also measured by three items. *i) "Seeking the views of employees or employee representatives"; ii) "Responding to suggestions from employees or employee representatives"; and iii) "Allowing employees or employee representatives to influence the final decisions".* The items were adopted from the WERS (Workplace Employment Relations Study) (2011) study.

As the model consists of three 2nd-order factors, the model fit indices were as follows; ($x^2(6)$ = 26.907, $p < .001$, KMO = .872; standardized root mean square residual [SRMR] = .029; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .118; Tucker-Lewis Index [TLI] = .934; Comparative Fit Index [CFI] = .965). The internal consistency of the variable is 0.89.

Table 1. Fit indices for all Variables

	Standard Value	G. Leadership	Green Creativity	Employee Voice
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.111	0.180	0.050
CFI	>0.90	0.968	0.960	0.965
TLI	>0.90	0.934	0.869	0.934
SRMR	>0.90	0.033	0.039	0.029

Source: Study Analysis

RESULTS

The study utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) with a robust maximum likelihood estimation method to examine the hypotheses developed among the variables. Table 1. presents the means (M), standard deviations (SD), and correlation matrix among the constructs previously introduced. The results indicate that green transformational leadership exhibited a mean average of 3.97 on a five-point Likert scale with a standard deviation of 0.736, while green creativity and employee voice had means of 4.00 and 3.89, respectively, with standard deviations of 0.708 and 0.723. These results are consistent with the literature, which highlights the importance of these constructs in sustainable and environmentally friendly organizations. The correlation analysis showed a significant and positive relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity (0.88**), as well as between green transformational leadership and employee voice (0.83**).

Additionally, a positive and significant correlation was found between green creativity and employee voice (0.85**). These results are regular with preceding studies and provide evidence

for the interrelatedness of these constructs in promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices in organizations.

Table 2. Fit Indices for all Variables

Standard Value	Alpha Values	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Green Transformational Leadership	0.90	3.97	.736	----		
Green Creativity	0.90	4.00	.708	0.88**		
Employee Voice	0.89	3.89	.723	0.83**	0.85**	---

***** p <. 01***

To test the proposed relationships in the structural equation model, a causal structure was posited as depicted in Figure 2. The model included a mediational model where employee voice acted as a mediator between green transformational leadership and green creativity. The presence of variance in the dependent and independent variables was taken into account in estimating the effects, and the model was used for the study's analysis and interpretation of results. Figure 2 illustrates the statistically significant relationships between the variables. The standardized regression coefficients (β) are indicated by the lines, and the corresponding explained variances are noted in parentheses. Four hypotheses were tested, and several fit indices were evaluated to assess the overall model fit. The fit values were x2 = 413.634/244, p =<0.00, RMSEA = 0.000, and CFI = 1, indicating a strong relationship between the variables and a good model fit. The study hypothesized that there is a positive association between green transformational leadership and employee voice in the organization, with a significant value of $p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.83$ and a standard error of .05. Additionally, the study found a positive and significant relationship between employee voice and green creativity ($\beta = 0.40$, $p = 0.001$), as well as between green transformational leadership and green creativity ($\beta = 0.55$, $p = 0.001$). The study proposed a mediating role for employee voice in the relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity. The Barron and Kenny (1986) mediation test was used to test this hypothesis, and the results indicated that employee voice does mediate the relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity, with an indirect effect value of ($ć = 0.33$, $p = 0.001$). This supports the hypothesis that employee voice is a mediator in the relationship between green transformational leadership and green creativity.

Overall, the results of the study provide evidence for the positive impact of green transformational leadership on employee voice and green creativity. The findings support the theoretical perspective that leaders who promote green practices and involve employees in

decision-making can foster creativity and innovation in environmentally sustainable practices in the organization.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Direct Effect	S. E	Indirect Effect Sig.
G. T. Leadership => Green Creativity	0.55	.04	.001
G. T. Leadership => Employee Voice	0.83	.05	.001
Green Creativity => Employee Voice	0.40	.05	.001
G. T. leadership => Employee Voice => Green Creativity		0.33	.001

Note: G. T. = Green Transformational

$^{*}P > 0.05$; $^{**}p > 0.01$; $^{***}p > 0.001$

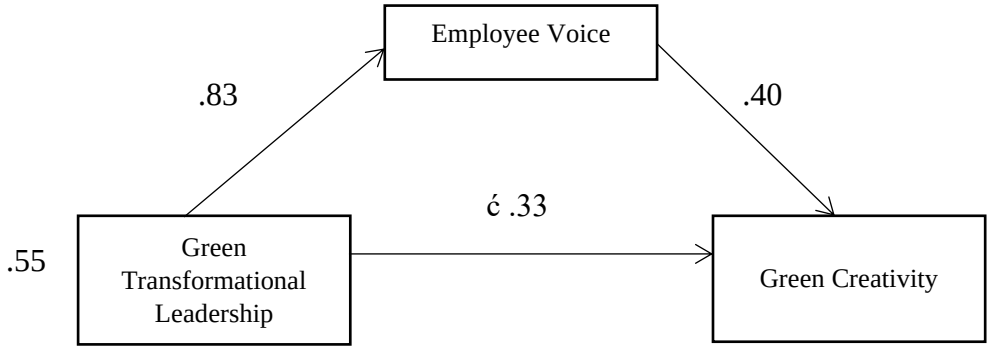

Figure 2. Structural Model

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature on green creativity by highlighting the positive relationship between green transformational leadership, employee voice, and green creativity. It advances the understanding of the underlying mechanisms that promote eco-friendly practices in organizations. By identifying employee voice as a mediator between green transformational leadership and green creativity, this study underscores the critical role of organizational culture in promoting green creativity.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have significant managerial implications for organizations that aspire to embrace sustainability. Managers must understand the importance of green transformational leadership and create a supportive organizational environment that encourages employee voice. Such leadership styles can inspire and motivate employees to generate innovative ideas that can contribute to sustainable development. By fostering green creativity, organizations can

promote eco-friendly practices and improve their reputation as environmentally responsible entities.

Limitations

This study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted in a specific industry, and therefore the findings may not be generalizable to other industries. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, and thus causality cannot be inferred. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships. Finally, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to literature by exploring the relationship between green transformational leadership, employee voice, and green creativity. It offers empirical evidence that green transformational leadership has a direct and indirect impact on green creativity, and employee voice mediates this relationship. The study highlights the importance of organizational culture in promoting eco-friendly practices and underscores the critical role of employee voice in fostering green creativity. The findings have significant implications for organizational practice, particularly for managers who are interested in promoting sustainable development.

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