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Leading Green Transformation with a Green Mindset: Unlocking Green Champions through Organizational Fit

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Abstract: **In this era of environmental consciousness, organizations can either accelerate or mitigate climate change and ecological degradation. To address the concern, this study highlights and proposes a unique model through the lens of the resource-based view theory, suggesting that green knowledge-oriented leadership (GKOL) and a green person-organization fit (GPOF) can play a crucial role in enhancing employee green championing behavior (GCB) in the context of LEED-certified garment organizations in Bangladesh. To examine the proposed model, the present study collects data in two waves from 430 full-time employees (supervisory level) working in LEED-certified garment organizations in Bangladesh. The partial outcomes showed that green knowledge-oriented leadership positively and significantly impacts employees' green championing behavior. Additionally, green person-organization fit mediates the relationship between green knowledge-oriented leadership and employee green championing behavior in the context of a LEED-certified garment organization in Bangladesh. The outcome of this study is to help understand various aspects of employees' green championing behavior.**

Keywords: **Green knowledge-oriented leadership, green person-organization fit, green champion behavior, resource-based view theory, LEED certified garments organization in Bangladesh**

I. INTRODUCTION

A global environmental disaster has significantly strained relationships [1]. Human-driven climate change presents a considerable risk to the world's ecosystems [2]. Industrialization and organizational expansion have intensified this challenge, raising concerns regarding corporate accountability and sustainability [3]. Organizations can either exacerbate or alleviate climate change and ecological degradation in the current context of environmental awareness [4]. Given these concerns, there is a growing acknowledgment among researchers and practitioners globally regarding the importance of employees' green behavior [5] and pro-environmental behavior [6], especially green championing behavior [7]. Because employees' championing behavior involves exceeding expectations to ensure the success of a change and advocating for it to others [8], in line with this, employee green championing behavior entails exceeding standard expectations to facilitate the success of green initiatives, transformations, or changes. This fosters coworkers' active participation in green transformation initiatives and promotes eco-friendly efforts beyond the organization [7]. Ensuring employee interest in green championing behavior is a complex undertaking. Current literature underscores the lack of empirical evidence to support enhancing employee green championing behavior. Moreover, a limited research study highlighted GCB in the context of the manufacturing industry. In addition, previous research observed GCB based on the Western context [7]. This study addresses the gap by exploring employee GCB in the context of organizational green change within LEED-certified garment organizations in Bangladesh. Bangladesh remains a prominent receiver of foreign investment in the South Asian garment sector [9]. Therefore, to be competitive among the foreign buyers and investors, the Bangladesh RMG (ready-made garments) organizations must maintain international standards [10], and LEED certification offers a standardized framework for assessing and benchmarking sustainable practices across categories like energy efficiency, water conservation, material selection, indoor environmental quality, and design innovation [11]. This certification is a hallmark of environmental stewardship and sustainability, influencing customer views, market competitiveness, and regulatory compliance [12]. In LEED-certified garment organizations, employees' roles, specifically employees' GCB, are essential for obtaining and sustaining certification by engaging in sustainable activities, complying with green building regulations, and fostering a company-wide culture of environmental stewardship [13]. Therefore, this research aims to identify key influencing factors that enhance employees' GCB in the context of green organizational transformation.

Prior studies have highlighted different leadership styles as crucial in fostering employee change-supportive behavior. Furthermore, aligning individuals and organizations is crucial during organizational change [14]. This study emphasizes that GKOL and GPOF are significant factors in organizational green transformation. This study addresses the following questions: Does GKOL affect employee GCB within organizational green transformation? Does GPOF mediate the relationship between GKOL and GCB of employees in the context of organizational

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green transformation? This study enhances the literature on leadership, human resource management, and change management by formulating original hypotheses to examine the effect of GKOL on employee GCB within the context of organizational green transformation. This study enhances the current literature on leadership, human resource management, and change management by formulating novel hypotheses to investigate the influence of GKOL on employee GCB within the framework of green transition in LEED-certified RMG firms in Bangladesh. A theoretical model is constructed utilizing resource-based view (RBV) theory [15] to establish a connection between GKOL and employee GCB within the framework of green organizational transformation, examining the mediating role of GPOF in the relationship between GKOL and GCB during the green transition in LEED-certified RMG organizations in Bangladesh.

Figure 1 delineates a research model based on theoretical foundations. The model is examined using primary data from LEED-certified garment organizations in Bangladesh, employing structural equation modeling to assess the study's hypotheses. The subsequent sections of this paper are organized as follows: The next part delineates the literature review and formulation of the hypotheses examined in this study. The methods section presents the sample frame, data, statistical model, and software utilized to evaluate the hypotheses. The empirical findings of the given hypothesized model are subsequently presented. The report concludes with a summary of the key findings, limitations of the study, and prospective research avenues to advance this emerging field of organizational change management.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Green Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Green Champion Behavior

In organizations, GKOLs significantly affect how green knowledge is developed and used [16]. Environmentally responsible leaders promote a culture that places the highest value on green knowledge by making decisions in an eco-conscious manner [17]. Therefore, employees working under the leadership of GKOL become environmentally concerned and demonstrate green behavior. Moreover, employees become green champions in the context of organizational green transition. Championing behavior refers to exhibiting significant enthusiasm for a change by exceeding formal requirements to guarantee its success and advocating for the shift among others [18]. Previous studies showed that transformational leadership nurtures employee championing behavior in the context of organizational change [8], [19], which supports organizations in managing change effectively. Moreover, existing literature highlighted that green leadership enhances employees' creative engagement [20] and employees' green behavior [21]. Accordingly, the present study justifies that GKOL can develop green knowledge and behavior, which eventually enhances employees' GCB in the context of green organizational transformation. Hence, the present study proposes:

H1: Green knowledge-oriented leadership has a significant and positive impact on employees' green champion behavior

Green Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Green Person-Organization Fit

GKOL is a seen or imputed behavior that fosters environmentally sustainable knowledge production, sharing, and application, promotes ecological responsibility and sustainable development-aligned cognition and collaboration [22], which ensures employees working under the supervision of GKOL to fit with the organizational goals and objectives. Previously, researchers revealed sustainable leaders to ensure person-organization fit [23]. P-O fit is the alignment between individual and organizational goals, individual preferences or needs with organizational systems or structures, and individual personality with organizational climate [24]. GPOF is a person-organization fit that evaluates the alignment between an organization's dedication to protecting the environment and its employees' environmental beliefs. Prior research indicates a relationship between personal values and pro-environmental behavioral intentions [25], [26]. The GPOF allows for analyzing the functional relationship between personal environmental values and the workplace and assessing whether fit impacts transcend beyond ecological protection activities [7]. Therefore, the present study highlighted that GKOL can fit employees with the organization's green values and ensure GPOS. Hence, the present study proposes:

H2: *Green knowledge-oriented leadership significantly and positively impacts green person-organization fit.*

Green Person-Organization Fit and Green Champion Behavior

Previous studies highlighted that person-job fit can enhance employee green behavior [27], pro-societal behavior [28], and citizenship behavior towards the environment [29]. Moreover, researchers revealed that GPOF enhances employees' job satisfaction and engagement [7]. Accordingly, the present study highlighted in the context of organizational green transition that GPOF can nurture GCB. Because when employees perceive a strong GPOF, they are more inclined to champion environmental initiatives, as these actions align with their individual identities and the organizational culture. Additionally, GPOF serves as a strategic human capital resource, as employees' alignment with environmental values fosters enhanced commitment, motivation, and championing of sustainability initiatives. Hence, the present study proposes:

H3: Green person-organization fit significantly and positively impacts green champion behavior.

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Mediating Effect of Green Person-Organization Fit

Relationships discussed above between GKOL and GCB; GKOL and GPOF, and GPOF and GCB are rational to propose a mediational effect of GPOF since GKOL influences GPOF, which in turn influences GCB. Precisely, GPOF levels may differ, and GKOL has the capacity to increase employees' GCB in the context of green organizational transformation. Therefore, it is rational to propose that GPOF can act as a potential mediator in the association between GKOL and GCB during organizational green change initiatives. In other words, GKOL facilitates the development of a collective environmental vision and promotes a learning culture. This enhances employees' sense of belonging and alignment with the organization's ecological values, thereby improving GPOF. Consequently, employees who perceive this alignment are more inclined to engage in behaviors that support the organization's sustainability objectives, resulting in GCB. Previous studies highlighted the mediating effect of person-organization fit [27], [30], [31]. From the perspective of the RBV theory [15], GKOL develops green knowledge resources, while GPOF incorporates these resources into the organizational culture. This alignment fosters GCB, a dynamic capability that creates sustained competitive advantage. Hence, the present study proposes:

H4: Green person organization fit mediates the relationship between green knowledge-oriented leadership and green champion behavior.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a cross-sectional approach and a standardized questionnaire to collect data from January to February 2022. Data were gathered from a sample of personnel occupying administrative roles across different departments of LEED-certified RMG organizations in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, 258 organizations in the RMG sector received certification from LEED, a globally recognized US-based green building certification standard. The LEED organizations were categorized into three classifications: 109 in platinum, 133 in gold, and 16 in silver, with four others designated as generally accredited. During the data collection phase, 30 organizations from various categories consented to participate. The researchers allocated 510 questionnaires uniformly among the 30 respondent organizations. Of the 500 issued questionnaires, 308 replies were obtained, with 5 excluded owing to criterion nonconformity. Consequently, 303 suitable participants were identified, resulting in a 58% response rate. This is considered satisfactory, as this is above the 45.6% rate reported by researchers [32] in the RMG business.

Data Analysis

For measurement and structural models' assessment, Smart PLS 4.0 was consciously selected. This technique doesn't necessitate strict adherence to a normal distribution in survey data [33]. Given our complex model, including higher-order SSCM practices and SP with mediation analysis, regression in SPSS was insufficient [33]. Thus, we used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for comprehensive and robust analysis.

Measures

In the current research, GKOL is considered the independent variable, whereas the dependent variable is the GCB. This study also considered GPOF as the mediating variable. Independent variable (GKOL) was measured by six items from a research work [34], whereas the dependent variable was measured by four items adapted from another research work [35]. Lastly, four items were used to measure the mediating variable (GPOF) adapted from [32].

III. RESULTS

Common Method Variance

Mitigating Common Method Variance (CMV) is essential in self-report assessments. This study utilized the methodological separation proposed in a research work [36] and performed a Harman single-factor analysis. Harman's analysis indicated that the first factor accounted for 31.4% of the variation, implying the insignificance of common method variance (CMV).

Measurement Model Structural Model

This study utilized convergent and discriminant validity to assess the measurement model. Convergent validity emphasizes evaluating the resemblance among items that embody the same construct. Factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) are standard metrics employed to assess convergent validity, as advised in the research work [33]. The results acquired for these variables in the current investigation exceeded the specified cut-off values, as illustrated in Table 3 below. This signifies that the measurement model exhibits adequate convergent validity.

Table 1: Output of Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	Rho_A	CR	AVE
Green Champion Behavior	GCB 1	0.795	0.913	0.893	0.912	0.577
	GCB 2	0.834				
	GCB 3	0.820				
	GCB 4	0.791				
	GCB 5	0.812				
	GCB 6	0.876				

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Green Knowledge Oriented Leadership	GKOL 1	0.795	0.853	0.836	0.898	0.619
	GKOL 2	0.876				
	GKOL 3	0.846				
	GKOL 4	0.875				
	GKOL 5	0.772				
	GKOL 6	0.775				
Green POF	GPOS 1	0.841	0.876	0.812	0.891	0.658
	GPOS 2	0.849				
	GPOS 3	0.833				
	GPOS 4	0.868				

Furthermore, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio, which provides a more precise measurement, utilizing two separate threshold values of 0.85 and 0.90 [37], with all obtained values falling below the recommended threshold. The measuring model exhibited satisfactory levels of convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 2: Output of Discriminant validity

	GCB	GKOL	GPOF
GCB			
GKOL	0.481		
GPOF	0.789	0.521	

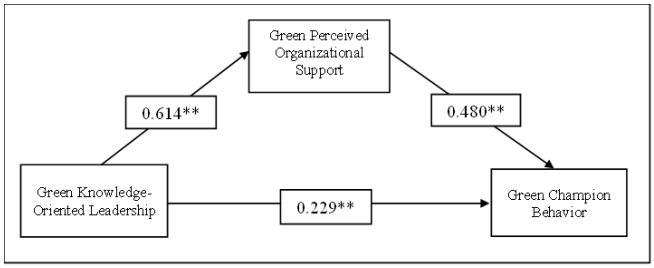
Structural Model

Evaluating the goodness-of-fit for the structural model entails analyzing various metrics, including the coefficient of determination (R^2), the significance of the route coefficient (b), effect size (f2), and cross-validated redundancy (Q2) [33]. The interpretation of R^2 values follows Cohen's stated intervals: values from 0.02 to 0.12 signify a weak association, values from 0.13 to 0.25 denote a moderate relationship, and values of 0.26 and above indicate a considerable relationship. Based on the findings of the results, the current study found that both GPOS (54.3%) and GCB (61.4%) explain the R^2 more than 0.26 which is considered substantial. In the current research, all three direct hypotheses were supported, such as GKOL to GCB (β= 0.291, p <0.01), GKOL to GPOS (β= 0.614, p <0.01), and GPOS to GCB (β= 0.480, p <0.01). Thus, based on the findings of the analysis proved all direct hypotheses were found significant and acceptable. Table 2 shows the output of all the direct paths of the current research

Table 2: Output of Structural Model

Direct Path								
Hypotheses	**Std. Beta**	**Std. Error**	**t. Value**	f^2	**P values**	**95% LL**	**95% UL**	**Decision**
GKOL >GCB	0.291	0.056	5.21**	0.153	0.00	0.239	0.699	S
GKOL > GPOS	0.614	0.024	25.55**	0.73	0.00	0.673	0.451	S
GPOS > GCB	0.480	0.0615	7.8**	0.289	0.00	0.461	0.799	S
**p < 0.01, (based on one-tailed test with 1, 000 bootstrapped replications); S = Supported								
Mediation Hypothesis								
Hypothesis	**Std. Beta**	**Std. Error**	**t. Value**	f^2	**P values**	**95% LL**	**95% UL**	**Decision**
GKOL > GPOS > GCB	0.291	0.047	6.2**	-	0	0.310	0.457	S
**p < 0.01, (based on two-tailed test with 1, 000 bootstrapped replications); S = Supported								

Furthermore, the current research also sees the mediating effect of GPOS between GKOL and GCB based on the guidelines of the research work [38]. Results of the analysis showed a significant mediating effect of GPOS between GKOL and GCB. Moreover, it was asserted in a work [33] that a model exhibits predictive significance for specific endogenous constructs when the Q2 value exceeds 0. The Q2 values obtained in this study were 0.108 for CE and 0.196 for GKOL. Consequently, the Q2 score signifies that the model had satisfactory predictive relevance. Table 2 shows the mediating paths of the current research.



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IV. DISCUSSION

This research, conducted using RBV theory [15], highlighted the association between GKOL, GPOF, and GCB in the context of green organizational change among LEED-certified garment organizations in Bangladesh. Empirical evidence revealed that the GKOL approach is suitable for enhancing GCB in green organizational transformation. In a complex situation like green organizational change or transformation, the GKOL promotes sustainability by developing, disseminating, and using environmental information. Ultimately, this leadership style improves environmental performance and competitive advantage by empowering employees to participate in green initiatives, innovation, and sustainable decision-making, promoting green practices, and cultivating a common understanding of ecological responsibility [22]. Such capacity of GKOL nurtures the green championing behavior of the employees in the context of green transformation. Previous evidence showed that green leadership can influence employee knowledge sharing, which aligns with the study's finding (GKOL-GCB linkage). In addition, this study revealed that in the context of green transformation, GKOL ensures GPOF. In other words, GKOL can nurture the organization's human resources in a way that properly fits the green transformation objectives of the organization and supports the organization in achieving its goals. This finding aligns with the research findings of a prior research work [23]. Moreover, the outcomes of this research show that GPOF, as a component of person-environment fit, enhances GCB in the context of organizational green transformation. Put it differently, during a green transformation initiative of an organization, when employees fit correctly with the green transformation process, it ultimately ensures employee GCB. This outcome aligns with the findings of a research [27], which showed a positive relationship between person-organization fit and employee green behavior. Finally, the present study confirmed the mediational effect of GPOS in the context of organizational green transformation. In other words, the findings showed that the effectiveness of the GKOL approach for enhancing GCB in the context of organizational green transformation depends in the presence of GPOF. GPOF as a mediator nurtures the capacity of the individual human resources, strengthening the leader's impact to foster GCB while managing green transformation in the organization. This outcome also aligns with the research outcome of another study [23], which revealed that person-organization fit mediates the association between green values and corporate green washing. This study also highlights the theoretical and practical implications. Finally, this study concludes by pointing out the limitations of this study and future research scopes.

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