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Leadership's Green Mandate: Fostering Organizational Citizenship for Environmental Sustainability

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Abstract: The growing demand for sustainable practices has led organizations to focus on fulfilling their social responsibilities towards the environment. Employees' environmentally conscious actions, identified as "organizational citizenship behavior for the environment" OCBE, are directed towards reducing their organization's ecological impact. This research explores the connection "between'' "responsible leadership" (RL) and "OCBE" among 397 employees in public sector of Pakistan. This study employs a structural equation model (SEM) to evaluate the connection between RL & OCBE. Findings reveal that RL positively affects OCBE, with motivation acting as an intermediary in this connection. The study also shows that leader identification and motivation have a dual mediation role in the association between RL and OCBE. However, the research has some limitations, including the use of measures developed outside Pakistan to assess RL, the need for more investigation on the cross-cultural validity of RL, and the lack of examination of factors that may affect the effectiveness of this relationship. Future studies should consider incorporating factors specific to the Pakistani context and examine the impact of RL as defined by leaders' self-assessment on OCBE.
Keywords: "'Environmental organizational citizenship behavior'; 'Leadership responsibility'; 'Motivational factors'; 'Identification with the leader'.

Introduction

Recently, there has been a heightened global concern regarding climate change and biodiversity loss, increasing the pressure on the business sector to add to conservational sustainability. Businesses are increasingly focusing on environmental sustainability to achieve long-term growth. This shift is driven by a growing global concern for climate change and biodiversity loss, which has heightened expectations for businesses to contribute to environmental conservation. To meet these expectations, businesses are implementing various green strategic initiatives (Ahmed, 2023). Active involvement from diverse stakeholders is essential for fostering sustainable development in all types of organizations, comprising public, non-profit, and profitable enterprises (Tang et al., 2023). Management scholars and policymakers have shown an increasing interest in the role of environmental and sustainable management. However, previous research in management has primarily focused on corporate environmental

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behavior and strategy, with little attention paid to the crucial role of employee behavior in achieving environmental sustainability and protection (M. Guo et al., 2022).

Ecological protection is a shared responsibility of individuals, organizations, and governments, with the goal of preserving depleted resources and the environment for the benefit of future generations (Asghar et al., 2024). Recently, there has been a growing emphasis on the nation's environmental awareness, with themes such as "inclusive environmental protection" and "clean rivers and green hills are as valuable as mountains of gold and silver." This has led to the requirement for corporate environmental performance systems and processes in virtually every sector. With the disruption of environmental issues like global environmental change and biodiversity loss, efforts are focused on improving behavioral standards and the commitment of business management to economic growth, drawing the attention of researchers, employers, and executives alike (Ben Lahouel et al., 2023).

Although there is a wealth of research on environmental management techniques from the user's perspective, systematic studies are lacking. Furthermore, the importance of the employee perspective within organizations has been somewhat neglected, as noted by (Dasanayaka et al., 2022). Employee engagement in environmentally sustainable practices such as waste reduction and energy conservation is crucial for an organization's sustained success. Scholars have recently turned their attention to the concept of OCBE, acknowledging the crucial role employees play in ensuring the sustainability of an organization (Gill et al., 2021). In organizations, the proactive engagement of employees as pivotal stakeholders significantly shapes the level of environmental awareness within the company. Additionally, the interpersonal relationships among individual employees play a vital role in promoting effective long-term environmental management practices (Shah et al., 2023). Therefore, investigating ecological protection actions at the individual fellow level is essential. The study efforts on OCBE, which refers to employees' environmentally conscious behaviors within their organizations. Often, the official reward structure of the company does not incentivize or mandate such activities. Nonetheless, they serve as a valuable supplement to the general public's environmental preservation efforts and the organization's green growth initiatives, as noted by (Lomachynska et al., 2023).

The significance of employees as crucial stakeholders in organizations cannot be overstated, particularly with regard to their contribution to environmental protection behavior (EPB) through their actions and interpersonal relationships (H. Wang & You, 2024). Examining OCBE holds significant importance in understanding the dynamics of sustainable practices within organizations. OCBE refers to a set of voluntary, environmentally conscious actions and behaviors undertaken by employees within the organization without any expectation of reward or recognition (Sahil et al., 2022) . A study indicates that some employees actively participate in explicit environmentally friendly actions and generate green ideas that align with the organization's environmental strategy. Such behaviors encompass activities like conserving pages, decreasing power usage, making suggestions, and aiding coworkers engaged in environmentally friendly actions (Engle-Friedman et al., 2022). Recognizing the importance of employee ecological protection behavior and its results, researchers have investigated numerous factors that foster OCBE. These aspects embrace employee self-accountability for ecological preservation, corporate environmental concerns, methods, and attitudes. In terms of leadership behavior, recent studies have aimed to establish the significance of ethical leadership, leader support for environmental preservation, and leader support for OCBE (Dey et al., 2022).

Past studies have recognized several factors influencing employee OCBE, including involvement in decision-making for ecological initiatives, human resource management (HRM) practices, and leadership styles. Leadership, especially, is widely acknowledged as a pivotal factor in shaping employee OCBE. Leaders have the capacity to inspire and motivate

their workforce, significantly influencing employees' willingness to engage in volunteer behaviors (Hameed et al., 2020; Lu et al., 2023). Proposed as a potent antecedent of employee OCBE, responsible leadership demands that leaders maintain ethical awareness of the wellbeing of all the stakeholders (Haider et al., 2022). As employees are critical internal stakeholders, responsible leadership has the potential to enhance their motivation for green participation and inspire their commitment to achieving long-term environmental goals (Ji et al., 2022).

The impact of responsible leadership on OCBE is primarily influenced by the relationship between organizational leaders and employees. This dynamic has been analyzed from both the leaders' and employees' perspectives. However, the role of other stakeholders in this interplay has been largely overlooked. The ultimate aim of OCBE, which extends beyond work hours, is to increase the socio-environmental context by enhancing the organization's environmental performance and practices (Wellmann et al., 2023). Therefore, in examining the impact of leadership conduct on EPP enactment, it is important to ponder the responsibilities of multiple stakeholders. Recent leadership studies have examined how leaders nurture and mold employees' volunteer action by nurturing and impelling their self-conceptions (Ren et al., 2022). These findings have important implications for advancing leadership research, as they shift the focus away from the leader's impact on societal and managerial outcomes and toward employee motivation. However, unfortunately, most prior research on self-concept has focused on individuality or structural individuality, rather than leader identification (Laub, 1999). Leader identification refers to the degree of intersection between an person's individuality and that of their leader (Adeel et al., 2023).

Employees' strong identification with their leaders' vision, goals, and values results in the integration of these elements into their self-concept. Consequently, they are more inclined to internalize the leader's beliefs and utilize them to interpret their specific work roles. Responsible leadership is dedicated to communicating a positive prophecy and making an example that inspires followers to establish an emotional connection with the perceived responsible leader (X. Wang et al., 2023). According to the social identity concept, workers who powerfully reckon with their leadership are more inclined to work on their behalf. This inclination arises from the alignment of interests and values between the employees and their leaders, with employees perceiving the leaders' principles as reflective of their own. As a result, they tend to respond to normative signals and emulate their leaders by engaging in OCBE to support these initiatives. Therefore, we hypothesize that responsible leadership stimulates OCBE because it enhances employees' identification with their leaders. Consequently, employee OCBE improves due to this leader identification.

Numerous studies have investigated the factors influencing employee environmental protection behavior, also known as OCBE, due to its substantial impact on corporate environmental outcomes. These factors encompass employee views of organizational support, employee commitment to environmental preservation, organizational initiatives for environmental protection, corporate environmental concerns, and corporate environmental attitudes (Alzaidi & Iyanna, 2022). Research indicates that leadership behavior is crucial in fostering employee environmental protection behavior, also recognized as OCBE. Leadership serves as a critical link between the company and its employees. Previous research works have found that Conscientious leadership and leaders' care for ecological preservation have a positive impact on OCBE (Noorliza, 2023). Effective leadership plays a crucial role in shaping employee ecological preservation behavior and organizational ecological consequences. Various research works have shown that righteous leadership and leadership care for ecological preservation positively impact employee behavior in this area. However, analyzing the impact of leadership conduct on employee ecological safeguard behavior requires considering the responsibilities of multiple stakeholders. The Responsible leadership, which prioritizes the interests of the

company and various stakeholders, integrates economic, social, and environmental benefits, and considers the interests of workers, aligns with the principles of OCBE.
While the paper provides a critical analysis of the association amongst leadership and employee ecological safeguarding activities, there is an opportunity to deepen the discussion by examining the motivational aspect that links leadership behavior to followers' actions. Motivation is a key determinant of employee behavior and is particularly relevant in the context of environmental initiatives. Research suggests that leaders who effectively motivate their followers can inspire greater engagement in environmentally responsible behaviors. Therefore, further exploration of the motivational mechanisms through which leadership influences employee behavior could enhance our understanding of how to effectively stimulate OCBE. Integrating this aspect into the study would add to a new comprehensive and detailed exploration of the leadership-OCBE relationship.

Review of the Literature and Hypotheses

Responsible Leader

The concept of responsible leadership emerged from ethical principles and social relationships, and it is a leadership style that has evolved from social interaction. Today's globalized and economic conditions, organizational networks, and diverse workforce pose challenges for leaders. Leadership encompasses not only generating shareholder profits but also meeting the expectations of various stakeholders (Voegtlin et al., 2020). The demands of various stakeholders, fierce competition, and complex relationship networks all place significant pressure on responsible leaders to perform multiple roles within organizations (Szczepańska-Woszczyna et al., 2015) . A responsible leader must embody several roles, including serving others, envisioning the future, negotiating democratically, motivating, making decisions, and communicating effectively.
Responsible leaders leverage their considerable powers of protection, acquirement, association, and indulgent to cultivate and sustain strong relationships among all stakeholders (Gomes et al., 2022). The Responsible leadership represents an extra advanced and multifaceted approach compared to traditional leadership styles. It is characterized by its emphasis on broader considerations such as scope, values, society, and the environment, along with a commitment to fostering positive change. In contrast, outdated leadership styles tend to overestimate their power and neglect the interests of the broader environment and stakeholders (Haque et al., 2020). While other leadership styles overlook the significance of accountability as a part of responsible leadership, responsible leadership prioritizes intricate stakeholder-leader interactions, according to (Ismail & Hilal, 2023).
Responsible leadership distinguishes itself from other conventional leadership styles by prioritizing the society and environment, creating long-term value, and promoting positive change (Oliveira et al., 2020). Traditional forms of leadership, such as ethical leadership, often overestimate their authority and fail to recognize the importance of the broader environment and diverse stakeholders with whom they interact. Moreover, these leadership styles tend to overlook the crucial element of accountability, that is a central concentration of the responsible leadership research (Shi & Ye, 2016). Responsible leadership, therefore, emphasizes multiple leader-stakeholder relationships, rather than solely focusing on the leader-employee relationship as traditional leadership studies have done. It takes into account the fundamentals of several stakeholders, not just the interests of shareholders, in its decision-making process.
Responsible leadership places significant emphasis on the wellbeing of different stakeholders connected to the organization. It involves communicating information and opinions with stakeholders and collaborating with employees (Lämsä & Keränen, 2020). It entails sharing information and viewpoints with stakeholders and working closely with employees (Cyfert et al., 2022). Research conducted in the past has demonstrated that responsible leadership

profoundly affects a wide array of employee aspects, including their behavior within the organization, satisfaction with their work, intention to leave their job, performance at work, commitment to the organization, and tendency toward unethical behavior (Haque et al., 2019). Taking into account the interests of all stakeholders, including employees, within the company is a key aspect of effective leadership. Observing a leader's behavior can lead employees and followers to adopt and emulate it over time. Additionally, proactive leaders address ethical issues and work to maintain positive relationships with stakeholders.

The concept of OCBE was first introduced by Daily in 2009 and has gained recognition among management scholars since then. OCBE refers to an individual's voluntary behavior in the workplace towards the environment not incentivized by prescribed encouragement scheme (Daily et al., 2009). Examples of philanthropist conduct related to OCBE include reducing energy and resource use, minimizing carbon footprint, reducing paper consumption to preserve trees, assisting stakeholders, and proposing environmentally beneficial work initiatives (Mi et al., 2019). OCBE is the term used to describe the voluntary efforts made by employees in an organization to safeguard the environment. These actions are not usually motivated or enforced by the organization's formal incentive structure. These actions include energy and resource conservation, reducing carbon footprint, reducing paper usage to save trees, supporting stakeholders, and offering environmentally beneficial job suggestions. Environmentally protective behavior and the organization's green development plan. (Mi et al., 2019).

OCBE refers to an individual's ethical values and actions aimed at conserving the environment for the benefit of oneself and society. Under the guidance of responsible leaders, employees are inspired to emulate their environmentally conscious behavior and engage in OCBE. According to (Malik et al., 2021), the responsible leaders support and ensure that organizations cultivate developmental guidelines and policies associated to environmental conservation, defining environmentally friendly actions. When employees observe these actions and behaviors, they tend to replicate the behavior of caring for the environment and engage in extra-role actions primarily focused on the environment. Responsible leaders encourage these extra-role behaviors by taking into consideration the interests of all stakeholders within or outside the company. This is what (Pless et al., 2022) refer to as the influencer effect, wherein a responsible leader can successfully encourage staff to yield the start for OCBE. Grounded on this association, we postulate the following:

H1: Responsible Leadership is positively connected with OCBE.

Leader Identification as Mediator

Social identity theory proposes that identification is the mechanism by which individuals form a psychological bond with entities such as organizations, professions, leaders, or colleagues (Stets & Burke, 2000). According to (Ishaq et al., 2023) leader identification is one of the targets in social identity theory, which suggests that subordinates' learning and imitation of their leaders depend on their level of identification with them. CSR, or extended stakeholder management, is a form of responsible leadership that entails leaders fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities towards different stakeholders (Jeong et al., 2022). Responsible leadership is a value-based approach in which ethical standards influence the interactions between leaders and stakeholders, thereby transforming the traditional dyadic leader-follower model to a more collaborative interaction model between leaders and stakeholders (Mahmood et al., 2023). Responsible leadership challenges the traditional concept of leadership that focuses on a one-on-one relationship between leaders and followers, as it emphasizes the interaction between leaders and stakeholders based on ethical values and principles. One of the key stakeholders that responsible leadership values is employees, and responsible leaders recognize the impact of their actions on employee self-concepts and personal identities (Marstand et al., 2018). Responsible leaders are loyal to promoting a positive idea and setting an example to follow, while also being attentive to the needs of their subordinates. They are willing to make

compassionate decisions, show concern for the well-being of their employees, and seek mutually beneficial outcomes whenever possible. These behaviors signal the concerns of the leaders and elicit empathy from employees, while also increasing their sense of meaning and purpose.

Research has shown that when individuals trust their leaders and their demands are met, they identify better with the leaders. This identification becomes self-referential and self-defining for followers, resulting in trust relationships with leaders (Lee, 2016). Effective leadership can facilitate employees' identification with their leaders. Responsible leadership, characterized by qualities such as a global perspective, CSR awareness, and a long-term vision, is considered an attractive leadership style.

When individuals attempt to imitate their leaders, the qualities of responsible leadership become apparent and aid in the process of subordinates developing a psychological bond with them. The word "leader identification" is used to describe the degree to which leaders are integrated into the social identities of subordinates, as described by recent theoretical and experimental research (Y. Guo et al., 2022). This phenomenon reflects the deep impact that responsible leaders can have on their followers, shaping not just their behavior at work but also their personal beliefs and sense of purpose. As employees identify with the leader's values, they are more likely to align their actions with the organization's mission and contribute positively to its goals. Incorporating the leader's values into their own self-identity can lead employees to form a more cohesive and motivated workforce, ultimately benefiting the entire organization.

According to social identity theory, followers are more inclined to act on behalf of their leader when they feel a strong sense of identification with them. This identification leads them to adopt and align with the leader's standards, principles, and dreams, shaping their peculiar work responsibilities. As they contribute common goals with the leaders and view the his ideas as of their own idea are more likely to engage in voluntary extra-role behaviors, including OCB (Teng et al., 2020). Individual leader identification enhances employees' motivation to establish and uphold positive social exchange relationships with responsible leaders. This heightened sensitivity to their leader's behaviors and expectations gives leaders greater influence over employees.

According to this explanation, if responsible leadership focuses on the organization's long-term sustainability performance and make an instance by adhering to viable practices, workers who interact with such a leader will perceive these goals and expectations both beneficial & significant. They are inclined to mirror the leader's actions by engaging in OCBE, which encompasses activities like reducing energy usage, conserving resources, proposing strategies for minimizing construction waste, and adopting environmentally sustainable practices (Marques et al., 2018). Therefore, we propose that RL and leader identification are necessary elements for OCBE. This leads us to propose the succeeding hypothesis:

H2a: Responsible leadership is positively connected with leader identification.

H2b: Leader identification serves as a mediator in the relationship between RL and employees OCBE.

Responsible Leadership and Motivation the second Mediator

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that human motivation is influenced by factors that play a critical role in shaping our identity and behavior (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Extraneous motivation, as indicated by (Bamberg & Verkuyten, 2022), is a drive to act in explicit manners that is reliant upon outside sources and bringing about outer advantages. Examples of such external sources include performance evaluations, rewards and recognition, and others' respect and appreciation. Conversely, motivation that originates from within ourselves is fueled by internal factors like our fundamental beliefs, interests, and individual moral compass, propelling us to act autonomously (Plant & Devine, 1998).

Self-Determination Theory differentiates between autonomous and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation includes both internal and external sources and is experienced by individuals who perceive the value of an activity and how it aligns with their self-worth. On the contrary, controlled motivation is characterized by external regulation, where individuals are driven by a desire for external rewards or a fear of punishment. Introjected regulation, on the other hand, stems from somewhat internalized behaviors and norms, such as avoiding embarrassment, seeking praise, and protecting one's self-image. Autonomous motivation, when present, can make individuals feel self-directed and autonomous. In contrast, controlled motivation may leave individuals feeling compelled to act in a specific way, resulting in limited autonomy (Goldfarb et al., 2023). In the corporate setting, employees assimilate demonstrated values through perception and perceptual learning. Leadership exemplifies these values through exemplary role models, facilitating their internalization by employees. This internalization can empower employees to express their ideas more openly. Responsible leadership places emphasis on personal responsibility for the welfare of society & surroundings, potentially enhancing the objectives of maintainable management (Forner et al., 2020).

According to Self-Determination Theory which stipulates that responsible leadership enriches self-encouragement among employees to supports their engagement in OCBE. This theory suggests that people's behavior is predisposed by both interior and exterior aspects, with their choices reflecting their needs and perceptions about the environment. Those workers who participate in OCBE typically believe that fetching in ecological safety actions can lead to personal happiness and that such behaviors are encouraged, rewarded, and supported. Overall, employee engagement in environmental protection behaviors is driven by a combination of self-directed (internal) and externally motivated (external) factors (Andrews, 2021). In summary, we suggest that RL enhances OCBE by promoting employee inspiration through the adoption, support, encouragement, or establishment of environmentally ethical practices. As a result, we propose the under mentioned hypothesis:

H3a: There is a positive association of Responsible leadership with employee motivation

H3b: Employee motivation mediates RL and OCBE connection

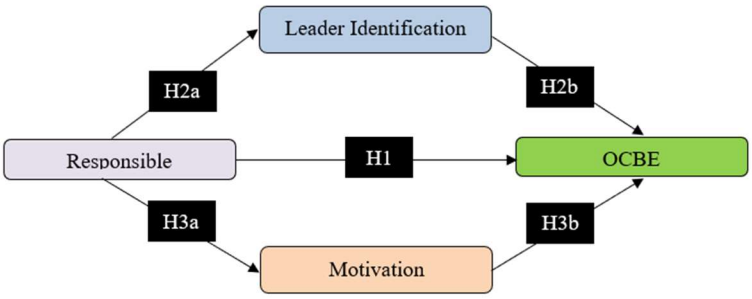

Figure-1 Research Model

Research Methodology

Sample Size

Research sample contained 397 employees from the public sector. The survey was conducted in both English and Urdu to ensure comprehension. Data collection was done via an online survey on Google Docs. Initially, 500 survey links were distributed randomly across six organizations. Eventually, 397 responses (79.50%) were fully completed and considered for analysis. The respondents included 158 females (31.6%) and 239 males (47.8%).

Finally, the fifth age group includes those aged 40 and above, and it contains 97 respondents, representing 24.4% of the total sample size. These demographics indicate that the sample is

fairly evenly distributed across different age groups, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the data with regard to the impact of RL on OCBE among employees in the public sector.
The research sample included 397 employees from the public sector. The arrangement of the age of respondents indicated the smallest group, comprising of 25 individualist, fell into the 20-25 age range. Regarding work experience, 18% of the sample had 1-5 years' experience, 48% got 10-20 years' experience, and rest of all 7% got over 20 years' experience. In terms of education, 36% have a graduate degree, while 32% have a post graduate degree. Additional evidence about the respondents is provided in Table 1 below.

Sr.#	Description	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	239	48%
		Female	158	32%
2	Age	20-25	25	6%
		25-30	69	17%
		30-35	198	50%
		35-40	58	15%
		Above 40	47	12%
3	Education	SSC	26	7%
		HSSC	52	13%
		Bachelor	143	36%
		Master	126	32%
		Other	50	13%
4	Experience	up to 01 year	25	6%
		01-05 Year	73	18%
		05-10 Year	84	21%
		10-20 Year	189	48%
		Above 20	26	7%

Table-1 Descriptive Statistics

Measurement of Variables

The study's measurement involves three main components. Initially, the research is introduced, emphasizing the significance of the responses. The second section requests responsers to render demographic info, i.e gender, age, education, work experience. The 3rd and most critical section of the questionnaire contains items allied to the study's indicators. We used 5-point Likert scale to answer the questions. Additionally, the questionnaire was interpreted into Urdu to assist respondents' understanding.
In this study, demographic factors were controlled for using dummy variables, where 0 represented male and 1 represented female. The questionnaire was formulated by adapting the following:

Sr. No.	Variable	No. of Items	Adapted from	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Responsible Leadership (Predictor)	5-item	(Voegtlin et al., 2012)	0.850
2	Leader identification (1st Mediator)	5-Item	(Mael & Ashforth, 1992) and (Shamir et al., 1998)	0.856
3	Motivation (2nd Mediator)	9-item	(Graves et al., 2013)	0.856
4	Organizational Citizenship Behavior for Environment (Outcome)	10-item	(Boiral & Paillé, 2012)	0.89

Table-2 Questionnaire Items

Results

The trial of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) revealed a satisfactory fit, with stipulated 471.525 value of $\chi 2$ test & df-179 and value of (RMSEA) was 0.075, while the measure of CFI & IFI both have 0.967, indicating good model fit. Model 1's factor loadings all exceeded 0.7 ($p < 0.001$), indicating strong convergent validity.

Model	Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	Incremental Fit Index	Comparative Fit Index	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
1-Four Factor Model (RL, LI, M, OCBE)	471.525	179	0.967	0.967	0.075
2-Three Factor Model (RL, LI+M, OCBE)	655.7	180	0.939	0.938	0.093
3- Three Factor Model (RL+OCBE, LI, M)	728.265	180	0.928	0.927	0.099
4- Two Factor Model (RL+OCBE, LI+M)	770.386	181	0.921	0.921	0.102
5- Single Factor Model (RL+OCBE+LI+M)	789.353	185	0.919	0.919	0.103

Table-3 CFA

Common Method Variance Test

To evaluate potential consistency issues in data collection, we performed exploratory factor analysis using SPSS 21.0. The analysis revealed that the first factor accounted for [X]% of the variance, well below the 50% threshold. This indicates that consistency issues are not significant in this study. Four factors with eigenvalues above one were extracted, with the highest factor accounting for only 41.331% of the variance, suggesting no dominant factor and minimal consistency concerns (Eby and Dobbins, 1997; Livingstone et al., 1997).

Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Table 4 highlights the main statistical parameters (μ, σ, and ρ) for the examined factors. The results reveal a significant positive relationship between RL and leader identification (moderate correlation, $r \approx 0.31$, $p < 0.01$), as well as with motivation and OCBE, albeit with lower correlations ($r \approx 0.15$ and $r \approx 0.21$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, strong positive correlations were found between OCBE and both leader identification ($r \approx 0.50$, $p < 0.01$) and motivation ($r \approx 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting their interrelation.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	1.63	0.063							
2. Age	2.68	0.921	-0.185 **						
3. Organizational Tenure	2.99	1.161	-0.114 *	0.851 **					
4. Education	3.03	0.832	-0.153 **	-0.087	-0.213 **				
5. RL	3.801	0.659	0.073	0.056	0.082	-0.07			
6. LI	3.792	0.656	0.128 *	-0.024	0.041	-0.082	0.305 **		
7. M	2.902	0.805	-0.036	0.066	0.064	-0.142 *	0.151 **	0.36 **	
8. OCBE	3.385	0.723	0.031	0.191 **	0.166	0.08	0.208 **	0.499 **	0.517 **

Note: N = 397; * means p < 0.05, ** means p < 0.01, and *** means p < 0.001; RL = Responsible leadership; LI =Leader identification; M = Motivation.

Table-4 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Table 5 presents the findings from the regression analysis, evaluating RL's direct effects on leader identification, motivation, and OCBE. Additionally, a mediation model was utilized to investigate the intermediary roles of leader identification and motivation in the RL-OCBE relationship.

Variable	Leader Identification	Motivation	OCBE	
	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 4
Control variable				
Gender	0.115 *	-0.055	0.045	0.025
Age	0.094	0.083	0.213 *	0.158
Work Experience	-0.118	-0.060	-0.045	0.034
Education	0.022	-0.144 *	-0.056	0.013
Independent variable				
Responsible leadership	0.303 ***	0.147 **	0.197 ***	0.045
Mediator				
Leader Identification				0.361 ***
Motivation				0.383 ***
R2	0.111 ***	0.050 ***	0.083 ***	0.405 ***
Δ R2				0.344 ***

Table-5 Hierarchical Regression Analyses

After accounting for demographic factors, Model 1 (Table 4) demonstrates a notable positive relationship between RL and OCBE, with a standardized beta coefficient close to 0.20 and high statistical significance ($p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Likewise, Model 2 reveals a meaningful and statistically significant positive association between RL and leader identification, with the beta coefficient exceeding 0.30 ($p < 0.001$), confirming H2. Finally, Model 3 shows a positive connection between RL and employee motivation, with a beta coefficient slightly below 0.15 and a significance level of $p < 0.001$, supporting H3.

In Model 4, which incorporated RL, leader identification, and motivation in the regression analysis, the effect of RL on OCBE was not found to be statistically notable ($\beta \approx 0.045$, $p > 0.05$). To further examine the mediating roles of leader identification and motivation on OCBE, we used structural equation modeling (SEM). The results showed that the model had an acceptable fit.

Figure 2 illustrates the model, showing that RL affects OCBE through two key pathways: RL → leader identification → OCBE and RL → motivation → OCBE. RL has a strong positive effect on leader identification ($\beta \approx 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn significantly influences OCBE ($\beta \approx 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, RL positively impacts motivation ($\beta \approx 0.16$, $p < 0.001$), leading to a significant positive effect on OCBE ($\beta \approx 0.46$, $p < 0.001$). Bootstrapping with 1,000 iterations was conducted, confirming the mediation roles of leader identification and motivation in the RL-OCBE link.

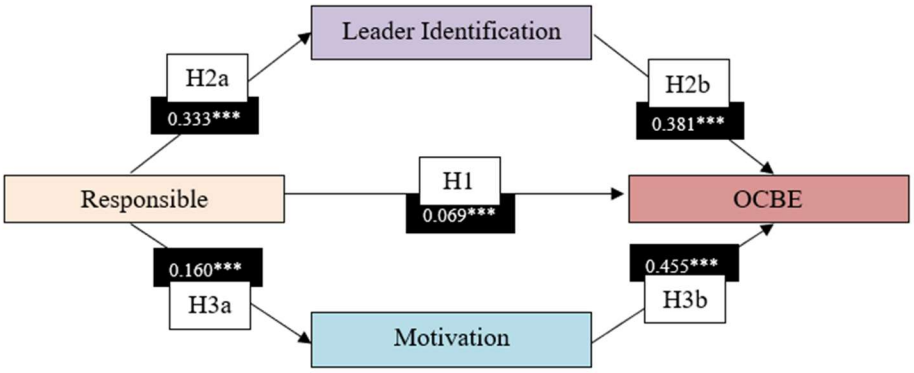

*Figure-2 Path Coefficients *** p<0.001*

Discussion

This research intended to investigate the mechanisms through which RL influences employee OCBE. Utilizing social identity theory, a two-stage study was conducted in the public sector.

The findings suggest that RL, as an evolving leadership style, can mitigate the inadequacies of customary leadership styles and plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational reputation while fostering both enterprise and social development (Voegtlin et al., 2012). In alignment with stakeholder theory, RL integrates CSR with ethical leadership. This dual focus of responsible leadership entails establishing ethical standards for employees, encouraging ethical behavior, and discouraging actions that could tarnish the organization's image. Furthermore, responsible leadership addresses the organization's social responsibility commitments.

The findings of this study carry several theoretical implications. Firstly, they contribute to our understanding of the factors influencing OCBE and illuminate its formation. The research reveals a positive association between RL and OCBE, aligning with previous research indicating that RL plays a pivotal role in fostering sustainable behaviors like OCBE among employees. Responsible leaders excel in effectively communicating their sustainability values and priorities to their team, resulting in heightened engagement in sustainable practices, including OCBE (Boiral & Paillé, 2012).

Moreover, in comparison to traditional leadership, responsible leadership, from a leader-follower perspective, enhances individual economic behavior by recognizing employees as vital partners. By aligning a RL standpoints or values with core individual ecological forces, organizations led by responsible leaders are anticipated to develop more effective sustainability practices. Additionally, this research adds to the research work on organizational citizenship behavior and ethics OCBE by classifying RL as a novel predictor.

When it comes to chore attached to embodied environmental domain, leadership plays a crucial role in influencing employee attitudes and behaviors toward environmental friendliness. Leaders who set examples of environmental responsibility can motivate employees to participate in environmental preservation efforts through their interpersonal interactions. In this research, we examined data obtained from 397 workers using regression analysis and obtained the following results. Our analysis reveals that the relationship between RL and OCBE is intervened by both leader identification and motivation. Notably, leader identification emerges as the stronger mediator compared to motivation.

Theoretical Significance

OCBE encompasses employees' voluntary environmental protection actions that are not prompted by formal incentives or mandates from their organization. It represents a form of discretionary environmental behavior that complements both conventional societal environmental actions and the green initiatives of companies. This study delves into the influence of RL on OCBE and its underlying mechanisms. Drawing on social learning theory, we aim to elucidate how responsible leadership shapes subordinates' environmental protection behavior.

Our study's findings make a significant contribution to the standing body of acquaintance. As per social learning theory, people often acquire complex actions through observational knowledge, which contains both straight observation of behavior and ancillary learning through observing models. As leaders and employees interact regularly, the actions of leaders can significantly influence employee approaches and actions. Previous research has shown that virtuous leadership boosts OCBE by modeling ethical behavior and fostering an ethical climate (Zhang et al., 2016).

According to (Norton et al., 2015), there is a pressing need for further research on leadership styles directly linked to environmental sustainability. Responsible leadership affects not only external stakeholders, such as those with connections to the company and a strong interest in the natural environment (Maak & Pless, 2006), but also internal stakeholders like employees. We explored the connection between RL and employee ecological conservation conduct. Our analysis confirms that RL has a positive influence on fostering worker’s environmental protection behavior by cultivating a sense of responsibility among them. Our

study broadens the research scope regarding the impact of RL on employee attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, it introduces a distinctive approach to investigating the antecedents of OCBE, diverging from the conventional dyadic leadership paradigm.

This study broadens the understanding of the pathways through which RL impacts OCBE. While earlier research has largely concentrated on the direct effects of RL on employee attitudes and behaviors, our investigation delves into the underlying mechanisms that drive this relationship (Voegtlin et al., 2012), our findings suggest that RL promotes OCBE by motivating employees. The extent to which a leader's behavior inspires employees to learn and emulate it is largely determined by the employees' inspiration.

In our research, we investigated the impact of RL on employee ecological protection conduct from both leader identification and motivation perspectives. Our findings indicate that RL can enhance OCBE by boosting employees' inspiration to participate in ecological preservation efforts. This underscores the need for further investigation into the mechanisms by which RL impacts OCBE.

Managerial Implication

Organizations should embrace a sustainable growth mindset and cheer staffs to participate more in ecological protection efforts to address environmental challenges. Enhancing employees' proactive environmental protection behavior is crucial. Our research indicates that responsible leadership positively influences both the leader identification and motivation of employees to engage in environmental protection, thereby supporting OCBE. The following are the managerial implications derived from our findings: It is crucial to accentuate the importance of competent leadership in the organization's growth. Employee ecological outlooks and engagements are shaped by the conservational conscience and corporate social responsibility of their managers.

Thus, improving the relationship between managers and employees and elevating the level of responsible leadership are key to promoting environmental protection activities in the workplace. Furthermore, organizations can promote OCBE by integrating environmental objectives and targets into employee performance assessments, compensation structures, and recognition systems. This will foster an intellect of obligation and commitment among employees toward environmental protection. Organizations should also encourage employees to participate in environmental training programs and provide them with the necessary resources to implement environmentally friendly practices at work. This approach will not only enhance their knowledge and skills but also boost their enthusiasm to involve in ecological protection activities.

In conclusion, our study underscores the significance of responsible leadership in promoting OCBE among employees. The findings suggest that responsible leadership positively impacts employee motivation, which in turn influences their environmental protection behavior. Therefore, organizations should prioritize the development of responsible leadership skills among managers and integrate environmental protection into their HR strategies to encourage and empower employees to embrace sustainable practices.

Research Limitations and Future Guidelines

While this research makes a considerable contribution to the existing literature, several limitations should be considered. Firstly, the scales used to measure responsible leadership were developed by researchers from outside Pakistan. This raises questions about their applicability and validity in other cultural contexts, especially in the Pakistani setting, which warrants further investigation. Secondly, the study solely emphases on the positive influence of RL on OCBE and does not address any potential contextual factors that may undermine this relationship. Future research may deliberate these limitations and explore the cultural adaptability of the measurement scales for responsible leadership. Additionally, further

investigation into contextual factors influencing the relationship between RL and OCBE would render a more blanket understanding of this phenomenon.

Future research should explore whether the relationship between RL and OCBE is influenced by contextual factors or employee characteristics. For instance, it would be valuable to investigate the impact of the organization's GHRMP and employee ecological consciousness on the link between RL and OCBE. Additionally, understanding how the existing emphasis on ecological protection and resource preservation in Pakistani society impacts OCBE could provide valuable insights. Although this study suggests that locally adapted OCBE can thrive and develop in Pakistan, further research is needed to validate this in Pakistani conditions through various contextual analyses.

For future research, it is important to consider incorporating factors specific to the Pakistani context. Additionally, the data for this research was mostly collected through employee self-assurance, and the assessment of responsible leadership was not based on leaders' self-assessment. There is a debate regarding whether responsible leadership as perceived by employees differs from responsible leadership as perceived by leaders. Therefore, future research should explore the impact of responsible leadership, as defined by leaders' self-assessment, on OCBE.

Conclusion

Employees engaging in OCBE participate in activities such as reducing paper usage in the workplace, supporting energy reduction efforts, encouraging colleagues to adopt environmentally-friendly behaviors, and offering eco-friendly suggestions to their employer. These activities are not typically incentivized or mandated by the organization, making them a valuable addition to both individual and organizational efforts towards environmental protection and sustainable development. The social learning theory suggests that individuals may model their behavior after observing and imitating others.

This paper expressively adds to the existing literature on environmental leadership and OCBE. It develops and explores the concept of RL in relation to OCBE, considering employees' concerns and mental ownership of environmental issues. The paper emphasizes the precursors of OCBE and examines the current model of RL and OCBE, highlighting its mediating effects on the relationship between the two. The study finds that RL can effectively stimulate and strengthen employee OCBE. Furthermore, the research proposes that leader identification is a mechanism influencing employee behavior at work. Overall, this research addresses a gap in the literature on RL and OCBE, offering valuable insights into the act of leadership in promoting environmentally viable behaviors.

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