

The Human Factor in Green Transformation: The Impact of Empowering Leadership, Green Passion and Customer Pressure

İtir HASIRCI¹, Fatma ZEYBEK PINARBAŞI², Volkan AKGÜL³



1. Dr., Independent Researcher,
itir8686@gmail.com,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5449-2640>

2. Dr., Independent Researcher,
fatmazeybek1525@gmail.com,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3525-0520>

3. Asst. Prof., Bandırma Onyedi Eylül
University, vakgull@gmail.com,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1248-1425>

<https://doi.org/10.30798/makuiibf.1581359>

Abstract

Sustainability, which has gained importance in modern businesses, is crucial for enhancing employees' environmental awareness and creativity. The banking sector, a branch of the finance sector, also pays attention to raising its personnel's ecological awareness and innovative skills to promote the sector's sustainability. This study examines the mediating roles of empowering leadership, green passion and customer pressure in influencing the green creative behavior of bank personnel. Within the scope of the study, an online survey was administered to 403 bank personnel working in Balıkesir Province and Bandırma District, using the convenience sampling method. Partial Least Squares (PLS) based Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze the study's data. In the study, it was found that empowering leadership has a significant impact on the green creative behavior of bank personnel and this effect is partially mediated by green passion and customer pressure. This situation reveals that environmental creativity is a phenomenon that is sensitive to both leadership approaches and individual motivation elements, as well as external environmental dynamics, in the organizational context.

Keywords: *Banking Sector, Customer Pressure, Empowering Leadership, Green Creative Behavior, Green Passion.*

Article Type	Application Date	Admission Date
Research Article	November 7, 2024	June 3, 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, global environmental challenges are escalating. Businesses are compelled to integrate sustainability into their operations. The banking sector also strives to minimize consumer ecological footprints and provide sustainable financial products. Consequently, financial institutions need to enhance their workforce's environmental awareness and implement innovative ecological practices. The empowering leadership model articulated by Zhang and Bartol (2010) emphasizes a leadership approach that nurtures creativity by granting autonomy to employees. Amundsen and Martinsen (2014) contend that this leadership style enhances job performance by boosting employee self-confidence.

Conversely, Delmas and Montiel (2007) assert that consumer pressures enhance corporate environmental performance. Conversely, Yen and Yen (2012) contend that consumer expectations may impede innovative and sustainable practices. Research, including Chavez et al. (2016) and Shafiq et al. (2020), examines the intricate impact of consumer pressures on green creativity. Robertson and Barling (2013) define employees' environmental awareness as green passion. Jiang et al. (2019) posit that passion is vital for green creativity and enhances intrinsic motivation for sustainable product development. This study examines the relationships between empowering leadership, customer pressures and green passion for green creativity. This research is novel in that it concurrently assesses the mediating roles of empowering leadership, green passion and customer pressures on bank employees' green creativity. The study's significance lies in providing insights that aid banking institutions in developing sustainability strategies and understanding employee contributions to green transformation. The findings meaningfully advance academic literature and the banking industry, fostering the creation of effective strategies for a sustainable future.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Customer Pressures

Customer pressures are a primary element of external organizational stakeholders, defined as "the pressures organizations receive from customers during business transactions." Customer pressures that drive organizations to adopt new technologies are also known as "customer demands," "customer expectations," and "customer purchasing behavior." Delmas and Montiel (2007) argue that customer pressures can positively influence suppliers' decisions to adopt eco-friendly standards, such as ISO 14001, as these environmental demands increase suppliers' dependency on these standards. However, firms in the manufacturing and service sectors face difficulties implementing ecological standards due to these customer pressures. Organizations may prefer to meet customer demands and expectations regardless of their environmental impact. Yen and Yen (2012) highlight the adverse effects of customer pressures, as they can pose significant barriers to the adoption of eco-friendly innovations and changes. Since 2015, empirical studies on customer pressures have received increasing attention (Chavez et al., 2016; Shafiq et al., 2020).

Customer pressures are considered under the Stakeholder Value Theory, which, rooted in economics, asserts that profit is necessary to increase the economic value of corporate social responsibility from the customers' perspective. This "shareholder value-oriented" approach is generally associated with Agency Theory (Ross, 1973), where owners are considered principals and managers are viewed as agents. Growing demands from various stakeholders have led organizations to adopt sustainable supply chain management. Stakeholder theorists, such as Clarkson (1995), distinguish between primary stakeholders (customers, suppliers and regulators), who are essential for organizational survival and secondary stakeholders (media and NGOs), who influence but are not essential for survival.

In academic discourse, customer pressure refers to the expectations regarding an organization's environmental performance. Ateş et al. (2012) view customers as critical organizational assets necessitating strategic management. In contemporary contexts, heightened environmental consciousness positions customers as influential stakeholders exerting impactful, non-regulatory pressure on ecological stewardship. Ilieska (2013) defines a customer as an entity that procures goods or services to satisfy its requirements. Nevertheless, the existing literature highlights that customers transcend traditional consumer roles, making significant contributions to organizational sustainability objectives. Zhu and Sarkis (2007) highlight customers as a driving force behind proactive environmental strategies and organizational investments. Ateş et al. (2012) describe four recent customer pressures related to environmental activities:

- Pressure to meet customers' environmental requirements,
- Providing information on environmental performance,
- Demands for organizations to achieve waste reduction goals,
- Requirements for organizations to implement recycling, remanufacturing and reuse.

Stakeholder theory suggests that various stakeholders have unique needs and expectations, leading organizations to establish distinct social contracts with each group. This theory, which also explains the relationship between stakeholder perceptions and organizational reporting strategies, posits that customer pressures influence an organization's reporting approach. Fernandez-Feijoo et al. (2014) highlight customer pressure as a determinant of transparency levels and sustainability reporting. Freeman et al. (2010) underscore organizations' multiple customer responsibilities, suggesting that customer pressures improve work standards and productivity, benefiting employees and customers.

2.2. Green Creative Behaviors of Employees

Green creative behaviors entail formulating innovative and beneficial concepts with eco-friendly implications for business outputs. The cultivation of green creativity is contingent upon the synergy of an entity's environmental strategies and aligned human resources practices. An organization must promote active employee engagement to realize efficient environmental governance and foster

green creativity (Boselie et al., 2005). The AMO framework (Ability-Motivation-Opportunity) asserts that capabilities, motivation and opportunities enhance organizational performance. This perspective highlights the interaction between employee traits and organizational context in shaping behavior and outcomes. Specifically, creativity, defined as the production of novel and valuable ideas, is affected by AMO elements. Colbert (2004) indicates that individual abilities, motivation and organizational opportunities jointly determine employees' innovative potential. Integrating innovation and development makes green creativity an effective means of eliminating environmental and resource bottlenecks, thereby promoting sustainable development (Chen, 2008). Green creativity, which refers to innovative ideas and practices within production and service processes, emphasizes an organization's environmentally friendly actions (Chen, Y. S. & Chang, K. C., 2013). Green performance management and reward systems are crucial for enhancing employees' eco-creative outputs. Aligning performance assessments with strategic green goals helps promote environmentally responsible behavior. Green HR aims to reward employees' green creativity behaviors and activities. Moreover, employees who receive clear information from green HR can better understand the strategic goals of the organization's green initiatives, thereby clarifying their roles in the environmental management process (Bret Becton et al., 2008).

Green creativity entails the development of environmentally friendly products and services through innovative ideas. Creativity relates to the psychological behaviors of individuals, where an individual's experience and knowledge serve as significant indicators of how managers can enhance employee creativity. If an organization possesses innovative ideas and employees committed to producing eco-friendly products/services, it can be considered dedicated to green creativity. This signifies that organizations can contribute to environmentally oriented activities end-to-end. Managers and employees committed to green creativity aim to improve economic and social performance while maintaining a long-term commitment to environmental preservation. High levels of green creativity significantly improve sustainable business performance and enhance organizational competitive advantage in the long term (Setyaningrum et al., 2023). Green creative behaviors refer to environmentally conscious actions exhibited by employees within organizations. Thus, employees should be allowed to embrace and implement eco-friendly policies actively. From product and process development activities, creating a shared consciousness is crucial to aligning organizational goals with environmental considerations. Environmentally aware management must lead by example, promoting actions that mitigate ecological impact while eliminating detrimental practices (Yüksel et al., 2022).

2.3. Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership is a concept in which leaders share legitimate power with subordinates, granting them autonomy and responsibility to foster experiences of empowerment. This leadership concept includes enhancing psychological empowerment, increasing the meaningfulness of work, encouraging subordinates to express their opinions, facilitating participation in decision-making, sharing

information and easing knowledge management (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Empowering leaders enhances psychological empowerment within the organization, enabling employees to make informed decisions in fulfilling their tasks. These leaders positively influence employees' behaviors and attitudes by instilling a belief in their ability to carry out tasks and granting autonomy in decision-making within work processes (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014). Empowering leadership involves sharing power through specific leader behaviors that aim to motivate. This style of leadership separates empowerment into two main approaches. The first, structural empowerment, focuses on leaders' empowering behaviors, such as providing guidance, participative decision-making, coaching, information-sharing and attentiveness, as core dimensions of empowering leadership. Another approach, psychological empowerment, emphasizes the feelings of empowerment among employees.

In this context, empowering leadership grants employees autonomy beyond bureaucratic restrictions encourages participation in decision-making processes, increases the meaningfulness of work and instills a sense of confidence in high performance (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). In organizations, delegation of authority should be considered not only to reduce the leader's workload but also as a conscious strategy that supports the development and motivation of employees (Tian & Zhang, 2020). The goal here is to instill trust, enhance organizational commitment, maintain the leader's authority, grant autonomy to employees and improve perceived control and accountability for organizational sustainability. This way, employees will align their interests with the organization's, gaining intrinsic motivation to expand market share. Such a leadership profile extends beyond ethical and responsible leadership, fostering a positive and future-oriented outlook within organizations (Redelinghuys et al., 2020). Leadership behavior plays a crucial role in effectively guiding employees' eco-friendly behaviors. Numerous studies have shown that positive leadership styles have a favorable impact on employee behavior (Khatoon et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Since the 21st century, as the external environment has grown increasingly dynamic and complex, organizations have focused on self-management among employees to adapt. Thus, empowering leadership, which offers the advantage of developing employees' self-leadership abilities, has garnered the attention of researchers (Bernoff & Schadler, 2010). Studies on empowering leadership suggest that this form fosters a sense of value and trust among employees, promoting positive and effective leadership that invigorates the organization. Empowering leadership, a significant and upbeat leadership style, has been proven to positively impact employee behaviors, such as organizational citizenship, environmental behavior and innovative behavior (Jiang et al., 2019).

Empowering leadership provides more autonomy in organizational decision-making processes, removing barriers to employee performance and sharing power with personnel. This leadership style enables employees to understand the significance of their work better, highlighting the importance of their roles and behaviors in driving organizational development (Wen et al., 2023). It encourages employees to voice their ideas, grants them greater autonomy in decision-making and aids in developing

their competencies. According to social exchange theory, employees are more likely to reciprocate when they feel motivated and trusted by their leaders (Wang et al., 2023). Specifically, empowering leadership stimulates employees' intrinsic motivation to contribute to the organization. Subsequently, employees will go beyond role boundaries, protecting the organization's interests to uphold its vision. Thus, empowering leaders are perceived as individuals inclined to foster behaviors conducive to eco-friendly organizational development. Furthermore, empowering leaders mitigate employees' work-related concerns, enabling them to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors (Yue et al., 2022).

Empowering leadership encompasses a set of leadership behaviors that aim to share power and control, foster trust, set high expectations and encourage greater self-direction among employees (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015). Many scholars argue that empowering leadership consistently yields positive results. Using conservation of resources theory, Zheng et al. (2023) assert that empowering leadership enhances project performance by motivating employees' creative self-efficacy. However, some researchers contest this view outside of project environments. Conger and Kanungo (1988) indicate that unregulated empowerment can lead to overconfidence among subordinates, potentially resulting in strategic errors over time. Zheng et al. (2023) suggest that empowered employees may resort to unethical behaviors due to increased responsibilities. Employees view empowerment positively as a situational factor and a unique incentive under empowering leadership. Also known as enabling leadership, employees hold a favorable perspective toward empowering leaders (Kehoe & Collins, 2017). Also referred to as super-leadership, empowering leaders seek to cultivate their followers' potential leadership capabilities, refraining from issuing direct orders. This style of leadership allows employees to manage and control their behaviors. Consequently, leaders should be empowered to assign responsibilities and remind employees of their control over their actions, emphasizing their roles as self-leaders (Yun et al., 2006). Characteristics of an effective empowering leader include a focus on addressing employee concerns, maintaining and upholding respect within the organization, sincerity, a thorough understanding of employees for effective coaching, offering opportunities for experiential learning and being understanding of potential mistakes (Cevahir, 2004). Leader behavior and attitudes are critical in empowering employees within organizations. Among the opportunities that empowering leaders provides, including authority delegation, responsibility, information sharing, innovative performance and independent decision-making, the most crucial element that accelerates work processes is authority delegation. Through responsibility, leaders persuade employees to strive toward organizational goals (Bayrakdar, 2014). Leaders thus hold employees accountable for outcomes related to organizational activities. In independent decision-making, leaders demonstrate trust in employees' decisions, while with information-sharing, they allow error tolerance, fostering development. Overall, empowerment entails both behavioral and cognitive aspects. Considering this perspective, encouraging behaviors that promote employees' self-efficacy and free will can benefit organizational empowerment (Bolat et al., 2009).

2.4. Employees' Green Passion

Green passion is a positive feeling that motivates employees to engage in environmentally friendly behaviors within organizations (Robertson & Barling, 2013). Passion plays a crucial role in employees' dedication to diverse organizational activities. Employees often express passion by showing positive emotions, developing meaningful connections with various work tasks and feeling internally motivated to fulfill these tasks (Li et al., 2020). Employees' green passion signifies their emotional engagement with organizational environmental practices, serving as a motivational driver for pro-environmental actions (Vallerand, 2012). Individuals exhibiting high green passion engage in eco-sensitive behaviors, demonstrate persistent commitment and self-identify as environmentally conscious. Here, the leader's role involves reinforcing green passion among employees, which may, over time, encourage excessive eco-friendly behaviors (Afsar et al., 2016).

The goal of green passion is to convert this positive feeling into environmentally conscious behaviors, as employees' green passion influences their ecological conduct. Employees dedicated to the environment value recycling and identify themselves as environmental enthusiasts (Sembiring et al., 2020). According to Turaga et al. (2010), green passion significantly, if not more strongly than intrinsic motivation, influences employees' involvement in environmentally friendly behaviors. Passion represents a person's strong inclination to devote time to an activity they love and consider important (Vallerand, 2012). Vallerand's Dualistic Model of Passion, based on self-determination theory, distinguishes between obsessive and harmonious passion and links it to green passion. Obsessive passion arises from a controlled internalization process whereby individuals feel compelled to engage in an activity due to external factors, such as seeking social acceptance or self-esteem (Vallerand, 2012), often resulting in heightened psychological stress. In contrast, harmonious passion emerges due to an activity's autonomous internalization within one's identity, where individuals freely engage without feeling forced (Vallerand, 2012). Thus, a strong and harmonious environmental passion is related to positive affect, psychological well-being and job performance and can be applied to both work and non-work domains (Hoe et al., 2018). Harmonious environmental passion is essential for predicting excessive eco-friendly behaviors as it triggers positive emotions that motivate employees toward environmentally conscious actions. Employees with a strong, harmonious green passion are energetic and determined to contribute to environmental improvement initiatives, freely dedicating time and effort to ecological activities without conflicts arising with other daily tasks (Afsar et al., 2016). In short, harmonious passion for the environment fosters motivation among employees to engage in environmentally friendly behaviors actively (Robertson & Barling, 2013).

Eco-friendly behaviors aim to mitigate adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, green passion signifies an intrinsic desire or commitment toward eco-friendly practices, influencing tangible eco-friendly behaviors (Robertson & Barling, 2013). Green passion is related to employees' concern levels about the impact of environmental issues on their current and future well-being, with those more

environmentally aware inclined to practice eco-friendly behaviors (Gatersleben et al., 2002). Four key reasons suggest that green passion leads to eco-friendly employee behaviors (Afsar et al., 2016). The first is that green passion encompasses positive emotions and inspires an experience that promotes environmental protection. Second, green passion is viewed as a moral behavior, much like the influence of moral actions on eco-friendly behaviors. Third, positive emotions such as happiness and satisfaction influence employees' eco-friendly behaviors, reinforcing green passion as a positive emotion. The fourth reason is that employees experiencing strong emotions, such as green passion, feel they make a difference, are motivated, gain energy and feel inspired (Sembiring et al., 2020). Based on these reasons, green passion can be said to trigger environmentally friendly activities, facilitating the motivation to make a difference.

3. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

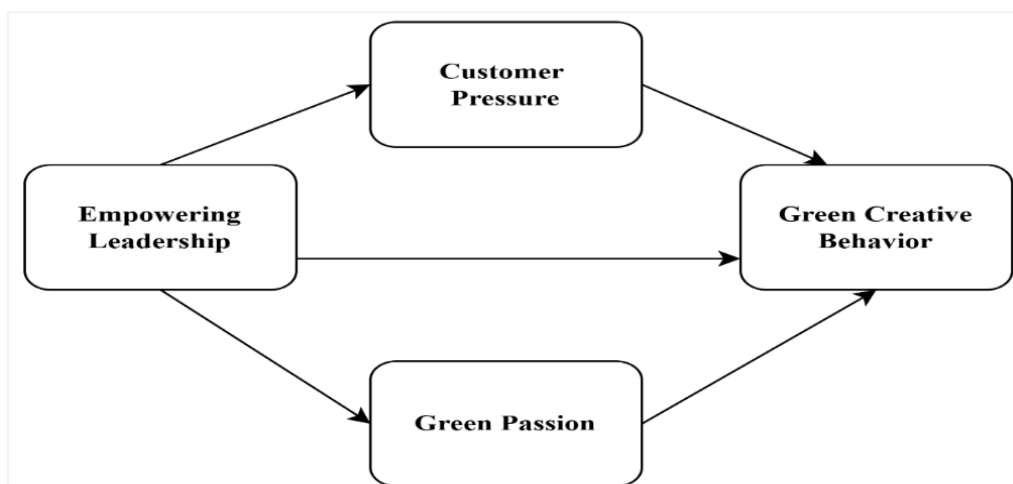
In the study, the mediating roles of customer pressure and green passion in the effect of empowering leadership on bank personnel's green creative behavior were evaluated. While the study universe comprised 1,800 personnel working in Balıkesir province and its districts, the study sample consisted of 403 bank personnel working in Balıkesir province and Bandırma district. Considering the number of items (questions) used in the study, the sample size is more than 10 times the number of items. Studies in the literature have suggested that, especially for factor analysis and similar multivariate techniques, the sample size should be at least 5 to 10 times the number of variables or items (Hair, Black, et. al., 2019). Based on this, the current sample size is considered to be sufficient and statistically reliable for the analyses performed. In this study, an online survey was conducted and approval was received from the ethics committee of the relevant university. Partial Least Squares (PLS) based Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze the research data. Partial Least Squares (PLS-Partial Least Squares) is robust to the complexity of scales and model. Thanks to this feature, PLS can work with small samples and complex models (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021; Ringle et al., 2020). For this reason, the data obtained in the study were analyzed with Partial Least Squares (PLS) based Structural Equation Modeling. A four-item scale developed by Ahearne et al. (2005) was used to assess the empowering leadership used in the study, a six-item scale developed by Chen, Y. S. and Chang C. H. (2013) was used to determine green creative behavior, a four-item scale developed by Cho & Yoo (2021), Jia et al. (2018) for green passion and a three-item scale developed by Yen & Yen (2012) for customer pressure.

3.1. Hypotheses of The Study

Green creative behavior in organizations encompasses original, new and valuable ideas generated by individuals within the organizational context. It is recognized as the first critical stage of innovation, which fosters growth. Empowering leaders with high idealized influence and intellectual stimulation encourages people to creatively solve environmental problems. It directs employees to prioritize corporate social responsibility and ecological sustainability over their interests. Therefore, the aspects of ability, opportunity and motivation theory will affect the production of new and valuable

environmental ideas created through the interaction between individual and situational factors. This theory is used to identify the factors that contribute to high performance within an organization. An organization that considers the ability, motivation and possible opportunities an employee can capitalize on will reach its organizational goals more efficiently, as it will enhance its operations (Boselie et al., 2005). Organizational leaders use this model (ability, opportunity and motivation theory) to influence the performance of employees. An organization that prioritizes all three elements can achieve more success than an organization that prioritizes only one or two elements. Organizations optimize employees' abilities, motivations and potential opportunities to increase employee performance and achieve their goals. Therefore, this research uses the theory of ability, opportunity and motivation to analyze employees' green creative behaviors within the organization (Colbert, 2004). Social exchange theory, linked to Albert Bandura, posits that individuals learn through observing and imitating the behaviors of others. Bandura states that knowledge and skills are acquired through direct experience and observing the actions and outcomes of others. According to social exchange theory, employees are more likely to provide positive feedback when their leaders motivate and trust them. According to social exchange theory, individuals who perceive that they will receive positive outcomes at the end of the interaction process tend to adopt a different approach to exchange than those who anticipate adverse outcomes (Doğan & Sökmen, 2021). The significance of role models, social dynamics and context in influencing sustainability behaviors and attitudes is highlighted. Researchers use this theory to analyze current dynamics and recommend encouraging sustainable practices in the sector. The core tenet of conservation theory, known as motivation theory, posits that individuals are driven to safeguard existing resources while also seeking new ones. Individuals become aware that they must allocate resources to maintain their current resources and acquire new ones. For this reason, they realize that their excess resources make them robust against stress (Hobfoll, 2001). The hypotheses and model of the research, prepared within the scope of ability, opportunity, motivation theory, social exchange theory and conservation theory of resources, are presented below.

Figure 1. Research Model



The hypotheses of the research are stated below.

H₁: Empowering leadership among bank employees significantly influences green creative behavior.

H₂: Bank employees' customer pressure partially mediates in the relationship between empowering leadership and green creative behavior.

H₃: Bank employees' green passion partially mediates in the relationship between empowering leadership and green creative behavior.

4. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Within the scope of the research findings, the demographic information of the bank personnel, descriptive statistics of the scales and normality tests were included. Additionally, exploratory factor analysis was conducted. Then, Partial Least Squares (PLS) based Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze the research data.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Bank Personnel

Variables	Subgroups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	205	50.9
	Male	198	49.1
Age	22-26 between ages	24	6.0
	27-31 between ages	41	10.2
	32-36 between ages	109	27.0
	37-41 between ages	121	30.0
	42 and above	108	26.8
Educational Status	Associate Degree	61	15.1
	Licence (Bachelor's)	277	68.7
	Postgraduate	65	16.2
Total		403	100

Fifty percent of the bank personnel participating in the research are female and 49.1% are male. 30.0% of the participants are between the ages of 37-41. 68.7% of the bank's personnel have a bachelor's degree.

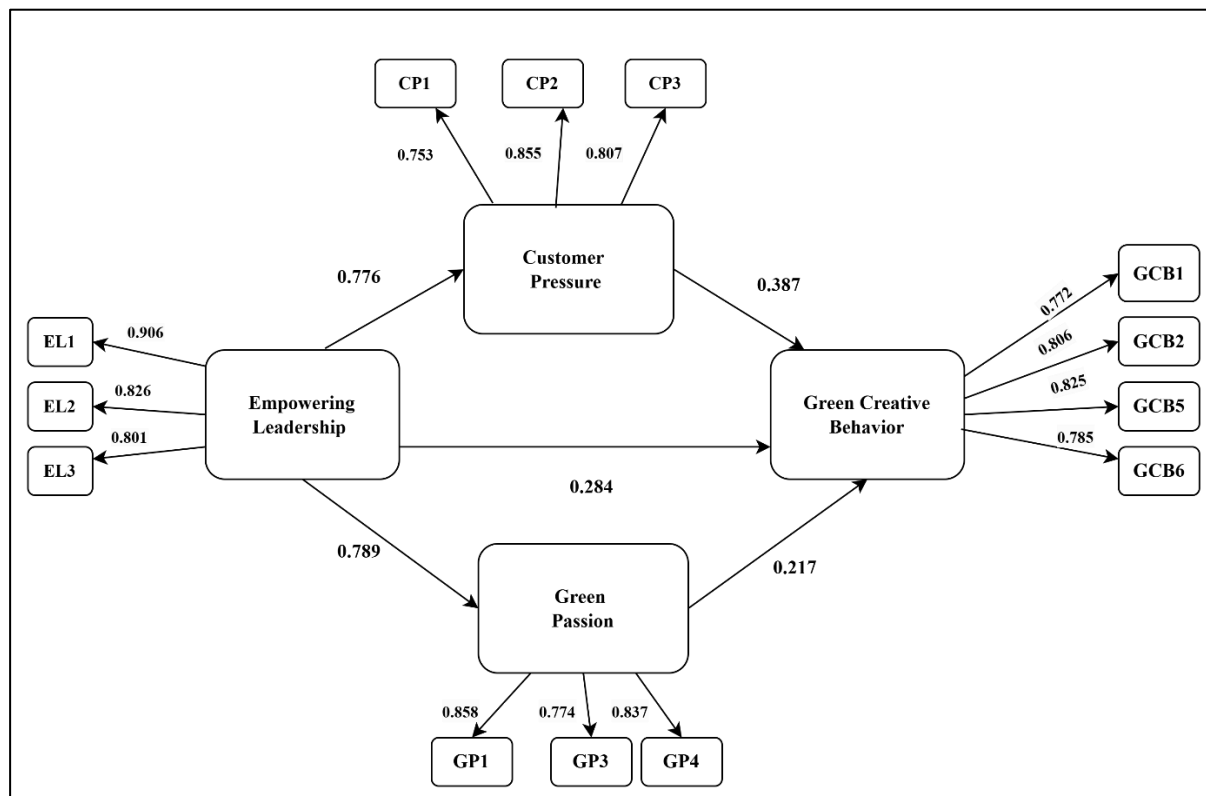
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Scale and Normality Test

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
EL	3.63	1.037	1.00	5.00	-1.327	.187
GCB	3.54	.965	1.00	5.00	-.916	-.374
CP	3.56	1.002	1.00	5.00	-.992	-.414
GP	3.63	1.010			-1.141	.131

Table 2 shows EL: empowering leadership, GCB: green creative behavior, CP: customer pressure, GP: green passion. Some researchers assume that kurtosis and skewness values should be between -1.5 and +1.5 (Tabachnick et al., 2013). According to this assumption, it was determined that

the scales in the study exhibited a normal distribution. In the research, the mediating roles of customer pressures and green passion in the effect of empowering leadership by bank personnel on green creative behavior were evaluated. The multi-factor model of the research is shown below.

Figure 2. Model of Mediation Model



Item 4 in the empowering leadership scale, items 3 and 4 in the green creative behavior scale and item 2 in the green passion scale were removed from the model because these items affected the significance of the model. Internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were evaluated by testing the multi-factor model of the confirmatory factor analysis measurement and are expressed below.

Table 3. Results of Multi-Factor Measurement Model

Variable	Coefficients	Cronbach's Alpha	rho A	Reliability Value	
				CR	AVE
Empowering Leadership		0.800	0.817	0.882	0.715
EL1	0.906				
EL2	0.826				
EL3	0.801				
Green Creative Behavior		0.809	0.809	0.875	0.636
GCB1	0.772				
GCB2	0.806				
GCB5	0.825				
GCB6	0.785				

(Table 3 cont.)

Variable	Coefficients	Cronbach's Alpha	rho A	Reliability Value	
				CR	AVE
Customer Pressure		0.729	0.734	0.847	0.650
CP1	0.753				
CP2	0.855				
CP3	0.807				
Green Passion		0.762	0.765	0.863	0.678
GP1	0.858				
GP3	0.774				
GP4	0.837				

As a result of multivariate analyses, it was determined that the created model was internally consistent and accurately represented the concepts it intended to measure. Internal consistency coefficients, such as Cronbach's Alpha, rho A and CR and convergent validity indices, such as AVE, support the model's reliability. In addition, the fact that the factor loadings obtained in the pls-sem analysis were at the expected level confirms the structural validity of the model. In line with the criterion suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), the discriminant validity of the model was achieved. These findings demonstrate that the model possesses a theoretically and empirically solid structure, as per the validity and reliability criteria specified by Hair et al. (2014) and Hair, Ringle et. al. (2019). Table 9 presents the analysis results of the model regarding the Fornell and Larcker criterion.

Table 4. Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	Empowering Leadership	Green Creative Behavior	Customer Pressure	Green Passion
Empowering Leadership	0.846			
Customer Pressure	0.789	0.806		
Green Passion	0.702	0.776	0.824	
Green Creative Behavior	0.713	0.756	0.760	0.797

Analyses performed according to the Fornell and Larcker criterion show that the variables in the model are measured independently of each other and thus have discriminant validity. The Q² metric assessed the model's predictive efficacy. R² statistics quantified the variance explained by independent variables on the dependent variable. Standardized beta coefficients indicated the relative significance of the independent variables within the model. The VIF value was examined to detect the multicollinearity problem and the f² value expresses the magnitude of the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 5. Model Results

	VIF	R ²	Q ²	f ²	β	Standard Deviation	t	P
EL -> GCB	3.573	0.663	0.567	0.067	0.284	0.025	31.830	0.000
EL -> CP	1.000	0.602	0.599	1.516	0.776	0.028	27.631	0.000
MB -> GCB	2.657	0.819		0.167	0.387	0.054	7.172	0.000
EL -> GP	1.000	0.623	0.620	1.650	0.789	0.025	31.830	0.000
GP -> GCB	2.799			0.050	0.217	0.056	3.894	0.000
EL ->CP -> GCB					0.301	0.044	6.893	0.000
EL ->GP -> GCB					0.171	0.045	3.774	0.000

The R² values obtained in the research model indicate that 66.3% of the variance in empowering leadership among bank personnel and 60.2% of the variance in customer pressure are explained by green creative behavior. This finding reveals that the empowering leadership of bank personnel and customer pressure significantly affect their green creative behavior. The fact that the VIF values used to evaluate the linearity assumption of the model are below five indicates that there is no multicollinearity problem and that the model's estimates are reliable (Henseler et al., 2015). The fact that the Q² values are above 0.35 indicates that the model's predictive power on new data is high and supports the structural validity of the model (Hair et al., 2014). However, the f² values above 0.002 indicate that the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable is statistically significant (Hair et al., 2014).

It was determined that the empowering leadership of bank personnel has a positive and significant effect on green creative behavior ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.01$). According to this result, hypothesis H1 was accepted. It was determined that the empowering leadership of bank personnel has a substantial effect on customer pressure ($\beta = 0.776$, $p < 0.01$). It was determined that customer pressure on bank personnel has a significant effect on green creative behavior ($\beta = 0.387$, $p < 0.01$). It was determined that the empowering leadership of bank personnel has a partial mediating role in the relationship between customer pressure and green creative behavior ($\beta = 0.301$, $p < 0.01$) and hypothesis H2 was accepted. The significant effect of empowering leadership on green creative behavior, as shown in the first model, remains substantial when the customer pressure variable is added to the model, indicating that this variable plays a partial mediating role. Therefore, it was determined that customer pressure has a partial mediating role in the relationship between empowering leadership and green creative behavior.

When the mediation effect of green passion on the green creative behavior of bank personnel, empowered by leadership, was evaluated, it was determined that the leadership of bank personnel had a positive and significant effect on green creative behavior ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.01$). It was found that the empowering leadership of bank personnel had a positive and significant impact on green passion ($\beta = 0.789$, $p < 0.01$). It was found that the green passion of bank personnel had a positive and significant effect on green creative behavior ($\beta = 0.217$, $p < 0.01$). In the final stage of the mediation model, it was found that green passion played a partial mediating role in the effect of empowering leadership on bank personnel's green creative behavior ($\beta = 0.171$, $p < 0.01$) and thus hypothesis H3 was accepted. The first

model examines the significant effect of empowering leadership on green creative behavior among bank personnel. The fact that the green passion variable remained substantial when added to the model indicates that this variable has a partial mediating role.

5. CONCLUSION

The study assessed customer pressure and green passion as mediators between empowering leadership and green creative behavior. An online survey was conducted among 403 bank employees from Balıkesir Province and Bandırma District. Data analysis employed Partial Least Squares (PLS) based structural equation modeling. Results indicate a significant positive relationship between empowering leadership and the green creative behavior of bank personnel ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, hypothesis H1 received confirmation. This result aligns with previous research by Khattak et al. (2023), Badar et al. (2023), Edosomwan et al. (2023) and Zhang & Bartol (2010).

Additionally, empowering leadership has a significant influence on customer pressure ($\beta = 0.776$, $p < 0.01$). This aligns with the findings of Dong et al. (2015) and Namasivayam et al. (2014). Furthermore, customer pressure on bank personnel has a significant impact on green creative behavior ($\beta = 0.387$, $p < 0.01$). This result corroborates Cho & Yoo's (2021) and Khattak et al. (2022) studies. Additionally, customer pressure is found to partially mediate the relationship between empowering leadership and the green creative behavior of bank personnel ($\beta = 0.301$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting hypothesis H2. The integration of customer pressure within the model preserves the statistical significance of empowering leadership's effect on green creative behavior, demonstrating its partial mediating role.

It was determined that green passion has a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.01$) on the mediating effect of empowering leadership on the green creative behavior of bank employees. This result aligns with Elsaied (2022) and Hao et al.'s (2018) findings. Furthermore, the green passion of bank employees has a positive impact on their green creative behavior ($\beta = 0.217$, $p < 0.01$). This finding aligns with the similar causal relationship established in the research of Jia et al. (2018) and Shah et al. (2023). In the concluding phase of the mediation model, green passion was identified as a partial mediator between empowering leadership and the green creative behavior of bank employees ($\beta = 0.171$, $p < 0.01$), thereby affirming hypothesis H3. The initial model's significant effect of empowering leadership on green creative behavior remained, indicating a partial mediation effect when the green passion variable was added.

In previous studies, customer pressure has generally been considered an external, compelling factor influencing sustainability performance (Zhu & Sarkis, 2007; Gualandris & Kalchschmidt, 2014). However, its psychological impact on employees' green creative behavior at the individual level has been largely overlooked. Similarly, among the mechanisms explaining the relationship between empowering leadership and green creative behavior, variables such as organizational support (Mittal &

Dhar, 2016) or environmental values (Chen, Y. S. & Chang, C. H., 2013) have been examined more frequently; the impact of external social factors such as customer pressure on creative environmental behavior at the employee level has not been investigated in sufficient detail. Our study fills a significant gap in the current literature. Given the high level of customer contact and service orientation in the banking sector, it is essential to evaluate the impact of customer demands and expectations on employees' psychological processes (Luo et al., 2012). In this context, the study shows that customer pressure can play a mediating role in the behaviors of bank employees not only at the institutional level but also at the individual level.

The recommendations presented to managers within the framework of the results are as follows.

- An organizational culture fostering proactivity and creativity among bank staff is essential. Inclusion in decision-making and autonomy are vital for attaining sustainability objectives.
- Sustainability training should be planned and awareness initiatives implemented to enhance the environmental sensitivity of bank personnel.
- Monitoring customer expectations and analyzing the demand for environmentally friendly products and services is recommended.
- Mechanisms must be developed to facilitate the exchange of ideas with banking staff regarding sustainability targets.
- Leaders are expected to guide bank employees in adopting a culture of sustainability, promoting environmental awareness among all staff.

This study cannot be generalized, as it was conducted on a specific sample and sector. The study is being implemented in the banking sector and the results may differ when applied to other industries and with varying sample sizes.

Ethics committee approval for the study was obtained from the Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University Ethics Committee on December 12, 2023, with decision number 2023-10.

The authors declare that the study was conducted in accordance with research and publication ethics.

The authors confirm that no part of the study was generated, either wholly or in part, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools.

The authors declare that there are no financial conflicts of interest involving any institution, organization, or individual associated with this article. Additionally, there are no conflicts of interest among the authors.

The authors affirm that they contributed equally to all processes of the research.

REFERENCES

- Afsar, B., Badir, Y., & Kiani, U. S. (2016). Linking spiritual leadership and employee pro-environmental behavior: The influence of workplace spirituality, intrinsic motivation, and environmental passion. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 45, 79-88.

- Ahearne, M., Mathieu, J., & Rapp, A. (2005). Satış gücünüzü güçlendirmek mi güçlendirmemek mi? Liderlik güçlendirme davranışının müşteri memnuniyeti ve performansı üzerindeki etkisinin ampirik bir incelemesi. *Uygulamalı Psikoloji Dergisi*, 90(5), 945.
- Amundsen, S., & Martinsen, Ø. L. (2014). Empowering leadership: Construct clarification, conceptualization, and validation of a new scale. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(3), 487-511.
- Ateş, M. A., Bloemhof, J., Van Raaij, E. M. & Wynstra, F. (2012). Proactive environmental strategy in a supply chain context: The mediating role of investments. *International Journal of Production Research*, 50(4), 1079-1095.
- Badar, K., Kundi, Y. M., Siddiquei, A. N., & Abualigah, A. (2023). Linking environmentally-specific empowering leadership to hotel employees' green creativity: Understanding mechanisms and boundary conditions. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 33(3), 412-435.
- Bayrakdar, M. (2014). *Çalışanların liderlik özellikleri ile örgüte bağlılıkları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi*. [Unpublished master's thesis], Turkish Aeronautical Association University.
- Bernoff, J., & Schadler, T. (2010). Empowered. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(7/8), 94-101.
- Bolat, O. İ., Bolat, T., & Seymen, O. A. (2009). Güçlendirici lider davranışları ve örgütsel vatandaşlık davranışı arasındaki ilişkinin sosyal mübadele kuramından hareketle incelenmesi. *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 12(21), 215-239.
- Boselie, P., Dietz, G., & Boon, C. (2005). Commonalities and contradictions in HRM and performance research. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 15(3), 67-94.
- Boselli, A. M., Caravello, G. U. & Baroni, A. (2005). The upper mustang (Nepal) ecosystem: Population, water quality and tourism. *Aquatic Ecosystem Health & Management*, 8(3), 285-291.
- Bret Becton, J., Giles, W. F. & Schraeder, M. (2008). Evaluating and rewarding OCBs: Potential consequences of formally incorporating organisational citizenship behaviour in performance appraisal and reward systems. *Employee Relations*, 30(5), 494-514.
- Cevahir, H. (2004). *Güçlendirici liderlik davranışları ile örgütsel bağlılık ve iş tatmini arasındaki ilişki üzerine bir araştırma*, [Unpublished master's thesis], Gebze Technical University.
- Chavez, R., Yu, W., Feng, M., & Wiengarten, F. (2016). The effect of customer-centric green supply chain management on operational performance and customer satisfaction. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 25(3), 205-220.
- Chen, Y. S. (2008). The driver of green innovation and green image-green core competence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 81, 531-543.
- Chen, Y. S., & Chang, C. H. (2013). The determinants of green product development performance: Green dynamic capabilities, green transformational leadership, and green creativity. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 116(1), 107-119.
- Chen, Y. S., & Chang, K. C. (2013). The nonlinear effect of green innovation on the corporate competitive advantage. *Quality & Quantity*, 47, 271-286.
- Cho, M., & Yoo, J. J. E. (2021). Customer pressure and restaurant employee green creative behavior: Serial mediation effects of restaurant ethical standards and employee green passion. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33(12), 4505-4525.
- Clarkson, M. E. (1995). A stakeholder framework for analyzing and evaluating corporate social performance. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(1), 92-117.
- Colbert, B. A. (2004). The complex resource-based view: Implications for theory and practice in strategic human resource management. *Academy of Management Review*, 29(3), 341-358.
- Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review*, 13(3), 471-482.
- Delmas, M. A., & Montiel, I. (2007). The adoption of ISO 14001 within the supply chain: When are customer pressures effective?
- Doğan, M., & Sökmen, S. (2021). Turizm araştırmalarında sosyal değişim teorisi'nin çeyrek yüzyılı. *Türk Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5(2), 1220-1237.

- Dong, Y., Liao, H., Chuang, A., Zhou, J., & Campbell, E. M. (2015). Fostering employee service creativity: Joint effects of customer empowering behaviors and supervisory empowering leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 100*(5), 1364-1375.
- Edosomwan, H. S., Oguegbe, T. M., & Joe-Akunne, C. O. (2023). Workplace well-being in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria: Do employee green behavior, core self-evaluations and empowering leadership matter? *International Journal of Occupational Safety and Health, 13*(1), 97-107.
- Elsaied, M. M. (2022). The mechanism underlying the relationship between empowering leadership and work passion. *Human Systems Management, 41*(1), 59-72.
- Fernandez-Feijoo, B., Romero, S. & Ruiz, S. (2014). Effect of stakeholders' pressure on transparency of sustainability reports within the GRI framework. *Journal of Business Ethics, 122*, 53-63.
- Fornell, C. & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: Algebra and statistics. *Journal of Marketing Research, 18*(3), 382-388.
- Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., Wicks, A. C., Parmar, B. L. & De Colle, S. (2010). Stakeholder theory: The state of the art. *The Academy of Management Annals, 3*(1), 403-445.
- Gatersleben, B., Steg, L. & Vlek, C. (2002). Measurement and determinants of environmentally significant consumer behavior. *Environment and Behavior, 34*(3), 335-362.
- Gualandris, J., & Kalchschmidt, M. (2014). Customer pressure and innovativeness: Their role in sustainable supply chain management. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management, 20*(2), 92-103.
- Hair, Jr J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis*. Prentice Hall.
- Hair, Jr. J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M. & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review, 31*(1), 2-24.
- Hair, Jr J. F., Sarstedt, M., Hopkins, L. & Kuppelwieser, V. G. (2014). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM): An emerging tool in business research. *European Business Review, 26*(2), 106-121.
- Hao, P., He, W., & Long, L. R. (2018). Why and when empowering leadership has different effects on employee work performance: The pivotal roles of passion for work and role breadth self-efficacy. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 25*(1), 85-100.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M. & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A New criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of The Academy of Marketing Science, 43*, 115-135.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: Advancing conservation of resources theory. *Applied Psychology, 50*(3), 337-421.
- Hoe, V. C., Urquhart, D. M., Kelsall, H. L., Zamri, E. N., & Sim, M. R. (2018). Ergonomic interventions for preventing work-related musculoskeletal disorders of the upper limb and neck among office workers. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 10*, 1-12.
- Ilieska, K. (2013). Customer satisfaction index - as a base for strategic marketing management. *TEM Journal, 2*(4), 327-331.
- Islam, T., Khan, M. M., Ahmed, I., & Mahmood, K. (2021). Promoting in-role and extra-role green behavior through ethical leadership: Mediating role of green HRM and moderating role of individual green values. *International Journal of Manpower, 42*(6), 1102-1123.
- Jia, J., Liu, H., Chin, T., & Hu, D. (2018). The continuous mediating effects of GHRM on employees' green passion via transformational leadership and green creativity. *Sustainability, 10*(9), 32-37.
- Jiang, M., Wang, H., & Li, M. (2019). Linking empowering leadership and organizational citizenship behavior toward environment: The role of psychological ownership and future time perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 2612-2625.
- Kehoe, R. R., & Collins, C. J. (2017). Human resource management and unit performance in knowledge-intensive work. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 102*(8), 1222-1235.
- Khatoun, A., Rehman, S. U., Islam, T., & Ashraf, Y. (2022). Knowledge sharing through empowering leadership: The roles of psychological empowerment and learning goal orientation. *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication, 1*, 1-12.

- Khattak, M. A., Ahmad, F. & Khan, N. A. (2022). Do banks enjoy technology under competitive pressures? Cross-country evidence. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 1, 1-16.
- Khattak, M. A., Rehman, Z. U., & Hashmi, S. H. (2023). Role of empowering leadership in inducing employee green creative behavior in hotel and restaurant industry: a moderated-moderated mediation model. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 1, 1-32.
- Li, W., Bhutto, T. A., Xuhui, W., Maitlo, Q., Zafar, A. U., & Bhutto, N. A. (2020). Unlocking employees' green creativity: The effects of green transformational leadership, green intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 255, 120-129.
- Luo, X., Homburg, C., & Wieseke, J. (2012). Customer satisfaction, analyst stock recommendations, and firm value. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(2), 175-187.
- Mittal, S., & Dhar, R. L. (2016). Effect of green transformational leadership on green creativity: A study of tourist hotels. *Tourism Management*, 57, 118-127.
- Namasivayam, K., Guchait, P., & Lei, P. (2014). The influence of leader empowering behaviors and employee psychological empowerment on customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(1), 69-84.
- Purwanto, A., & Sudargini, Y. (2021). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis for social and management research: A literature review. *Journal of Industrial Engineering & Management Research*, 2(4), 114-123.
- Redelinghuys, K., Rothmann, S., & Botha, E. (2020). Outcomes of leader empowering behaviour in a retail organisation. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 51(1), 1-6.
- Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Mitchell, R., & Gudergan, S. P. (2020). Partial least squares structural equation modeling in HRM research. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(12), 1617-1643.
- Robertson, J. L., & Barling, J. (2013). Greening organizations through leaders' influence on employees' pro-environmental behaviors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34, 176-194.
- Ross, S. A. (1973). The economic theory of agency: The principal's problem. *The American Economic Review*, 63(2), 134-139.
- Sembiring, M. J., Eliyana, A., & Wibawa Ningrum, L. S. (2020). Effect of Workplace Spirituality on Pro-Environmental Behaviour Mediated by Environmental Passion. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, 11(11), 1282-1292.
- Setyaningrum, R. P., Kholid, M. N. & Susilo, P. (2023). Sustainable SMEs performance and green competitive advantage: The role of green creativity, business independence and green IT empowerment. *Sustainability*, 15(15), 1-11.
- Shafiq, A., Ahmed, M. U. & Mahmoodi, F. (2020). Impact of supply chain analytics and customer pressure for ethical conduct on socially responsible practices and performance: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 225, 107-121.
- Shah, S. H. A., Fahlevi, M., Rahman, E. Z., Akram, M., Jamshed, K., Aljuaid, M., & Abbas, J. (2023). Impact of green servant leadership in Pakistani small and medium enterprises: Bridging pro-environmental behaviour through environmental passion and climate for green creativity. *Sustainability*, 15(20), 147-159.
- Sharma, P. N., & Kirkman, B. L. (2015). Leveraging leaders: A literature review and future lines of inquiry for empowering leadership research. *Group & Organization Management*, 40(2), 193-237.
- Tabachnick, B. G., Fidell, L. S., & Ullman, J. B. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics* (Vol. 6, pp. 497-516). Pearson.
- Tian, G., & Zhang, Z. (2020). Linking empowering leadership to employee innovation: The mediating role of work engagement. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 48(10), 1-8.
- Turaga, R. M. R., Howarth, R. B., & Borsuk, M. E. (2010). Pro-environmental behavior: Rational choice meets moral motivation. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1185(1), 211-224.
- Vallerand, R. J. (2012). The role of passion in sustainable psychological well-being. *Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research and Practice*, 2(1), 1-21.

- Wang, S., De Pater, I. E., Yi, M., Zhang, Y., & Yang, T. P. (2022). Empowering leadership: Employee-related antecedents and consequences. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 39(2), 457-481.
- Wang, H., Zhang, Y., Li, P., & Henry, S. E. (2023). You raise me up and I reciprocate: linking empowering leadership to organizational citizenship behavior and unethical pro-organizational behavior. *Applied psychology*, 72(2), 718-742.
- Wen, J., Huang, S. S., & Teo, S. (2023). Effect of empowering leadership on work engagement via psychological empowerment: Moderation of cultural orientation. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 54, 88-97.
- Yen, Y. X. & Yen, S. Y. (2012). Top-management's role in adopting green purchasing standards in high-tech industrial firms. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(7), 951-959.
- Yue, T., Gao, C., Chen, F., Zhang, L., & Li, M. (2022). Can empowering leadership promote employees' pro-environmental behavior? Empirical analysis based on psychological distance. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 774-791.
- Yun, S., Cox, J., & Sims Jr, H. P. (2006). The forgotten follower: A contingency model of leadership and follower self-leadership. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(4), 374-388.
- Yüksel, A., Uçkun, S. & Uçkun, C. G. (2022). Çalışanların yeşil örgütsel davranışlarına ilişkin bir araştırma. *International Academic Social Resources Journal*, 7(43), 1380-1387.
- Zhang, X., & Bartol, K. M. (2010). Linking empowering leadership and employee creativity: The influence of psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and creative process engagement. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(1), 107-128.
- Zheng, J., Gu, Y., Zhang, Z., Xie, H., Li, P., & Li, H. (2023). The relationship between empowering leadership and project performance: A resource perspective. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, 30(7), 2969-2990.
- Zhu, Q. & Sarkis, J. (2007). The moderating effects of institutional pressures on emergent green supply chain practices and performance. *International Journal of Production Research*, 45(18-19), 4333-4355.