

Leading the green way: the role of green leadership and green organisational culture in modelling innovative behavior in the hotel industry

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine the influence of green leadership on employees' innovative work behaviour and investigate the moderating effect of green organizational culture within the hotel industry.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative, explanatory research design was adopted. Data was gathered from 395 hotel employees in Ghana and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings – The results show that both green leadership and green organizational culture positively and significantly predict innovative work behaviour. Furthermore, green organizational culture significantly strengthens the relationship between green leadership and employee innovative behaviour, demonstrating a meaningful moderation effect.

Practical implications – The findings highlight the need for hotel managers to embed sustainability into organizational values, mission and practices. Demonstrating a visible commitment to environmental stewardship and cultivating a strong green culture can enhance employees' willingness to generate and implement innovative sustainability-focused ideas.

Originality/value – To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is one of the premier empirical studies that reports the intricate relationship between green leadership, green organizational culture and innovative work behaviour as espoused in this study. This provides fresh insights into how cultural conditions amplify the effectiveness of green leadership in fostering sustainability-driven innovation. With this state in mind, this study fills in these gaps in the hotel industry.

Keywords Green leadership, Innovative work behaviour, Green organisational culture, Hotel industry

Paper type Research paper



1. Introduction

In an era marked by unprecedented environmental challenges, the role of leadership in steering the world towards a sustainable future has become paramount (Moşteanu, 2023). Green leadership, characterized by a commitment to environmental stewardship, has emerged as a crucial force in addressing pressing issues such as climate change, resource depletion and biodiversity loss (Hull *et al.*, 2020). This is particularly relevant in the hotel industry, which has a significant environmental footprint due to high energy consumption, waste generation and water usage. Green leadership in this sector involves integrating environmental responsibility into decision-making processes, adopting sustainable practices and fostering a culture of environmental consciousness (McDermott *et al.*, 2019). Leaders who prioritize sustainability recognize the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental systems, acknowledging that a healthy planet is fundamental to the well-being of societies (Fry and Egel, 2021). By adopting green leadership practices, hotels can mitigate their environmental impact and drive innovation, resilience and long-term prosperity. However, a significant problem arises in translating green leadership into innovative work behaviour among employees in the hotel industry (Kyei-Frimpong *et al.*, 2025). Despite the potential for green leadership to inspire creativity and innovation, many hotel employees are often constrained by rigid organizational structures and insufficient support for experimentation. This limits their ability to develop and implement innovative solutions to environmental challenges, undermining green leadership's full potential to foster a sustainable and innovative hotel industry (Xiao *et al.*, 2021; Lusiani *et al.*, 2020).

The drive for innovative work behaviour has become a cornerstone of success in today's dynamic business environment, particularly in the hotel industry, where adaptability and responsiveness to environmental concerns are increasingly critical (Alheet *et al.*, 2021). Innovation is widely acknowledged as a catalyst for growth and sustainability in organizations, fostering continuous improvement and enabling companies to adapt to changing environments and remain relevant in the face of evolving challenges (Mansoor *et al.*, 2021). Hotels that prioritize and encourage innovative work behaviour are better equipped to navigate uncertainties, capitalize on emerging opportunities and sustain a competitive advantage (Khairy *et al.*, 2023). Leadership commitment to innovation, establishing a supportive culture and providing resources for research and development are vital organizational factors (Donate and de Pablo, 2015). Leaders who champion environmental responsibility set the stage for a culture that values innovation, encouraging employees to explore creative solutions to complex challenges (Zhang and Ma, 2021). However, achieving this in the hotel industry can be challenging due to the traditional hierarchical structures that may stifle creativity and the experimentation necessary for innovation. Further, as the global call for sustainability intensifies, green leadership and innovation fusion emerge as a strategic imperative for organizations aspiring to thrive in a rapidly changing world. By its nature, green leadership encourages organizations to seek innovative solutions to address environmental challenges (Singh *et al.*, 2020). Yi *et al.* (2019) argue that effective green leaders recognize and reward innovative work behaviour. By incentivizing employees to contribute to sustainability initiatives, leaders reinforce the link between environmental responsibility and innovation (Yi *et al.*, 2019). Recognition programmes highlighting and celebrating eco-friendly innovations create a positive feedback loop, encouraging employees to continue thinking creatively and contributing to the organization's sustainability objectives (Kuo *et al.*, 2022).

Green organizational culture refers to the collective values, beliefs and practices within an organization that prioritize environmental sustainability (Shahzad *et al.*, 2023). It creates a supportive environment where employees feel encouraged to engage in behaviours that align with the organization's green objectives (Di Stefano *et al.*, 2019). In the hotel industry, a

strong green organizational culture can amplify the impact of green leadership by embedding sustainability into the organizational ethos and daily operations. This cultural foundation reinforces the importance of sustainability and fosters a conducive atmosphere for innovation (Shahzad *et al.*, 2023). When sustainability is ingrained in organizational values, employees are encouraged to think creatively about reducing waste, conserving energy and implementing eco-friendly practices in their daily tasks. This encouragement to innovate can lead to the development of new procedures, technologies and services that improve environmental performance and enhance overall operational efficiency (Chan and Hawkins, 2012). Additionally, when employees feel that their contributions are valued and that they are making a difference, they are more likely to take the initiative and propose new ideas. For example, hotel staff may develop new recycling methods or suggest innovative ways to reduce energy consumption, contributing to the hotel's sustainability goals (Shahzad *et al.*, 2023). However, studies examining the nexus between green organizational culture and innovative work behaviour in the hotel industry are rare. Furthermore, this study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature. While prior studies have examined the direct effects of green leadership on organizational outcomes, limited research has explored how broader organizational culture shapes or conditions this relationship (Chen *et al.*, 2018; Kim *et al.*, 2018).

Hence, green organizational culture was considered a moderator in this current study. Firstly, organizational culture significantly shapes employee behaviour and attitudes (Schein, 1990). Thus, a green organizational culture can enhance employees' identification with organizational goals, increasing their motivation to engage in innovative practices that support sustainability. Secondly, a supportive organizational culture can mitigate some barriers to innovation, such as fear of failure and resistance to change, by creating an environment that values and rewards creativity and experimentation (Cameron and Quinn, 2011). This makes it a critical factor in realizing the potential of green leadership to foster innovative work behaviour. Finally, a critical review of the extant hotel industry literature shows that sparse studies have examined the plausible moderating role of green organizational culture in the nexus between green leadership and innovative work behaviour (Ahmed *et al.*, 2021; Karatepe *et al.*, 2020; Hussein *et al.*, 2024). These studies highlight the importance of sustainability and leadership in fostering innovation, but often overlook the intricate dynamics of how green organizational culture might enhance or moderate this relationship, indicating a significant gap in the literature. Given the above, the study examined the nexus between green leadership and innovative work behaviour while assessing the moderating role of green organizational culture. Specifically, this current study sought to achieve these objectives:

- To examine the relationship between green leadership and innovative work behaviour.
- To determine the relationship between green organizational culture and innovative work behaviour.
- To ascertain whether green organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between green leadership and innovative work behaviour.

The contribution of this study lies in its potential to advance both theoretical understanding and practical applications within the hotel industry. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the burgeoning field of sustainability by highlighting the complex interplay between leadership, organizational culture and employee innovation. While existing research has acknowledged the importance of green leadership and sustainability practices, there has been limited exploration into how a supportive green organizational culture can amplify these effects. This contribution is particularly relevant as organizations increasingly

recognize the need for integrated approaches to manage environmental sustainability and drive competitive advantage through innovation. Practically, the findings of this study hold significant contributions for hotel managers and policymakers, as the hotel industry faces mounting pressure to reduce its environmental impact. Understanding the factors that promote sustainable practices and innovation becomes imperative. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 delves into the literature review, discussing the theory and reviewing the literature to develop hypotheses that underpin the conceptual model. Section 3 outlines the research methodology. Section 4 covers the data analysis, presenting the results and discussing their implications. Section 5 concludes the study, offering theoretical and practical implications, highlighting the study's limitations and providing suggestions for future research.

2. Theory and hypotheses development

2.1 Leader–member exchange theory

The leader–member exchange (LMX) theory posits that individuals within an organization vary in their receptivity to information, influence and direction from leaders compared to external sources (Chiu *et al.*, 2016). Those with higher-quality relationships with their leaders tend to be more receptive to leadership influence and guidance. High-quality leader–member relationships have been linked to numerous positive work-related outcomes, including heightened job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Martin *et al.*, 2016). This theory offers valuable insights into relationships between leaders and followers within organizational settings (Martin *et al.*, 2018). This socio-psychological approach emphasizes the significance of the quality of these relationships, categorizing them into two primary types: in-group and out-group exchanges. In-group exchanges represent robust relationships characterized by mutual trust, respect and reciprocal influence. Conversely, out-group exchanges are marked by lower quality, featuring minimal trust, limited communication and transactional interactions (Gooty and Yammarino, 2016).

Green leadership, focusing on environmental sustainability and ethical practices, is pivotal in shaping the quality of leader–member exchanges within organizations (Nawaz Khan, 2023). Leaders who exhibit green leadership behaviours, such as advocating for environmentally responsible practices, fostering a culture of sustainability and championing green initiatives, are likely to nurture positive relationships with their followers. Also, green leadership fosters a sense of shared purpose and identity among followers by emphasizing common goals related to sustainability and environmental protection (Nawaz Khan, 2023). Leaders who prioritize green initiatives often involve their followers in decision-making processes, seek their input on sustainability strategies and provide opportunities for participation in environmental projects (Kardoyo *et al.*, 2020).

The link between green leadership and innovative work behaviour can be explained through the lens of the LMX theory. Thus, in-group exchange relationships characterized by trust, collaboration and shared values provide fertile ground for fostering innovative behaviour among followers (Gooty and Yammarino, 2016). When employees feel valued, empowered and supported by their leaders, they are more inclined to engage in creative problem-solving, take initiative and explore novel ideas. Moreover, green leadership inspires followers to think creatively and proactively about sustainability challenges and opportunities within the organization (Kardoyo *et al.*, 2020). Leaders encouraging environmentally sustainable practices stimulate innovation by challenging the status quo, promoting experimentation and rewarding risk-taking behaviour, creating an organizational climate conducive to innovation.

2.2 Social identity theory

The social identity theory (SIT) posits that an individual's responses to their group's circumstances are contingent upon their perceptions of the prevailing social structure (Trepte and Loy, 2017). While legal frameworks, cultural norms and objective constraints may limit the avenues for social identity improvement, SIT emphasizes the subjective belief structures individuals hold regarding opportunities for change ("cognitive alternatives" to the status quo) and the legitimate motives for enhancing individual and group status (Hogg, 2016). Central to SIT is the notion that individuals derive a substantial portion of their identity from their groups, whether grounded in shared traits, interests or principles (Demirden, 2021). Within organizational settings, employees' identification with the prevailing organizational culture significantly influences their behaviours and attitudes (Scheeppers and Derks, 2016).

The concept of green organizational culture, which places paramount importance on principles such as environmental sustainability, eco-conscious practices and ethical stewardship, emerges as a pivotal group identity within the workplace. Individuals strongly identifying with this green ethos tend to align their actions and behaviours with its values and objectives. Moreover, drawing on this theory, alignment with a green organizational culture can bolster employees' self-esteem, sense of pride and an overarching sense of purpose, all of which serve as catalysts for fostering innovative work behaviour. Thus, employees who view their innovative contributions as integral to advancing the organization's environmental sustainability objectives are likelier to demonstrate heightened creativity, initiative and openness to experimenting with novel ideas and approaches.

2.3 Green leadership and innovative work behaviour

Green leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics between individuals and organizations, aiming to achieve sustainable objectives in environmental preservation. According to Boiral *et al.* (2014) and Luu (2019), green leadership encompasses the capacity of an individual to inspire and mobilize members within an organization towards engaging in environmentally beneficial endeavours. Innovative work behaviour encompasses activities ranging from incremental enhancements to the conception and implementation of groundbreaking ideas that fundamentally transform organizational processes or products (Medhaug and Mossige, 2020). Indeed, as posited by Boiral *et al.* (2009), the green leader is an innovator who champions the integration of green values into the organizational fabric and perceives this alignment as essential for attaining competitive advantages in the market. In addition, Li *et al.* (2019) found a significant relationship between transformational leadership, work engagement and innovative work behaviour, highlighting the pivotal role of trust in a leader. Similarly, Arici and Uysal (2022) unveiled compelling insights into the evolving research landscape surrounding the causal links between leadership dynamics and the promotion of green innovation and creativity. Moreover, Begum *et al.* (2022) contributed to the discourse on green leadership and innovation and brought to bear a substantial effect of green transformational leadership on green thinking, creative process engagement and, ultimately, green innovation. Likewise, Cai *et al.* (2020) unveiled the influence of environment-oriented leaders' voluntary green behaviour on their team's green product and process innovation. Given the above pieces of evidence espoused above and the LMX theory, the study hypothesizes that:

- H1. Green leadership has a positive and significant relationship with innovative work behaviour.

2.4 Green organizational culture and innovative work behaviour

Green organizational culture remains a subject of debate and evolution, with perceptions of its causes, effects and solutions varying among stakeholders (Imran *et al.*, 2021). According to Tahir *et al.* (2019), a strong environmental ethos embedded in the organizational culture becomes the driving force that shapes employees' perceptions and behaviours, influencing their attitudes towards sustainability. Siswanti and Muafi (2022) revealed compelling insights, indicating a significant positive impact of green organizational culture on innovative behaviour among employees within Batik SMEs. In a related vein, Imran *et al.* (2021) delved into the impact of green organizational culture on organizational performance, specifically focusing on the mediating role of green innovation, and found that green organizational culture emerged as a significant predictor of green innovation. Furthermore, Gürlek and Tuna (2018) elucidated a positive impact of green organizational culture on green innovation and competitive advantage, highlighting the strategic significance of fostering a culture of sustainability within organizations. Moreover, Jankelová *et al.* (2021) contend that the positive effect of diverse organizational cultures on innovative work behaviour highlights the importance of promoting a collaborative and inclusive work environment conducive to creativity and innovation. Given the above pieces of evidence espoused in the extant literature and insights from the social identity theory, the study hypothesizes that:

- H2. Green organizational culture has a positive and significant relationship with innovative work behaviour.

2.5 Moderating role of green organizational culture

Green organizational culture encompasses shared beliefs, norms and symbols related to environmental management, shaping the behaviours expected from individuals within the organization (Chang, 2015). A sustainability culture, therefore, involves shared assumptions and beliefs among organizational members regarding the importance of balancing environmental stewardship, economic viability and social equity. The symbolism associated with environmental management within a green organizational culture influences the perceptions and behaviours of organizational members (Umrani *et al.*, 2016), thus shaping the organization's approach to sustainability. To our knowledge, this is a premier study focusing on the plausible moderating role of green organizational culture on the relationship between green leadership and innovative work behaviour. Hence, pieces of evidence from other relevant studies are espoused. For instance, Wang *et al.* (2022) highlighted the pivotal role of organizational green culture in bolstering the relationship between green knowledge management and green innovation, underscoring the significance of fostering a culture that prioritizes sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Pham *et al.* (2018) found that green training and organizational culture positively influence organizational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE), with organizational culture moderating the effect of green training on OCBE, bringing to bear the importance of fostering a green organizational culture to enhance the effectiveness of green training initiatives. Moreover, Qu *et al.* (2022) revealed that green core competence significantly influences green innovation performance, with green organizational culture moderating the relationship between green absorptive capacity and green innovation, highlighting the pivotal role of organizational culture. More so, Ali *et al.* (2023) contend that green organizational culture positively moderates the relationship between green

competencies and corporate sustainability performance. Given the above pieces of evidence and insights from the social identity theory, the study hypothesizes that:

H3. Green organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between green leadership and innovative work behaviour.

2.6 Conceptual framework

Figure 1 displays the hypothesized relationship between green leadership, innovative work and green organizational leadership.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative approach and an explanatory research design to explain the relationships regarding the constructs under study. The use of explanatory design was inspired by the need to explain the relationship between variables and the cause and effect of the relationship (Yusfarto, 2023). The authors gathered data from employees of 25 hotels in the Central and Western Region of Ghana to test the aforementioned hypotheses after 45 hotels were contacted. This study used convenience and judgemental sampling techniques (Arnolds and Boshoff, 2002). Convenience sampling was used to select the hotels, as it facilitates timely responses compared to probability sampling techniques (Ayimey et al., 2020). This approach allowed researchers to consider the willingness and accessibility of the prospective hotels (Senbeto et al., 2023). Judgemental sampling was also applied, enabling researchers to select potential respondents based on their judgements about the study’s purpose (Tarka, 2017). These nonprobability sampling techniques enabled researchers to access suitable hotels and their employees, whose characteristics could not be quantified or identified *a priori*.

A total of 450 questionnaires were personally distributed to hotel employees, and 395 completed questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 87.8%. An overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the study indicates that the respondents were evenly distributed across genders, with 54.7% identified as male and 45.3% as female. In the case of the age of the respondents, the majority of respondents (41.9%) were below 30 years old, followed by 25.6% falling within the age group of 30–39 years. Subsequent age groups were represented in decreasing proportions, with 16.3% aged 40–49 years, 9.3% aged 50–59 years and 7.0% above 60 years. Regarding the respondents’ marital status, most were single (57.0%), while a significant portion were

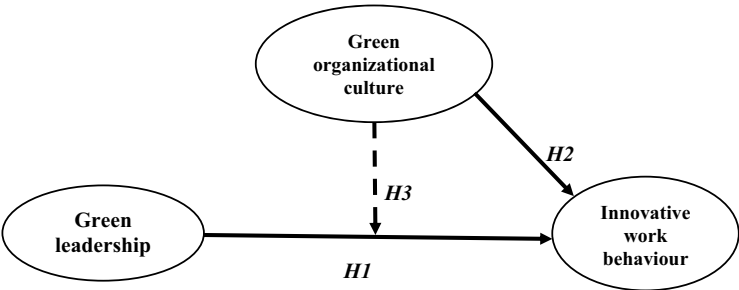


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Source: Developed by the researcher

married (41.9%). Only a small proportion (1.2%) identified as divorced. For the academic qualification of the respondents, the highest proportion (43.0%) held Diplomas or Higher National Diplomas (HND), followed by 33.7% holding Bachelor's degrees. A smaller percentage held Master's degrees (11.6%). Most respondents (52.3%) reported having 6–10 years of working experience. A smaller proportion had 11–15 years (16.3%), 16–20 years (15.1%), or more than 20 years of experience (10.5%). Additionally, 5.8% reported having 20 years or more of experience.

To control for common method variance, several critical procedural remedies were applied. Specifically, the author provided information about management support for employee participation, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality on the first page of the survey. Additionally, the authors informed the respondents that there were no right or wrong answers to the survey items.

3.1 Measures

The green leadership scale was adopted from an eight-item scale from Wang *et al.* (2023). Sample items include “*My leaders motivate employees with environmental programs*”. The response options ranged from 1 “*Strongly Disagree*” to 5 “*Strongly Agree*”. The innovative work behaviour scale is a three-dimensional measure consisting of idea generation (three items), idea promotion (three items) and idea realization (three items). Sample items include: “*I create new ideas for improvements*” (idea generation), “*I mobilize support for innovative ideas*” (idea promotion) and “*I transform innovative ideas into useful applications*” (idea realization). The response options ranged from 1 “*Never*” to 5 “*Always*”. Green organizational culture was adopted from a six-item scale developed and validated by Marshall *et al.* (2015). Sample items include “*My organization makes a concerted effort to make every employee understand the importance of environmental preservation*”. The response options ranged from 1 “*Strongly Disagree*” to 5 “*Strongly Agree*”.

3.2 Data analysis

The data gathered from the respondents were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28.0) and Hayes PROCESS macro for SPSS, respectively. Firstly, the authors conducted a preliminary assessment, including mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, reliability analysis and a bivariate correlation. Also, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to address the first and second objectives, while the final assessment was done to ascertain whether green organizational culture moderates the relationships between green leadership and innovative work behaviour.

4. Results

The results in Table 1 indicate a significant positive relationship between green leadership and innovative work behaviour ($r=0.174$, $p < 0.05$). In other words, green leadership

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis among the study's constructs

S/No.	Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3	SK	KURT
1	Green leadership	4.337	0.399	(0.975)			–0.637	1.458
2	Green organizational culture	4.502	0.291	0.073	(0.946)		–0.121	–0.184
3	Innovative work behaviour	4.012	1.510	0.174*	0.478**	(0.966)	0.873	–1.150

Source(s): Developed by the researcher

correlates positively and significantly with innovative work behaviour. In addition, green organizational culture positively and significantly correlates with innovative work behaviour ($r = 0.478, p < 0.01$). In other words, green organizational culture correlates positively and significantly with innovative work behaviour. Finally, the results revealed that green leadership does not significantly relate to green organizational culture ($r = 0.073, p > 0.05$).

4.1 Moderation analysis

The interaction effect of green organizational culture in the relationship between green leadership and innovative work behaviour was tested using the Hayes PROCESS macro. Green organizational culture served as the moderator; green leadership was the independent variable, while innovative work behaviour was the dependent variable.

This present study found that the influence of green leadership on innovative work behaviour was contingent upon the level of green organizational culture. Based on the findings presented in Table 2, it can be seen that it is only at low moderation that the association between green leadership and innovative work behaviour is significant ($b = 0.51, SE = 0.12, p < 0.001$). However, there was a non-significant impact of green organizational culture on the existing nexus between green leadership and innovative work behaviour at mid-levels as well as high levels of moderation.

4.2 Hypotheses testing

The results, as presented in Table 3, show that green leadership positively and significantly influences innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.471, p < 0.001$); hence, the hypothesis that green leadership positively and significantly influences innovative work behaviour (i.e. $H1$) is supported. This means that green leadership, which involves leaders promoting and

Table 2. Interaction/condition effect of the focal predictor at the values of the moderator

Levels of the moderator	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
13.62	0.51	0.12	4.11	0.00	0.26	0.75
4.50	0.05	0.07	0.72	0.47	-0.09	0.17
4.63	0.02	0.07	0.27	0.79	-0.12	0.16

Source(s): Developed by the researcher

Table 3. Regression analysis of green leadership and green organizational culture on innovative work behaviour

Constructs	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Sig.	R^2	F
	B	SE	Beta	t			
(Constant)	2.991	0.660		4.534	0.000	0.769	86.940
Green leadership	0.471	0.096	0.291	4.914	0.000		
Green organizational culture	0.612	0.074	1.391	8.231	0.000		

Note(s): Dependent variable: innovative work behaviour

Source(s): Developed by the researcher

modelling environmentally friendly practices and values, encourages hotel employees to think creatively and implement new ideas and solutions that support both environmental goals. In addition, the results revealed that green organizational culture positively and significantly influences innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$); hence, the hypothesis that green organizational culture positively and significantly influences innovative work behaviour (i.e. $H2$) is supported. This means a green organizational culture, characterized by shared values, beliefs and practices focused on environmental responsibility, encourages hotel employees to engage in innovative activities. Finally, the results of the study, as presented in Table 4, revealed that green organizational culture moderates the influence of green leadership on innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.3922$, $t = 4.9082$, $p < 0.001$), indicating support for $H3$ of this study (see Figure 2). This means that green leadership is more effective in fostering innovative work behaviour when a green organizational culture accompanies it, and the statistical results provide strong support for this claim.

Table 4. Interaction effect of green organizational culture in the nexus between green leadership and innovative work behaviour

Constructs	B	Boot SE	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	5.7008	0.1663	34.2727	0.0000	5.3723	6.0293
Green leadership	0.6085	0.0879	6.9224	0.0000	0.7821	0.4349
Green organizational culture	0.8918	0.0958	9.3112	0.0000	1.0810	0.7027
Int_1	0.3922	0.0799	4.9082	0.0000	0.2344	0.5499
	$R^2 = 0.5630$		$F = 68.7085$			

Source(s): Developed by the researcher

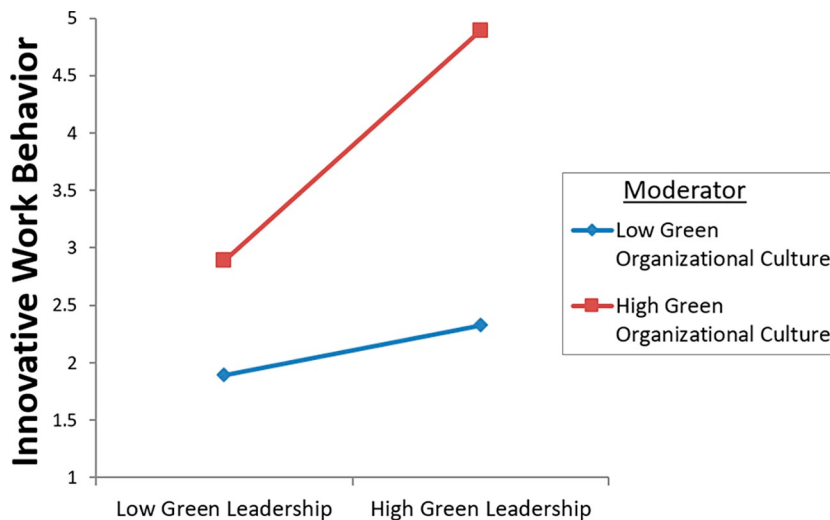


Figure 2. Interactional effect of green organizational culture in the relationship between green leadership and innovative work behaviour

Source: Developed by the researcher

4.3 Discussion

This study aimed to explore the intricate relationships between green leadership, green organizational culture and innovative work behaviour within the hotel industry in Ghana. By examining these relationships, the study sought to address gaps in the current literature and provide a deeper understanding of how environmental sustainability practices within organizations can drive employee innovation. The findings reveal significant interactions between green leadership and innovative work behaviour, moderated by green organizational culture, highlighting the critical role that organizational culture plays in enhancing the effectiveness of green leadership.

The study results show that green leadership positively and significantly influences innovative work behaviour, indicating support for *H1*. These findings suggest that hotels with leaders who emphasize and actively promote environmental sustainability will likely see their employees engage more in innovative behaviours. This means that employees in such hotels are more inclined to develop new ideas, implement creative solutions and contribute to the hotel's sustainability goals through innovative practices. Theoretically, these results support the LMX theory, which means that leaders who prioritize green initiatives and model environmentally sustainable behaviour set a clear example for their employees. Thus, employees who perceive their leaders as genuinely committed to green practices are more likely to feel valued and supported. This sense of support and alignment with the organization's values enhances the leader-member exchange quality. Employees in high-quality LMX relationships are more likely to reciprocate by engaging in positive behaviours, including innovative work behaviour. Empirically, the study's findings corroborate the perspective of [Boiral et al. \(2014\)](#) and [Luu \(2019\)](#), who found that green leadership positively influences innovative work behaviour, reinforcing that leaders who emphasize environmental sustainability can drive creativity and innovation among their employees. Additionally, the study supports [Boiral et al. \(2009\)](#) assertion that green leaders act as innovators who integrate green values into the organizational fabric. Thus, green leaders encourage employees to engage in innovative practices that align with the organization's sustainability goals by fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. Furthermore, the study aligns with the insights of [Arici and Uysal \(2022\)](#), who emphasize the evolving understanding of how leadership dynamics promote green innovation and creativity. This provides empirical evidence that green leadership fosters individual innovative behaviours and cultivates an organizational culture that supports green innovation. The substantial influence of green transformational leadership on green thinking and creative process engagement, as highlighted by [Begum et al. \(2022\)](#), is also reflected in the study's findings. This study shows that green leadership creates an environment where innovative work behaviour can flourish, supporting the link between green leadership and green innovation.

Green organizational culture positively and significantly influences innovative work behaviour, supporting *H2* of the study. This means that when hotels cultivate a culture that prioritizes environmental sustainability and green practices, this cultural orientation significantly encourages employees to engage in innovative behaviours. In other words, a green organizational culture creates an environment that fosters creativity and the development of new ideas among employees. Theoretically, these findings draw on the social identity theory and posit that when a hotel fosters a green organizational culture, it creates a shared set of values and a common purpose among its employees. This shared identity enhances the hotel employees' sense of belonging and aligns their personal goals with the organization's sustainability objectives. As the hotel employees identify with the green values of their organization, they are more likely to internalize these values, which, in turn,

influence their innovative behaviours. Hence, hotel employees who see themselves as part of a green organization are motivated to act in ways that support and enhance this identity, including engaging in innovative work behaviours that contribute to sustainability. Empirically, the study's findings corroborate the perspective of [Imran et al. \(2021\)](#) by showing how a green organizational culture can align employees' values with the organization's environmental goals, motivating them to engage in innovative practices that support these objectives. [Siswanti and Muafi \(2022\)](#) provide further evidence that aligns with the current study's results, indicating that employees are more likely to exhibit innovative behaviours when an organization's culture emphasizes environmental sustainability. [Imran et al. \(2021\)](#) findings suggest that green organizational culture is a significant predictor of green innovation, which aligns with this study's results by highlighting the importance of fostering a culture of sustainability to drive innovation. Furthermore, [Gürlek and Tuna \(2018\)](#) findings are consistent with this view, demonstrating how a green organizational culture can enhance innovative work behaviour, ultimately contributing to an organization's competitiveness through continuous improvement and creative solutions. Additionally, [Jankelová et al. \(2021\)](#) highlighted the positive effect of diverse organizational cultures on innovative work behaviour, emphasizing the importance of a collaborative and inclusive work environment. While their focus was on diversity in organizational culture, the underlying principle that a supportive and inclusive culture fosters innovation aligns with the current study's findings.

The study's results revealed that green organizational culture significantly moderates the influence of green leadership on innovative work behaviour, lending support for *H3* of this study. These results indicate that while green leadership can encourage employees to engage in innovative behaviours, its effectiveness is significantly enhanced when it is supported by a hotel organizational culture that prioritizes and values environmental sustainability. A green organizational culture provides the context and reinforcement to make green leadership more impactful. For instance, in a hotel with a strong green organizational culture, employees are inspired by their leaders' commitment towards sustainability and find their innovative efforts supported and appreciated by the broader organizational values and practices. This alignment creates a more cohesive and encouraging environment for innovation. Employees are more likely to take risks, propose new ideas and engage in creative problem-solving when they see that their leaders and the organizational culture support such behaviours. Theoretically, these findings support social identity theory and posit that green leadership represents a form of organizational leadership that prioritizes and models environmental sustainability. Thus, when employees identify with their leaders committed to green practices, they are likely to internalize these values. However, the extent to which this identification translates into innovative work behaviour is significantly enhanced when the broader organizational culture prioritizes environmental sustainability. Empirically, these results find support with [Wang et al. \(2022\)](#), who highlighted the pivotal role of organizational green culture in enhancing the relationship between green knowledge management and green innovation. Similarly, [Long et al. \(2023\)](#) findings support the broader notion that organizational culture is crucial in moderating the effects of various initiatives, echoing the moderating role of green culture, as found in the present study. In addition, [Pham et al. \(2018\)](#) parallel the current study's results by emphasizing the importance of an organizational culture that supports sustainability to enhance the effectiveness of specific green initiatives, such as leadership or training. Furthermore, [Qu et al. \(2022\)](#) align closely with the present study's findings, highlighting how a green organizational culture can strengthen the link between green-oriented capabilities and innovative outcomes. Moreover, [Ali et al. \(2023\)](#) reinforce the current study's conclusion that a supportive green culture enhances the effectiveness of green leadership, leading to better innovative work behaviour and overall sustainability performance.

5. Conclusion

The culmination of research presented in this study elucidates the intricate dynamics between green leadership, green organizational culture and innovative work behaviour in the hotel industry. This empirical study highlights the pivotal role of fostering a green organizational culture in driving innovative work behaviour within hotels. The results unequivocally demonstrate that green organizational culture is a linchpin for driving innovative work behaviour within hotels. Thus, hotels can cultivate an environment conducive to creativity, collaboration and problem-solving to address sustainability challenges by instilling a culture prioritizing sustainability and environmental stewardship. As such, hotels must prioritize developing and maintaining a green, solid organizational culture. This entails aligning leadership values, organizational practices and employee behaviours with sustainability goals. In so doing, hotels can drive innovation and contribute positively to environmental conservation and societal well-being, thus fostering a more sustainable future.

5.1 Theoretical implications

Our study's findings deepen our theoretical understanding of how environmental sustainability is actually cultivated and sustained within service-based organizations such as hotels. By demonstrating that green leadership significantly enhances innovative work behaviour, the study shows why leadership is central to translating sustainability intentions into employee-driven innovation. In other words, it clarifies that green initiatives do not gain traction merely by being mandated, as they require leaders who model and reinforce environmentally responsible behaviours to stimulate meaningful employee engagement.

Moreover, the finding that green organizational culture directly promotes innovative work behaviour explains how hotels can create internal environments that naturally support creativity, problem-solving and sustainability-oriented improvements. This strengthens theoretical arguments that organizational culture is not just a background condition but an active mechanism that shapes employees' willingness to innovate.

The moderating role of green organizational culture further advances theory by revealing when and under what conditions green leadership is most effective. Specifically, it shows that leadership alone is insufficient, as its impact becomes stronger within a supportive cultural environment. This interplay between leadership and culture offers an important theoretical insight: sustainability-driven innovation is a systemic phenomenon, not an individual one.

Taken together, these contributions extend the emerging discourse on green leadership in the hotel industry, particularly in the understudied Ghanaian context, by showing why leadership and culture must be considered jointly rather than separately. Our study ultimately demonstrates that cultivating a green organizational culture is not just a moral or operational decision but a strategic necessity that enhances the effectiveness of green leadership and drives employee innovation. This provides scholars with a richer, more integrated understanding of how environmental sustainability can become embedded in organizational practice and competitive strategy.

5.2 Implications for practice

Our study's findings provide clear, evidence-based guidance for hotel managers on how to translate sustainability ambitions into measurable improvements in employee innovation and organizational performance. The results show that managers who intentionally integrate green initiatives into daily operations through clear sustainability goals, consistent communication and visible leadership behaviours create an environment where employees feel motivated and equipped to develop new ideas that reduce costs, enhance efficiency and

strengthen the hotel's competitive advantage. This means managers are not just promoting environmental responsibility, as they are unlocking a practical pathway for boosting innovation and service quality.

The study further demonstrates that cultivating a green organizational culture is not simply a symbolic gesture but a strategic move that directly encourages employees to generate and implement creative solutions. When sustainability becomes embedded in values, routines and decision-making, employees become more proactive, resourceful and collaborative. This matters because hotels that institutionalize green culture can achieve operational improvements such as reduced waste, lower energy costs and enhanced customer satisfaction while also positioning themselves as sustainable market leaders.

Importantly, the finding that green culture strengthens the impact of green leadership tells managers why they must prioritize cultural alignment. Leadership alone cannot drive innovation unless the underlying culture supports it. This insight helps managers understand that building a green culture is not optional; it is a necessary condition for sustainability initiatives to succeed. When leaders model green behaviour within a supportive cultural context, employees are far more likely to translate environmental goals into innovative action.

5.3 Suggestions for future studies

Also, this study, just like any other study, is not exempt from limitations. As such, future researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to track the evolution of green organizational culture and its impact on sustainable innovation over time. Longitudinal research designs would explore how organizational culture changes in response to leadership interventions and external environmental factors and how these changes influence innovation outcomes. Moreover, future studies can use qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews and case studies, to provide rich insights into how green organizational culture influences innovative work behaviour, as qualitative approaches would enable researchers to capture organizational members' lived experiences and perceptions, providing a deeper understanding and context to quantitative findings.

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