

# Green-Oriented Leadership and Employees' Green Behaviour in Manufacturing Industries

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined how green-oriented leadership impact on employees' green behavior in manufacturing industries. It specifically investigated green transactional and green transformational leadership in Unilever Nigeria Plc, Agbara, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study employed survey research design and comprised of the entire members of staff of Unilever Nigeria Plc, Agbara which consisted of 630 employees. Census technique was employed for the study to avoid sampling bias and ensure complete accuracy. Data were gathered from primary source with the use of questionnaire as a means of gathering data. The instruments' reliability and validity were determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics and component factor analysis respectively. Multiple linear regression was utilized with the aid of SPSS version 26 to evaluate the inferential statistics of the data. Based on the findings of the study, there is a statistically significant association between employees' behaviors and both green transactional and green transformational leadership styles in Unilever Nigeria Plc., Agbara, Ogun State, Nigeria. It was concluded that green-oriented leadership positively and significantly influence employees' green behavior. In order to promote environmentally conscious employees' behavior, the study recommended that the management of Unilever Nigeria Plc., Agbara, Ogun State, Nigeria, should further improve on their green transformational and green transactional leadership styles.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Employees, Green Behaviour, Transactional Leadership and Transformational Leadership

## INTRODUCTION

Organizations globally over the past few decades, have been facing two biggest issues including reducing environmental degradation and improving environmental quality (Gibb et al., 2020). In the modern age of ecological awareness and global sustainability, promoting green practices in the manufacturing industry has evolved from a commendable aspiration to an imperative for responsible corporate citizenship (Chen & Zhang, 2024). As climate changes and ecological degradation intensifies, businesses worldwide are under mounting pressure to adopt sustainable operations. As a result, green behavior, a method of employing sustainable and ecologically sound methods and systems, has become increasingly important in organizational procedures to minimize their negative environmental impacts (Gyensare et al., 2024). This green behavior can be influenced by factors including environmental knowledge, concern, motivation and importantly green leadership styles (Ahmed et al., 2020; Cai et al., 2020). The behaviours and attributes of a leader have a huge influence on how their followers behave in any kind of organizational context (Cahyadi et al., 2023). Green leadership is not just about supporting environmental policies; it also involves how organization members behave in support of such goals. Despite an increasing size of study on different leadership styles and employee green behavior, there is still a void in the literature about whether green transformational leadership and green transactional leadership can encourage employee green behavior in Nigerian manufacturing sector (Tang et al., 2023; Mohammad et al., 2021). To fill this gap, the study broadens green transformational and green transactional leadership and investigates their influence on employees' green behavior. The study, therefore, posits these questions:

RQ1: How does green transformational leadership influence the employees' green behavior in Nigerian manufacturing industries?

RQ2: What is the influence of green transactional leadership on employees' green behavior in Nigerian manufacturing industries?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Green Leadership

Green leadership is the capability of an individualized' compelling leadership to persuade and inspire others to involve in ecologically responsible activities (Gultom, 2022). In the opinion of Arici and Uysal (2022), green leadership includes making decisions with the environment in mind. Green leadership has the power to encourage followers to act sustainably to further the cause of sustainable development and to uphold civic ideals while doing their duties. Green leaders' model pro-environmental conduct, disseminate sustainability standards and concepts to their followers, and encourage observational learning about green views and postures. Green leaders lead by example by taking social responsibility and environmental stewardship seriously. Green workplace practices are encouraged by having green role models.

### Green Transformational Leadership

Green Transformational Leadership (GTL) is a fundamental shift in leadership approaches that prioritizes the incorporation of environmental principles into corporate initiatives. GTL, a form of transformational leadership, encourages employees to emphasize sustainability goals, adopt eco-friendly practices, and provide solutions with little environmental impact (Sanchez-Garcia et al., 2024). This leadership style is characterized by an articulate plan for the future, active employee engagement, and a collaborative culture that fosters green projects (Sidney et al., 2022). Empirical researches have shown that GTL has an impact on influencing environmentally conscious actions and promoting green innovation, underlining its potential as a foundation for including sustainable practices in organizational procedures (Suliman et al., 2023; Abdurachman et al., 2023).

Benevene and Buonomo (2020); Ren et al., (2018) opine that the actions of leaders whose primary objective is to provide an apparent inspiration and image for inspiring and assisting their staff in achieving the organizational green goals is known as "green transformational leadership." Transformational leaders facilitate employees' focus shift toward objectives that support long-term organizational development, allowing subordinates to embrace their ideas (Asrofi et al., 2020). They motivate their teams to exert greater effort and engage in innovative thinking (Liao, 2024). Begum et al., (2022) demonstrated that green transformational leaders encourage employees to generate environmentally friendly ideas (green creative behavior). They stimulate their staff members to become knowledgeable about environmental issues and to participate in eco-friendly processes, activities, and behaviors in order to increase an organizational ecological performance (Ren et al., 2021). Moreover, they attempt to instill in their followers the values of conserving the environment within an organization by encouraging environmentally friendly behaviors and attitudes (Norton et al. 2015; Rueperk et al., 2016).

### Green Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership happens when a leader approaches their followers with the intention of exchanging something valuable (Habib & Kiyani, 2022). Transactional leadership, which emphasizes clear processes, goal-setting, and performance tracking, offers the foundation for introducing and upholding green practices (Habib, 2023). Transactional leadership enables organizations to set environmental policies, maintain conformity to green standards, and manage the daily operation aspects related to sustainable practices. The style of transactional leadership is focused on tasks, emphasizing performance through incentives, monitoring, and remedial actions. It may be combined with punishment and contingent incentives, which are regarded as the basis of performance by such administration (AlNuaimi et al., 2021). Transactional leadership involves trading relationships existing between leaders and subordinates in order for the subsidiary to receive pay and status in return for obeying the leader's orders. Green transactional leadership is a leadership style that focuses on achieving copious business goals and objectives while promoting sustainable environmental methods. Green transactional leaders use this technique to motivate employees to achieve specified goals through a system of incentives and punishments. Leaders encourage environmentally responsible behavior that aligns with social responsibility and environmental planning and management (Daouk et al., 2021).

## Employees' Green Behaviour

Employee Green conduct (EGB) is a workplace conduct that employees engage in in order to preserve the environment and advance the organization's long-term sustainability (Rubel et al., 2020). Some scholars regard green behaviour on the part of employees as a component of human resource management practices that help firms green their workforce (Ren et al., 2021). In the opinion of Su and Swanson (2019), employee green behavior is readiness to take environmentally responsible initiatives. The term "employee green behavior" describes actions taken by staff members in the workplace that promote environmental sustainability (Norton et al., 2017). Examples of these actions include shutting off lights, offering guidance on environmental protection, and being involved in environmental protection initiatives. According to Xing and Starik (2017), the organization's leader serves as its moral center and source of guidance for all members. When the leader takes the initiative to mentor the subordinates, encourages them to safeguard the environment internally, and accepts recommendations and viewpoints that diverge from their own, the subordinates will be more actively devoted to the organization's green practices.

## Underpinning Theories

A number of hypotheses have been created and put out in an effort to improve the understanding of how green leadership practices impact on employees' green behavior. However, the study rests on transformational leadership and social identity theories.

### Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory provides the basis for comprehending green transformational leadership (GTL). According to this theory, transformational leaders motivate and encourage people by communicating an appealing vision, building trust, and promoting innovative and proactive behaviors (Sidney et al., 2022). In the context of GTL, leaders apply these concepts to promote sustainability by incorporating environmental goals into organizational plans and acting as role models for green behaviours (Sun et al., 2022; Abdurachman et al., 2023). People are empowered by transformational leaders to participate fully in green activities beyond their immediate duties, resulting in improved organizational and environmental performance (Priyadarshini et al., 2023). According to this viewpoint (Bass, 2000 referenced in Ewell, 2018 and Getachew & Erhua, 2018), idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, personalized concern, and inspirational motivation are necessary for effective leadership. Individualized consideration is defined by a number of scholars, Ewell (2018) and Getachew and Erhua (2018), as the act of paying close advertence to each follower's requirements to be able to promote their growth and development on a personal and professional level (Bass, 2000). The purpose of intellectual stimulation is to motivate subordinates to approach assignments creatively and innovatively. Inspirational leaders encourage and inspire their followers by praising them for their efforts and posing challenges for them (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Idealized influence is the state in which followers of transformational leaders connect with an elevated level of motivation and excitement to satisfy the desires of a leader they regard, respect, and admire (Bass, 2000). This occurs when these leaders operate as examples for their subordinates. Others are motivated "to want to change, to improve, and to be led" by this kind of leadership (Hall, 2002 cited in Ewell, 2018). It also demonstrates a high degree of moral and ethical standards.

### Social Identity Theory

By emphasizing the significance of group identification in influencing employee behavior, social identity theory offers a useful perspective on how GTL fosters GEB. Employees draw a part of their identity from their employer, and leaders who support environmental ideals increase employees' alignment with a common green identity (Abdurachman et al., 2023). This sense of belonging motivates employees to act in ways which mirror the organization's commitment to sustainability, resulting in a common culture of environmental responsibility (Cahyadi et al., 2023; Hoang et al., 2024). Leaders that prioritize sustainability as a fundamental corporate value effectively incorporate environmental goals into the employees' identity, boosting systemic engagement and commitment to green efforts (Dahinine et al., 2024). Through this viewpoint, GTL not merely encourages employees, but also motivates and instills eco-behavioral intervention throughout the workforce.

Recent research has underlined the importance of green transformational leadership in enhancing employee performance, productivity, and workplace sustainability (Al-Romeedy & El-Sisib, 2024; Lathabhavan & Kaur, 2023).

Su and Hahn (2025) revealed that green transformational leadership improves employee green performance in enterprises by moderating the variables moral reflectiveness and green craftsmanship. Chen and Wu (2022) discovered that transformational leadership may foster a high-quality exchange connection with subordinates by showing caring, trust, and support directly. Kalsoom, Khan, and Zubair (2018) looked into how worker performance was affected by transactional and transformational leadership: A Case Study of Pakistan's FMCG Sector. 318 employees' data were collected for the study. Both Pearson correlation and linear regression analysis were applied to the collected data in order to determine the predictor's effect on employees' performance. The study discovered that although worker performance and leadership ideologies are positively correlated, worker performance and the transactional leadership style are positively correlated to a notably high degree. Marcus et al. (2017) looked into the connection between leadership philosophies and employee performance in Nigerian colleges. The study used primary and secondary data, respectively, by conducting surveys and conducting a literature review. The study found that staff performance, needs, and goals are impacted by a leader's style.

Widayanti and Putranto (2015) examined the effect of transactional and transformational leadership philosophies on worker performance at PT.TX Bandung, Indonesia. The researcher employed 92 people as the sample size. This study set out to ascertain the relevance of the link between two leadership variables: transformational and transactional leadership and employee performance. For this inquiry, both primary and secondary data were employed. The study collected primary data using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which is based on the Slovin Theory approach. Secondary data was acquired via the employee performance review conducted in-office. To evaluate the quality of the data, validity and reliability tests were used. Multiple regression analysis is used to determine the link since the correlation includes a large number of independent variables. Prior to performing multiple regression analysis, the data had to pass conventional assumption tests including the autocorrelation, heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity, and normality tests. The findings demonstrated the favorable relationship between the leadership philosophies of transformational and transactional leadership and how they affect employee performance, either simultaneously or partially.

## METHODOLOGY

The study examined the influence of green-oriented leadership on employees' behavior in manufacturing industries. It specifically investigated the influence of green transactional and green transformational leadership in Unilever Nigeria Plc, Agbara, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study utilized survey research design. The study comprised of the entire members of staff of Unilever Nigeria Plc, Agbara which consisted of 630 employees. Census sampling technique was employed for the study to avoid sampling bias and ensure complete accuracy. Data were gathered from primary source with the use of questionnaire as data collection instrument. The instruments' reliability and validity were determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics and component factor analysis respectively. Multiple linear regression was utilized with the aid of SPSS version 26 to evaluate the inferential statistics of the data.

The model used in the analysis is as follows:

$$EGB = f(GOL)$$

$$= f(GTFL, GTNL)$$

$$EGB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GTFL + \beta_2 GTNL + e_t$$

Where:

EGB = Employee Green Behaviour

GOL= Green-Oriented Leadership

GTFL = Green Transformational Leadership

GTNL = Green Transactional Leadership

$e_t$  = Error Term

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2$  = Co-efficient of the Variables

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table I: Reliability Statistics**

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha (Standardized Items)	Number of Items
GTFL	0.771	0.772	15
GTNL	0.758	0.759	15
EGB	0.755	0.756	15

Source: Field Survey, 2025 using SPSS Version 26

Table I shows that the study's instrument reliability statistics which were assessed to be  $\alpha=.771, .758$  &  $.755$  respectively are above  $.70$  threshold. This indicates that the instruments are reliable.

**Table II: Descriptive Statistics**

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
EGB	12.4222	2.91362	630
GTFL	12.4429	2.93313	630
GTNL	12.4524	2.92026	630

Source: Field Survey, 2025 using SPSS Version 26

The mean values and standard deviation of the study's sample are presented in Table II. Employee Green Behaviour (EGB), Green Transformational Leadership (GTFL) and Green Transactional Leadership (GTNL) have mean values and standard deviation of 12.4222, 12.4429 & 12.4524 and 2.91362, 2.93313 & 2.92026 respectively.

**Table III: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.916 <sup>a</sup>	.840	.839	1.16769	2.075

Source: Field Survey, 2025 using SPSS Version 26

Table III reveals R-Square estimate of 84% ( $R^2 = .840$ ). The data proposed that 84% overall variance of the dependent variable, Employee Green Behavior (EGB) is accounted for by the independent variables: Green Transformational Leadership (GTFL) and Green Transactional Leadership (GTNL)

**Table IV: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4484.773	2	2242.387	1644.579	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	854.916	627	1.364		
	Total	5339.689	629			

**Source: Field Survey, 2025 using SPSS Version 26**

Table IV depicts the joint significant association of the independent as well as the dependent variables. The null hypothesis, stating that there is no statistically significant association between the dependent variable, Employee Green Behavior (EGB), and the independent variables, Green Transformational Leadership (GTFL) and Green Transactional Leadership (GTNL), is rejected at a 5% level by considering the probability value of the F-Statistics, that reveals a P-Value of less than 5% ( $2/627 = 854.916, P < 0.05$ ).

**Table V: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.742	.209		3.550	.000
GTFL	.414	.035	.416	11.864	.000
GTNL	.525	.035	.526	14.986	.000

**Source: Field Survey, 2025 using SPSS Version 26**

Table V shows the P-value of the t-statistics ( $\beta = .416, t = 11.864, p < .05; \beta = .526, t = 14.986, p < .05$ ) indicating that the P-values are less than 5%, this denotes that:

- Employee green behavior (EGB) and green transformational leadership (GTFL) significantly correlate, and this null hypothesis is rejected at a 5% significant level. The alternative is accepted at a 95% confidence interval.
- The alternative hypothesis, that there is significant effect of Green Transactional Leadership (GTNL) on Employee Green Behavior (EGB) is accepted at 5% significant level, with a 95% confidence interval.
- Employee green behavior increases by 0.414 for every unit increase in green transformational leadership style.
- Employee green behavior increases by 0.525 units for every unit rise in green transactional leadership style.

**CONCLUSION**

This study found that, in Nigerian manufacturing industries, both green transformational and green transactional leadership styles have significant association with green employee behavior. Employee green behavior in Nigeria has been found to be strongly predicted by both green transformational and green transactional leadership styles. Therefore, it was determined that employee green behavior is positively and significantly impacted by both green transformational leadership style and green transactional leadership style.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, it was suggested that in order to encourage more environmentally conscious behavior among employees, the manufacturing sector should strengthen its green transformational and green transactional leadership practices.

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