

Environmental-Specific Servant Leadership and Organizational Environmental Citizenship Behavior: The Mediating Role of Harmonious Environmental Passion and Moderating Role of Gender

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Activities within the tourism industry contribute to environmental issues, including climate change, resource depletion, emission of pollutants impacting air and water quality, and generation of sound and light pollution. Furthermore, these actions can lead to species extinction. Leadership has been identified as a key factor in enhancing green performance both at the individual and organizational levels. Our objective is to elucidate the mechanisms and contextual limitations influencing the correlation between environmental-specific servant leadership and organizational environmental citizenship behavior, utilizing insights from the conservation of resource theory. The suggested connections were explored through the acquisition of data via a survey conducted among 300 employees and their supervisors employed across diverse organizations within the hospitality and tourism sectors. The data underwent analysis using PLS-SEM, and the empirical findings substantiated that the relationship between environmental-specific servant leadership and organizational environmental citizenship behavior is mediated by harmonious environmental passion. These findings contribute to the conservation of resource theory.

1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality sector has come under scrutiny for its significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, primarily due to its carbon-intensive operations (Lenzen et al., 2018). However, businesses in this industry need to implement eco-friendly and sustainable policies and practices to reduce their carbon footprint (Wells et al., 2015; Moshood et al., 2021). In addition to the prominent emphasis on continually improving ecological efficiency and sustainability practices within the hospitality sector (Zientara & Zamojska, 2018) scholars in hospitality and tourism have recently shifted significant focus towards studying the eco-friendly behaviors and attitudes of employees. This increased focus stems from acknowledging employees as essential pillars for successfully implementing environmentally friendly policies (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Rayner & Morgan, 2018; Robertson & Barling, 2013). Furthermore, scholarly perspectives, as highlighted by (Luu, 2019) have called for a shift in focus, advocating for a transition from prioritizing sustainable results at the organizational level to sustainable results at the individual level within the hospitality sector. Prior empirical research has explored the environmental sustainability of the hotel and tourism sectors (Sakshi et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2021), laying the groundwork for scrutinizing green behaviors at the personal level, as exemplified by (Luu) 2019.

The success of environmental initiatives is partly contingent on the leadership's guidance (Lasrado & Zakaria, 2020). A growing body of literature emphasizes the importance of leadership in improving environmental sustainability, both at the managerial and personal levels (Graves & Sarkis, 2018), especially within the hospitality industry (Tuan, 2020). Nevertheless, research on workplace green behavior has chiefly concentrated on leadership philosophies such as TL (Peng et al., 2020) and ethical leadership (Saleem et al., 2020). Despite some recent studies (Luu, 2019; Tuan, 2020) there has been limited research on the impact of servant leadership in promoting eco-friendly behaviors (ESSL), especially within the hospitality sector. Prior research has presented insights into the associations between ESSL and the eco-friendly outcomes of employees, with these studies underscoring the importance of ESSL as crucial catalysts for promoting environmentally friendly results within the hospitality sector (Luu, 2019; Tuan, 2020)

Moreover, there exists a significant gap in comprehensively addressing the underlying mechanisms through which ESSL could impact eco-friendly behavior within the hotel sector (Luu, 2019). Therefore, research urged by (Robertson & Barling, 2013; Aboramadan et al., 2021) underscores the necessity to expand the application of servant leadership into a green context, particularly by investigating the influence of ESSL on workers' eco-friendly behaviors. The servant leadership (SL) theory, with its focus on helping and genuinely caring for others, has been acknowledged as significantly effective in predicting workers' environmentally friendly outcomes (Stritch & Christensen, 2016; Ying et al., 2020).

Hence, our study anticipates that ESSL will have a significant impact on influencing

employees' eco-friendly behaviors. As stated by (Luu, 2022), ESSL is a unique leadership approach that emphasizes sustainable principles and meets the needs associated with environmental responsibility. By adopting the "people first" approach of SL (Eva et al., 2019; Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020), ESSL endeavors to foster sustainable behaviors by equipping employees with the requisite tools and resources to participate in environmentally sustainable initiatives and practices, as emphasized by (Luu, 2022).

In light of the preceding discourse, this study aims to address the researcher's call for enriching the literature on green management. Its primary focus is to investigate the influence of ESSL on organizational environmental citizenship behavior (OECB). Within the context of OECB, "we explore voluntary actions undertaken by members of an organization—actions neither mandated nor incentivized but directed towards fostering environmental improvements", as articulated by (Daily et al., 2009). The research also examines the role of harmonious environmental passion (HEP) as an intermediary mechanism that connects these associations, as illustrated in Figure 1. Furthermore, in alignment with prior studies on SL within the hotel sector (Luu, 2022) our hypothesis suggests that ESSL positively influences OECB through the mediating role of HEP. This proposition is grounded in earlier research indicating the indirect impact of leadership on eco-friendly conduct (Islam et al., 2023) as well as the subsequent influence of HEP on employee performance outcomes (Fatoki, 2021).

Our study contributes significantly to the existing literature in multiple facets. Firstly, we address prior appeals to examine the influence of ESSL on employees' environmentally friendly outcomes rather than solely focusing on green organizational outcomes (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Luu, 2019) Secondly, our study addresses the limited understanding of the mechanisms underlying the connection between servant leaders' environmental behaviors and employees' sustainable actions, particularly within the hospitality industry. Therefore, our contribution to the literature involves examining the influence of ESSL on OECB and uncovering HEP as a mediator in this relationship. Lastly, our investigation utilizes the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory to offer insights into the conditions under which ESSL promotes OECB. According to this theory, when employees possess abundant resources, they are more inclined to adopt proactive strategies aimed at acquiring additional resources. The intermediary function of HEP in the correlation between ESSL and OECB aligns with the social identity theory (Turner & Oakes, 1986), suggesting that employees actively identify with and take pride in organizations that demonstrate social and environmental responsibility.

2. Review of literature and the formulation of hypotheses.

2.1 Conservation of resource theory

In this study, we employ the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) to investigate the impacts of ESSL on employees' environmentally friendly actions within the hotel sector. Typically, this theory has been applied to investigate the influence of servant leadership on discretionary behaviors (Ye et al., 2019), and specifically, the impact of ESSL on

environmentally friendly outcomes (Luu, 2019) within the hospitality sector.

This theory posits that an increase in the resources accessible to an employee would result in the creation of "resource-gaining spirals" (Hobfoll, 2001). The presence of these resources motivates employees to acquire further gains by allocating additional resources (Hobfoll, 2001). In light of this, when employees have limited resources, they are more inclined to adopt a defensive resource conservation strategy (Stoverink et al., 2018). Conversely, individuals with sufficient resources are inclined to embrace a "proactive resource management" approach, wherein they accumulate additional resources, experience resource gain spirals, and persist in engaging in behaviors that exceed their job requirements (Srivastava & Bajpai, 2020). In situations where employees receive environmentally focused assistance and resources from their leader, they are more likely to allocate additional resources towards green outcomes, such as demonstrating organizational citizenship for the environment.

2.2 ESSL and OECB

OECB encompasses employees' voluntary and discretionary efforts aimed at the conservation of the ecosystem, (Daily et al., 2009) and these efforts are not formally rewarded within the organizational system (Boiral & Paillé, 2012). It plays a vital role in effective ecological governance within institutions. (Boiral & Paillé, 2012; Cheema et al., 2020). While OECB is influenced (Organ, 1997) conceptualization of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which entails voluntary contributions to improve the organization's functioning, it is differentiated from traditional OCB. While OECB directs its attention to voluntary efforts aimed at improving the environment, OCB is focused on ensuring efficient organizational operations. (Cheema et al., 2020; Lamm et al., 2013). It includes the following measurements: (1) 'eco-helping' (assisting colleagues with assignments that contribute to ecological enhancement), (2) 'eco-civic engagement' (voluntary endeavors to advance sustainable goals), and (3) 'eco-initiative' (instigating deeds to bolster ecological efficiency), (Boiral & Paillé, 2012). In our ongoing investigation, we explore the potential improvement of OECB through ESSL, drawing upon previous studies that have shown the significant influence of leaders' behavior on employee conduct (Bavik, 2020; Islam et al., 2023).

To be more precise, ESSL is defined as "a leadership approach that prioritizes environmental benefits over personal and organizational economic gains." It focuses on cultivating eco-friendly values within organizational stakeholders, encompassing employees and customers (Luu, 2019). At the core of such practice lies the belief that leaders who prioritize their followers' needs by demonstrating environmentally conscious behavior serve as inspirational role models (Saleem et al., 2020). According to (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018; Sousa & Van Dierendonck, 2017), SL is a practical approach to promoting the common good through personal accountability and humility of leadership. Previous research suggests that individuals working under the guidance of SL tend to exhibit increased concern for environmental preservation. (Liden et al., 2014). ESSL, rooted in the fundamental principles of SL, places specific emphasis on promoting pro-

environmental objectives for both the organization and society (Luu, 2019). Based on the aforementioned research suggesting the positive influence of SL on OCB (Bavik, 2020; Chiniara & Bentein, 2018), it is proposed that there is a positive association between ESSL and OECB. This leads to our initial hypothesis (H1):

H1: The implementation of ESSL positively affects OECB.

2.3 ESSL &HEP

Robertson & Barling (2013b) proposes that the concept of servant leadership, emphasizing leaders' roles as servants to their employees, has gained significant attention in recent years, especially concerning environmental sustainability. Environmental servant leadership involves leaders advocating for the common good and engaging in behaviors that uphold environmental sustainability. This form of leadership encourages leaders to prioritize the welfare of their employees while also fostering environmentally responsible practices (Robertson & Barling, 2013c).

According to Yuan and Li (2022b) findings, ESSL is notably and positively linked with employees' harmonious environmental passion. This connection may stem from the emphasis that servant leaders place on the well-being of their employees and the environment, potentially motivating employees to partake in environmentally responsible behaviors. Additionally, environmental servant leaders provide employees with a clear understanding of the importance of environmental sustainability, which may inspire them to act in alignment with their passion for sustainability (Wang et al., 2021)

Furthermore, environmental servant leaders actively cultivate a culture of sustainability by demonstrating environmentally responsible behaviors and providing resources and support to employees interested in engaging in environmentally responsible actions (B. Yuan & Li, 2022c). Such leadership practices can enhance employees' sense of competence and proficiency, crucial components of harmonious passion (Slemp et al., 2021).

In summary, research indicates a significant and positive correlation between environmental-specific servant leadership and employees' harmonious environmental passion (Shah et al., 2023b). This association likely arises from servant leaders prioritizing the well-being of both employees and the environment, offering employees a clear understanding of the importance of sustainability, and fostering a culture of sustainability through their actions and support (Li et al., 2020).

H2: There is a notable positive impact between Environmental-Specific Servant Leadership (ESSL) and employees' Harmonious Environmental Passion (HEP)

2.4 The role of HEP as a mediator.

HEP refers to the positive emotions experienced by the workforce who are inclined to participate in eco-friendly actions. It signifies an extension of the HP theory into the domain of



ecological sustainability (Robertson & Barling, 2013). The framework of self-initiated motivation highlights how positive emotions can expand an individual's cognitive resources, stimulate inclinations for action, and influence goal-setting and effective pursuit of objectives. This can be seen as a type of motivation where individuals are inspired to take proactive measures. (Yuan & Li, 2022). According to (Li et al., 2020), HEP, functioning as an intrinsic motivation signal, can offset the depletion of cognitive resources caused by workforce involvement in eco-friendly practices and can invigorate and inspire employees to actively participate in eco-friendly actions. Therefore, this study asserts that HEP meets the criteria for motivating the workforce to adopt eco-friendly behavior.

According to (Yuan & Li.,2022 b) Previous studies have examined the impact mechanism of various leadership styles on HEP. Drawing from the common attributes of leaders, this study provides initial speculation that ESSL will impact workforce HEP. This influence will be investigated from two distinct perspectives. Looking through the lens of the affective events theory (Weiss et al., 1999), this study suggests that ESSL behaviors, which prioritize environmental concerns, can be viewed as specific emotional events that occur during direct interactions between leaders and subordinates. These particular emotional events are considered crucial for sparking the HEP of subordinates (Li et al., 2020). Initially, ESSL actively engages in environmental conservation actions and communicates a strong commitment to sustainable practices by demonstrating environmental stewardship. The workforce subsequently mirrors and adopts ESSL's eco-friendly actions and attitudes, ultimately fostering their own HEP. (Aboramadan et al., 2021). Moreover, ESSL is devoted to environmental initiatives, communicates a clear ecological standpoint, and ties it to the self-identities of employees. This strengthens the connection between the workforce and the organization, thereby enhancing the stimulation of worker HEP (Robertson & Barling, 2013). Secondly, ESSL motivates employees to achieve their pre-established environmental conservation goals by encouraging them to actively engage in ecological conservation efforts. The environmentally friendly contributions made by the workforce instill hope and activate HEP (Robertson & Barling, 2013). Thirdly, ESSL recognizes employees' proactive efforts in environmental protection and provides support for their environmental actions. The provision of personalized care and guidance by leaders offers emotional support to employees, resulting in the generation of HEP (Wang et al., 2021).

Individuals with HEP tend to be more willing to go beyond their regular job duties and take initiative, motivated by the pursuit of happiness (Ho & Pollack, 2014). Numerous prior studies have indeed documented a positive correlation between HEP and employees' engagement in OECEB (Anser et al., 2021). Vitaly, employees possessing a robust HEP develop trust-based relationships with their peers, managers, and subordinates. Fostering contentment within these relationships actively encourages individuals to participate in pro-social behaviors (Luu, 2022).

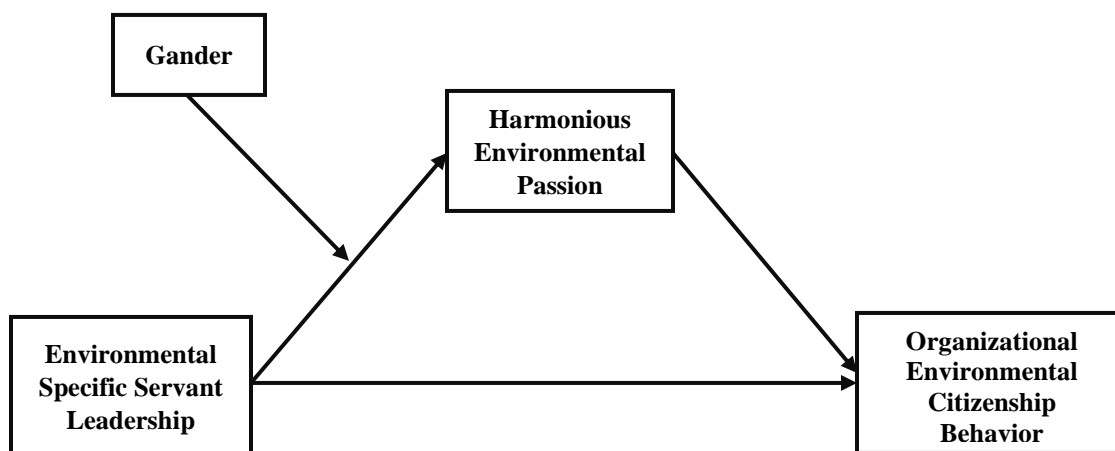
H3: The positive impact between ESSL and OECEB is facilitated by the mediation of HEP.

2.5 Moderating effect of gender

There are differences among male and female leaders due to their personality characteristics and the use of influence tactics. Female leaders use soft tactics to achieve their goals and they are more expressive of their emotions. On the other hand, the male is more aggressive and use hard tactics to achieve their goals. The relationship between ESSL and HEP is likely stronger for male as compared to their female counterpart. This has been evident from previous studies (Schaffler-Schaden et al., 2021; Yadav & Dhar, 2021)

H4: Gender moderates the relationship between ESSL and HEP

Figure No 1: Theoretical Farmwork



3. Methods

3.1 Participants and procedure

As Pakistan positions itself as a "global leader" in addressing global warming, the government is exerting growing pressure on hotels to adopt green initiatives (Aboramadan et al., 2021). Consequently, hotels throughout Pakistan are actively endorsing awareness of environmental sustainability and motivating their workforce to adopt sustainable work practices (Aboramadan et al., 2021). For example, Pearl Continental Hotels, Serena Hotels, and Marriott Hotels in Pakistan have made notable contributions to the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage. Proactively, they have implemented measures to minimize the environmental impact of their properties as much as possible. The aforementioned hotels consistently strive to make all their locations ecologically sustainable, with a particular emphasis on integrating eco-friendly equipment, such as solar-powered laundry services. Additionally, they actively engage in nationwide tree plantation initiatives (Serena Hotels, 2020). Furthermore, these hotels are actively integrating sustainable management approaches. This includes organizing training programs to promote environmental management, integrating eco-friendly behavior into performance evaluations, offering incentives for sustainable work practices, and encouraging the workforce to

suggest ideas for ecological improvements. Consequently, these endeavors effectively increase employees' involvement in sustainable behaviors (Ahmad et al., 2021).

This research collected data from permanent staff, who were the unit of analysis, working within the hotel industry in Pakistan. Situated in five major metropolitan centers across Pakistan, these hotels were selected using a convenience sampling method, which is a type of non-probability sampling technique. We opted for this technique for several reasons: Firstly, accessing participants presented challenges in terms of ease and convenience. Secondly, there was a lack of a suitable sampling frame. The initial stage of hotel selection involved defining the population (Eisenhardt, 1989). This population consisted of hotels that were actively involved in green initiatives or had implemented activities aimed at enhancing and conserving the environment.

To maximize response rate and data quality, a combination of methods was employed to reach out to hotel employees and their supervisors, including phone calls and email invitations with a survey package containing a questionnaire that consisted of two sections. The first section was of demographic variables which includes gender, other section consists of ESSL, HEP, and OECB. Only employees, who have been with the current management for at least one year, including the period of data collection, will be eligible to participate, as suggested by (Jiang et al., 2012). As per item-to-response theory (IRT) the minimum sample size should be 1:10 for each item therefore the minimum sample size required for this study is 290 ($29 \times 10 = 290$). Subsequently, we distributed a cover letter to 350 employees for data collection. At the outset, we outlined the study's objectives, assured participants of the confidentiality of their responses, and emphasized the voluntary nature of their participation. The study achieved an overall response rate of 94.2%. Subsequently, questionnaires with missing values exceeding 9% were excluded, and imputation was utilized to address any remaining missing values. This process followed the methodology advocated by Hair et al. (2012a) and employed maximum likelihood estimation. Almost thirty responses, each containing roughly 9% missing values, were eliminated, leaving 300 valid responses. Additionally, Hair et al. (2012a) suggest that a minimum sample size of 300 is necessary when employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for data analysis. It's worth noting that similar or smaller sample sizes have been observed in recent studies within hospitality settings, as seen in studies conducted by (Aboramadan et al., 2021; Bavik, 2020; Uçanok & Karabatı, 2013), affirm the appropriateness of our sample size, ensuring the reliability of the results.

3.2 Measures

The study utilized the 12-item ESSL measurement instrument by (Liden et al., 2015), to assess leader perceptions among subordinates. Example statements include “My manager emphasizes the importance of contributing to environmental improvement”. OECB was evaluated using the measurement instrument from (Boiral & Paillé, 2012), comprising a total of 10 items, Sample items include “This employee encourages his/her colleagues to adopt a more environmentally conscious behavior”. A scale containing 10 items developed from (Robertson & Barling, 2013a), was used to rate harmonious environmental passion, Sample items include “I am

passionate about the environment” and “I enjoy engaging in environmentally friendly behaviors. To ensure linguistic and cultural appropriateness, the original English survey was translated into Urdu. This process involved back-translation into English to validate consistency and accuracy. A pilot study involving 30 participants evaluated question comprehension, response time, and potential issues. The outcomes were satisfactory with no need for revisions. Subsequently, measurement reliability and validity were examined using partial least squares analysis.

4. Results

4.1 Demographics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Item	Description	Response	Percentage (%)
Male and female categories	Male	177	59
	Female	123	41
Age group	Less than 25	22	7.3
	25–30	109	36.3
	31–35	95	31.7
	36–40	62	20.7
	More than 40	12	4
Qualification	Undergraduate degree	131	43.6
	Graduate degree	158	52.6
	Postgraduate degree	11	3.8
Service length	Up to 3	96	32
	4–6	98	32.6
	7–9	71	23.7
	Above 10	35	11.7
Category of hotel	Triple-star	157	52.3
	Four-star rating	109	36.3
	Five-star rating	34	11.4
Employment role	Customer-facing staff	59	19.7
	Administrative team	23	7.6
	Trainee manager	56	18.7
	Deputy manager	108	36
	Department manager	54	18

To investigate the proposed relationships between variables, this study utilized the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique with SmartPLS software. This choice is in line with the recommendation of (Hair Jr et al., 2017), as SmartPLS is preferred for its predictive capabilities. Despite a small sample size, SmartPLS has shown superior results (Henseler et al., 2015), demonstrating its ability to handle such scenarios robustly. Moreover, SmartPLS enhances the predictive relevance of the model, as observed by (Yong et al., 2020).



4.2 Measurement Model

Hair et al. (2019) emphasize a comprehensive evaluation of the measurement model, advocating scrutiny of factor loadings (>0.70), composite reliability (>0.70), Cronbach’s alpha (>0.70), and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (>0.500). The results, detailed in Table 1, affirm the construct validity's acceptability. Cronbach’s alphas surpass 0.700, composite reliability spans from 0.866 to 0.921, and AVE values range between 0.510 and 0.683. This indicates a robust level of construct validity. Furthermore, the AVEs within the range of **0.626 to 0.646** signify strong convergent validity of the scales.

Table No 2: Measurement model Validity and Reliability

Constructs	Items	Loadings	VIF	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
HEP	HEP 1	0.750	1.802	0.839	0.879	0.510
	HEP 10	0.709	1.614			
	HEP 2	0.682	1.510			
	HEP 4	0.767	1.735			
	HEP 7	0.689	1.558			
	HEP 8	0.702	1.590			
	HEP 9	0.693	1.559			
OECB	OECB 4	0.686	1.458	0.851	0.887	0.528
	OECB 1	0.732	1.711			
	OECB 2	0.716	1.606			
	OECB 3	0.710	1.598			
	OECB 5	0.736	1.778			
	OECB 6	0.780	1.973			
	OECB 7	0.725	1.755			
ESL	ESSL 1	0.569	1.490	0.904	0.921	0.542
	ESSL 11	0.769	2.861			
	ESSL 12	0.781	2.306			
	ESSL 2	0.794	3.128			
	ESSL 3	0.788	1.286			
	ESSL 4	0.841	1.967			
	ESSL 5	0.713	1.748			
	ESSL 7	0.639	1.599			
	ESSL 8	0.641	1.578			
ESSL 9	0.781	2.360				

4.3 Discriminant Validity

As per the guidelines proposed by (Hair et al., 2019), this study utilized the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlation (HTMT) to assess the relationships between constructs. The HTMT values, documented in Table 2, consistently met the recommended criterion of <0.90 as stated by



(Hair et al., 2019). This successful adherence to the criteria establishes the discriminant validity of the scale.

Table No 3: HTMT Ratio

	HEP	OECB	ESSL
HEP			
OECB	0.830		
ESSL	0.887	0.864	

4.4 Hypotheses Test Results

The study's hypotheses were examined by estimating path coefficients through the consistent PLS bootstrapping method. The results for the direct effects and the mediating effect are detailed in Tables 4 and 5. Hypotheses H1a, which evaluates the causal relationship between ESSL and OECB, are supported by the findings. The results reveal a positive association between ESSL and OECB, with a significant coefficient of $\beta = 0.342$ ($p < 0.01$). The mediation analysis results, as presented in TABLE 4, reveal that the association between ESSL and OECB is influenced by the mediating factor HEP ($\beta = 0.353$, $p < 0.05$). Consequently, this confirms the validity of Hypothesis H2b.

Table No 4: Mediation Analysis

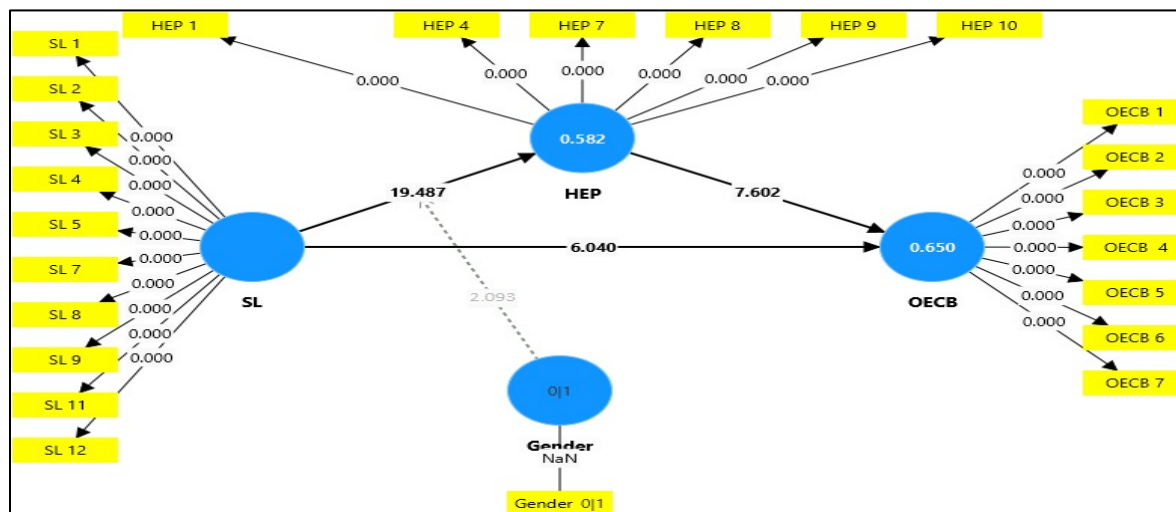
Path	Path (Beta)	Coefficient	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Impact
ESSL -> HEP -> OECB	0.353		0.052	6.750	0.000	Supported

The moderating effect of gender was tested through PLS4. We can see from the figure and Table 5 that the p-value for the interaction term is significant which is $p < 0.05$ ($\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.014$). Hence, we can conclude that this relationship is stronger for males rather than for females. Our hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Table 5: Direct Path

	Beta	S.D	T statistics	P values
Gender -> HEP	0.179	0.069	2.597	0.010
HEP -> OECB	0.472	0.062	7.602	0.000
ESSL -> HEP	0.722	0.037	19.487	0.000
ESSL -> OECB	0.387	0.064	6.040	0.000
Gender x SL -> HEP	0.158	0.075	2.093	0.014

Figure No 2: Moderation Analysis



4.5 Discussion and Contributions

Building upon the Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory and social identity (SI) theory, this study combines the literature on ESSL, HEP, and OECB to explore the mechanisms through which ESSL promotes OECB. Our research, based on firsthand data and empirical evidence, validated the suggested mediation model, demonstrating that ESSL exerts both direct and mediated impacts, with the latter mediated by HEP. The study's results supported Hypothesis (H1), indicating a direct and positive influence of ESSL on OECB. These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted on similar topics (Aboramadan et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2023). This indicates that as the resource pool expands, employees are motivated to allocate resources toward engaging in OECB. These findings are consistent with and corroborate the Conservation of Resource (COR) theory. While traditionally used to investigate how inadequate resources lead to negative outcomes for employees in hospitality settings (Al-Hawari et al., 2020), our research adds to the limited pool of research (Luu, 2019a) endorsing the applicability of COR theory. In particular, it explains how employees allocate more resources to OECB when they receive social support from their leaders and their overall resource pool expands (Stoverink et al., 2018). Hypothesis 2 (H2) posited that HEP act as a mediator in the connection between ESSL and OECB. The results showed a positive influence of ESSL on HEP. Furthermore, HEP demonstrated a positive impact on OECB and acted as a mediator in the connection between ESSL and OECB, consistent with findings from previous studies (Fatoki, 2021). OUR H3 was about the moderating effect of gender between ESSL and HEP and that was also accepted ($B= 0.158, p = 0.014$). The findings align with the SI perspective (Turner & Oakes, 1986), suggesting that employees actively identify with and take pride in organizations that demonstrate social and environmental stewardship. Striving to bolster the company's reputation, employees actively involve themselves in constructive and responsible endeavors (Islam et al., 2023). Additionally, this study is one of the first to explore the interplay between ESSL and HEP in fostering OECB among employees in

the Pakistani hospitality and tourism industry. The findings of this research offer significant conceptual and practical contributions, outlined below.

5. Conclusion

As organizations worldwide place greater emphasis on environmental sustainability as a core aspect of their business mission, our study presents fresh perspectives on the vital role of leadership in attaining this objective. The study findings suggest that the existence of ESSL positively influences the advancement of the business mission by promoting HEP and motivating the workforce to actively participate in OCBE. The results from our study, which utilized SEM to analyze data from employees in the hospitality sector, provide evidence-based insights into the authentic dynamics of relationships among ESSL, HEP, and OCBE. Additionally, this research represents one of the first endeavors to investigate how ESSL interacts with HEP to foster OECEB among workers in the Pakistani hospitality and tourism industry.

5.1 Conceptual advancements

The framework and model developed in this study lay the groundwork for the advancement of eco-conscious organizations. The findings regarding ESSL offer a fresh perspective for researchers in the field of environmental management. This is particularly noteworthy as previous research has primarily emphasized ethical and transformational leadership styles in advancing the eco-friendly initiatives of organizations (Ahmad et al., 2022; Dumont et al., 2017; Mittal & Dhar, 2016). According to (Fallatah et al., 2017), leaders have the responsibility of cultivating a sense of identity among their followers. The findings of our research significantly add to understanding this viewpoint within the framework of the COR theory. Moreover, they extend the application of the theory, addressing a knowledge gap regarding how employees acquire and interpret resources (Fallatah et al., 2017; Luu, 2019a). In contrast to previous research, which has used the COR framework to explore the relationship between green HR practices and OCB (Luu, 2019a) our current study examines how ESSL fosters HEP and improves OECEB. Through our research, we confirm the fundamental principles of the COR theory by uncovering a mechanism that holds promise for aiding in the creation of sustainable ecosystems within organizations led by ESSL Its assistance in the incorporation of green stewardship with the conscientious ethical dimension of SL (Jewitt et al., 2017). Additionally, it adds to the literature on HEP. While previous HEP studies have largely focused on a firm or institutional viewpoint (Li et al., 2020a), the current study adopts "a relatively novel behavioral perspective on HEP" (Li et al., 2020a) by analyzing its effect on the comparatively unexplored domain of OCBE. OECEB holds significance for organizations in achieving their sustainability objectives by fostering eco-friendly actions among employees (Boiral & Paillé, 2012; Daily et al., 2009; Moorman & Blakely, 1995). Our research elucidates the contribution of HEP in supporting this implementation, revealing that it amplifies OECEB. Furthermore, it adds to the existing literature on OECEB by recognizing both HEP and ESSL as significant predictors.

5.2 Managerial implications

Practically, our study presents a pathway for encouraging environmentally friendly practices in the hospitality sector. Initially, ESSL held a pivotal position in advancing sustainable behaviors. Therefore, hotel management needs to prioritize fostering an environmentally-focused leadership mindset among their managers. This strategic focus is vital to ensure the efficacy of eco-initiatives and to foster a dedication to green practices within the organization. Achieving this objective can be realized through the implementation of comprehensive training sessions and well-designed strategies. Additionally, hotel management should prioritize staffing and selection policies that emphasize leaders with a strong emphasis on sustainability. Establishing efficient reward systems is vital to guarantee the efficacy of ESSL. Secondly, leaders in the hotel industry should instill environmentally conscious values among their team members through mentorship and training initiatives, this approach aims to encourage eco-friendly actions, including OEGB. Thirdly, this research underscores the significance of fostering and maintaining a HEP to nurture OEGB. Therefore, hotels should proficiently convey these interests and concerns to their stakeholders by integrating green initiatives into their organizational vision, mission, and reward systems.

5.3 Constraints and Paths for Future Research

Similar to several research, the current research has boundaries that could be tackled in future research. Initially, data were solely collected from employees and supervisors within the hotel industry. Future research efforts should investigate the model driven by ESSL, examining the relationship between HEP and OEGB within organizations in the manufacturing industry. Secondly, our data on HEP is exclusively obtained from employees, and implementing a multi-source approach by including supervisors' assessments in organizations could improve the study's comprehensiveness. Thirdly, we solely investigated HEP's role as a mediator in the relationship between ESSL and OCBE. Future researchers are urged to explore additional mediating factors, like green role modeling, to achieve a more comprehensive understanding.

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