

## The Antecedence of Pro-Environmental Behavior Through Green Transformational Leadership at Hospitality Sector: Organizational Pride as a Mediator

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### Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the direct impact of green transformational leadership on pro-environmental behavior, and organizational pride among hospitality sector employees, and the mediating impact of OP between GTL and PEB. Data were collected from 444 employees in hotels. The structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM V.4) was used to examine the interrelationships between variables and to examine the research hypotheses. The SEM results showed that GTL has a positive direct impact on PEB and OP and proved a full mediating influence of OP on the relationship between GTL and PEB among hospitality sector employees, which means that OP of hotel employees can play an important role in improved environmental practices for hotels as they strive towards green transformation.

**Keywords:** Green transformational leadership; pro-environmental behavior; organizational pride; hospitality sector

### Introduction

Environmental concerns have become increasingly prominent for both scholars and organizations in recent decades (Robertson & Barling, 2018; Huda et al., 2018; Pham et al., 2019; Sobaih et al., 2022a; Tosun et al., 2022). Organizations, influenced by both internal motivations and external pressures, have augmented their efforts toward sustainability, integrating green practices across various operational fields, from leadership approaches to product and process development (Aftab et al., 2022; Perez et al., 2023). Employees are considered one of the essential stakeholders in any enterprise, and their meaningful involvement, active participation, and conduct significantly contribute to the effectiveness of corporate environmental initiatives (Zientara & Zamojska, 2018; Shah et al., 2023). Recognizing individual behavior as a pivotal factor in environmental protection, Li et al. (2020) emphasized the significance of employees in fostering sustainable approaches.

Chen and Chang (2013) and Robertson and Barling (2018) have embraced the idea of green transformational leadership (GTL). This approach combines the tenets of

transformational management, aiming to inspire employees and guide their endeavors toward environmental and sustainability goals. Numerous studies have validated that GTL (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bass et al., 2022) not only promotes organizational pride (OP) but also enhances employees' pro-environmental behavior (PEB) (He et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2021; Bass et al., 2022; Tosun et al., 2022; Sobaih et al., 2022b). Furthermore, GTL has emerged as a crucial driver in aligning environmental management with human resource management functions (Renwick et al., 2013) and fostering a sustainable organizational culture (Kim et al., 2019).

OP has a great attention to a crucial precursor for motivating employees to go beyond their regular duties (Tracy & Robins, 2007; Ng et al., 2019; Youn & Kim, 2022; Sturm et al., 2022; Elshaer et al., 2023; Mirzaei, 2023). Despite the significant role of OP in organizational behavior, it has not received much attention in the fields of hospitality sector. The assertions about the influence of OP in hospitality context primarily rely on intuition, highlighting the necessity of empirical proof to determine the importance of pride in business environments (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). According to Steg and Vlek (2009), PEB is defined as pertaining to the actions directed at minimizing or preventing harm to the environment. In the workplace, PEB is frequently discretionary, voluntary, and spontaneous, surpassing an employee's formal job obligations (Norton et al., 2015; Roberson & Barling, 2018; Li et al., 2020). This discretionary aspect underscores employees' potential to contribute to environmental sustainability beyond explicit requirements. The individual adoption of PEB is influenced by a range of factors, encompassing cultural, social, personal, and organizational elements (Li et al., 2020).

This study specifically delves into the concept of GTL and its impact on organizational pride employees' pro-environmental behavior in hospitality sector in Egypt. The indirect effect of OP in the correlation between GTL and PEB is also investigated. Drawing upon transformational leadership theory (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bass et al., 2022), this study explores how leaders can adeptly guide their employees toward environmentally conscious behaviors and propel their organizations toward enhanced environmental practices. Green transformational leaders, by nature, are invested in altering employees' and organizations' green behaviors, encompassing the implementation of robust green management practices (Peng et al., 2021). Numerous research (e.g. Chan & Mak, 2014; Oh & Yang, 2023; Ismail et al., 2023; Zen, 2023) have explored the relationships between GTL, OP, and PEB, consistently revealing GTL as a pivotal predictor of both employees' OP and PEB.

## Literature review

### *Green transformational leadership and pro- environmental behavior*

Social psychology has observed an increasing body of literature that acknowledges the notion of employees' pro-environmental conduct. This behavior entails observing others and striving to replicate similar behavioral patterns, as evidenced by various studies (Brown et al., 2005; Pham et al., 2019; Tosun et al., 2022). Drawing upon transformational leadership theory, several studies (e.g. Elshaer et al., 2022; Pham et al., 2019; Tosun et al., 2022; Sobaih et al., 2022b; Sachdeva & Singh, 2023) declared that GTL possess a unique ability to inspire and encourage their employees to actively engage in green friendly behaviors (PEB) within the workplace., especially when a close leader-follower relationship exists. Likewise, followers are more inclined to view participation in environmentally friendly activities as valuable and meaningful rather than an obligatory task (Brown et al., 2005). In terms of hospitality sector, numerous research studies (i.e., Gurmani et al., 2021; Iftikhar et al., 2021; Patwary et al., 2022; Sobaih et al., 2022b; Agrawal & Pradhan, 2023; Sachdeva & Singh, 2023) have investigated the influence GTL on employees' PEB. A recent study by Agrawal and Pradhan (2023) expanded the adoption of GTL on employees' PEB in Indian hotel industry. The study

concluded that green transformational leaders, similar to task-oriented leaders, prioritize sustainable and long-lasting growth by integrating the green values of both employees and organization, and promoting PEB among employees. Another recent study has been conducted by Sachdeva and Singh (2023) measured the unravelling the underlying the impact of GTL and PEB in Indian hotel industry. The main results suggested that there is a significant positive correlation between GTL and employees' PEB. Additionally, the study of Sobaih et al. (2022b) demonstrated that GTL plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' PEB through inspiring, motivating, as well as satisfying them. Drawing on these prior findings, the hypothesis emerges that GTL leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing employees' PEB. thus, we could postulate that:

*H1: GTL has a positive and direct effect on PEB*

### ***Green transformational leadership and organizational pride***

The relationship between GTL and OP has a great attention by scholars recently (CH Chan & Mak, 2014; Oh & Yang, 2023; Ismail et al., 2023; Zen, 2023). Lack of research studies explored the relationship between GTFL and OP in hospitality context. The presence of OP as an outcome of GTL is not merely a byproduct of personal achievements but a reflection of the organization's commitment to green integrity (Oh & Yang, 2023). According to a recent study by Zen (2023), employees guided by green transformational leaders, often perceive themselves as contributors to a larger, environmentally conscious collective. Employees' sense of pride is rooted in the acknowledgment of being part of an organization that goes beyond traditional success metrics to prioritize ecological responsibility. Based upon transformational leadership theory, the influence of GTL on OP extends beyond individual recognition, encompassing a shared sense of achievement derived from advancing environmental sustainability goals. As organizations increasingly recognize the importance of environmental stewardship, understanding the dynamics of how GTL contributes to OP becomes crucial for fostering a sustainable and ethically driven workplace culture (Ismail et al., 2023). Hence, these discussions encourage us to hypothesize:

*H2: GTL has a positive and direct effect on OP*

### ***Organizational pride and pro- environmental behavior***

Numerous researches (i.e., Youn& Kim, 2022; Sturm et al., 2022; Elshaer et al., 2023; Mirzaei, 2023) declared that the presence of organizational pride significantly influences the development of pro-environmental behavior in a workplace. When employees experience a deep sense of pride in their organization, they are inclined to participate more actively in environmentally responsible behaviors (Youn& Kim, 2022). This emotional attachment fosters a collective responsibility among staff, encouraging them to align their actions with the organization's commitment to environmental sustainability. Proud employees are not only motivated to contribute to the positive image of the organization but also tend to integrate environmental considerations into their decision-making processes (Sturm et al., 2022). Furthermore, organizational pride contributes to a workplace atmosphere that encourages innovation and creativity, leading to the development of sustainable initiatives (Mirzaei, 2023). Ultimately, the impact of GTL on organizational pride and pro-environmental behavior extends beyond individual actions, shaping a culture that values and actively promotes environmental responsibility within the organization (Zen, 2023; Elshaer et al., 2023). Thus, we postulate that:

*H3: OP has a positive and direct effect on PEB*

*H4: OP mediates the relationship between GTL and PEB*

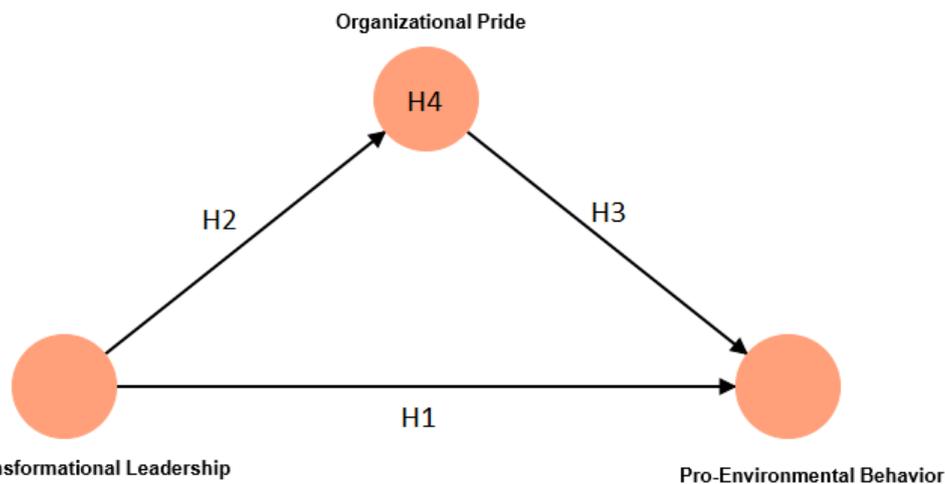


Figure 1. Study theoretical model

## **Methodology: Materials and methods**

### ***The scale and the study constructs***

To ensure that the variables of the current study are measured properly, a number of scales whose validity has been proven through literature reviews were adopted. The green transformational leadership were measured by 6 items, derived from Chen and Chang (2013). Regarding pro-environmental behavior, it was measured by 3 items, derived from Frese et al. (1997), which are Hotel staff participate in various activities with the aim of becoming environmentally friendly, teamwork is used to solve environmental issues related to the hotel's activity, and hotel employees usually discuss relevant environmental issues in staff meetings. For organizational pride, it was measured by 3 items, derived from Ng et al. (2018), which are: feeling proud to be an employee of the entity, to tell others that I'm working there, to identify myself personally with this entity. It is worth noting that, all variables' scale showed a high reliability value above 0.90.

### ***Population and sample size***

Hotels' employees are the target research population of this study. Based on the fact that it is difficult to accurately determine the actual number of employees in hotels, determining the sample size for the current study was based on what was proven by Veal (2006), by calculating the sample size for any infinite research population, assuming that the size of the population is 20,000 individuals, and using the Herbert Larkin equation. the sample size for this study is 377 individuals (Ayad, 2017).

### ***Data collection***

To collect primary data for this study from hotels' employees, a quantitative approach was adopted using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-tested, reviewed and modified twice by a group of hospitality industry experts and university professors, and the questionnaire was directed to 460 employees in Egyptian hotels, during the months of May, June and July 2023. The final result of the number of completed and statistically analyzed questionnaires was 444, with a response rate of 96.5%. The questionnaire consists of four parts, the first part was devoted to demographic data, while the remaining three parts were for the three variables of this study, which are green transformational leadership, organizational pride,



and pro-environmental behavior. survey participants were asked to rate all items of each variable on a 5-point Likert scale.

### Analysis techniques

The statistical package SPSSvs24 and Excel Sheet 2010 were utilized to analyze the descriptive data and explore the demographic features of the sample of the study. Moreover, the structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM V.4) was used to examine the interrelationships between all variables and to test the research hypotheses.

## Analysis and results

### Measurement model (Outer model)

#### Convergent validity

To ensure the model's construct reliability and validity, the convergent validity was tested, and the results of all items' reliability were above 0.7, which meet the cut-off point proved by Hair et al. (2017), except the item "GTL-1", which scored 0.672. In the same context, results of composite reliability (CR) for all the study variables were also above 0.7, and also meet the advised cut-off point of Bryman and Cramer (2011) and Hair et al. (2017). In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results for all variables exceeded 0.5, which recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Briefly and directly, the results show that the model is reliable and valid. See Table 1.

Table 1. Results of measurement model - convergent validity

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	CR
Green Transformational Leadership (Chen and Chang, 2013)	GTL-1	0.672	0.726	0.940
	GTL-2	0.823		
	GTL-3	0.866		
	GTL-4	0.885		
	GTL-5	0.895		
	GTL-6	0.944		
Pro-environmental Behavior (Frese et al., 1997)	PEB-1	0.948	0.872	0.949
	PEB-2	0.878		
	PEB-3	0.958		
Organizational Pride (Ng et al., 2018)	OP-1	0.855	0.862	0.95
	OP-2	0.969		
	OP-3	0.972		

#### Discriminant validity

To support the level of confidence in the results and conclusions of the model, it was verified that all variables that make up the model differ from each other, proving the discriminant validity of the model. (Kock, 2020). For that reason, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings approaches were applied. See Tables 2,3 and Figure 2.

Table 2. Latent variables correlations (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

Construct	GTL	PEB	OP
GTL	<b>0.902</b>		
PEB	0.441	<b>0.929</b>	
OP	0.852	0.729	<b>0.934</b>

\* The values in bold are the square root of AVE.

All results in Table 2 demonstrate that each variable explains the variance of its components better than the other variables that make up the model, which confirms the discriminant validity of the model as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (2017).

Table 3. Discriminant validity - Cross loading

	Green Transformational Leadership	Pro-environmental Behavior	Organizational Pride
GTL-1	<b>0.672</b>	0.217	0.489
GTL-2	<b>0.823</b>	0.280	0.709
GTL-3	<b>0.866</b>	0.469	0.771
GTL-4	<b>0.885</b>	0.292	0.776
GTL-5	<b>0.895</b>	0.265	0.789
GTL-6	<b>0.944</b>	0.606	0.668
PEB-1	0.293	<b>0.948</b>	0.567
PEB-2	0.613	<b>0.878</b>	0.648
PEB-3	0.285	<b>0.958</b>	0.578
OP-1	0.612	0.663	<b>0.855</b>
OP-2	0.650	0.595	<b>0.969</b>
OP-3	0.648	0.600	<b>0.972</b>

The results at Table 3 prove that all items load more strongly on their own constructs, and greater than its loading on all other variables constructs of the model, which confirms the discriminant validity of the model, as approved by Chin (1998).

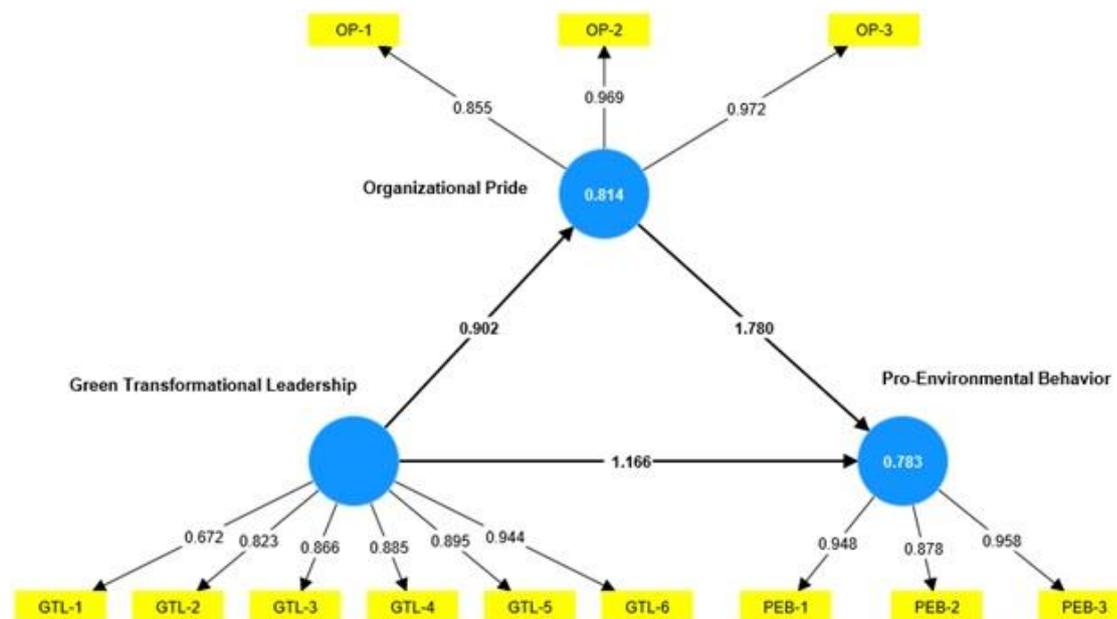


Figure 2. Measurement model

**Structural model (Inner model)**

*Coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>)*

To measure the model's ability to predict the variance ratio occurring in the dependent variable by the independent variable, the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) was used. Table 4 shows that the variance occurring by the independent variable "GTL" on the dependent variables "PEB" and "OP" is high, and exceed the cut-off point which recommended by Chin (1998), as both results were over 0.67.

Table 4. R<sup>2</sup> of the Endogenous Latent Variables

Constructs	R-square	Results
PEB	0.814	High
OP	0.836	High

*Predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)*

In order to measure the goodness of prediction of the model, and to assure that the model has predictive relevance or not and it has the ability to measure changes that will happen at the endogenous latent variables, the Blindfolding approach was used. According to Wold (1982) Q<sup>2</sup> value should be greater than zero. Results at table 5 shows that all Q<sup>2</sup> values of the model are above zero, which prove that the model has predictive relevance.

Table 5. Predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>) assessment for the model

Constructs	SSO	SSE	Q <sup>2</sup> (=1-SSE/SSO)
Green Transformational Leadership	141.079	60.431	0.572
Pro-environmental Behavior	149.63	62.782	0.580
Organizational Pride	141.079	60.431	0.572

*Effect size (f<sup>2</sup>)*

In order to measure the individual impact of each exogenous latent variable on the endogenous latent variable, the assessment of effect size (f<sup>2</sup>) was used. Results at table 6 show that the effects size of GTL as an exogenous latent variable of the model on PEB and OP as endogenous latent variables of the model, are medium and large effect respectively, according to the recommendations of Cohen (1988). While, the effect size of the organizational pride as an exogenous latent variable of the model on the pro-environmental behavior as an endogenous latent variable of the model, is medium effect.

Table 6. Assessment of effect size (f<sup>2</sup>)

Constructs	Pro-environmental Behavior	Organizational Pride
Green Transformational Leadership	0.312 (Medium)	0.810 (Large)
Organizational Pride	0.221 (Medium)	

*Goodness of fit of the model (GoF)*

In order to ensure that the proposed model of this study is considered as a global fit measure model, at level of measurement, structural, and the overall performance of the model, goodness of fit of the model test was applied, according (Chin, 2010):

$$GoF = \sqrt{R^2 \times AVE}$$

$$GoF = 0.81$$

According to the criteria of Wetzels et al. (2009) and the result of GoF test, It can be concluded that the goodness of fit of the model of this study is large enough to be considered sufficiently valid for a global PLS model.

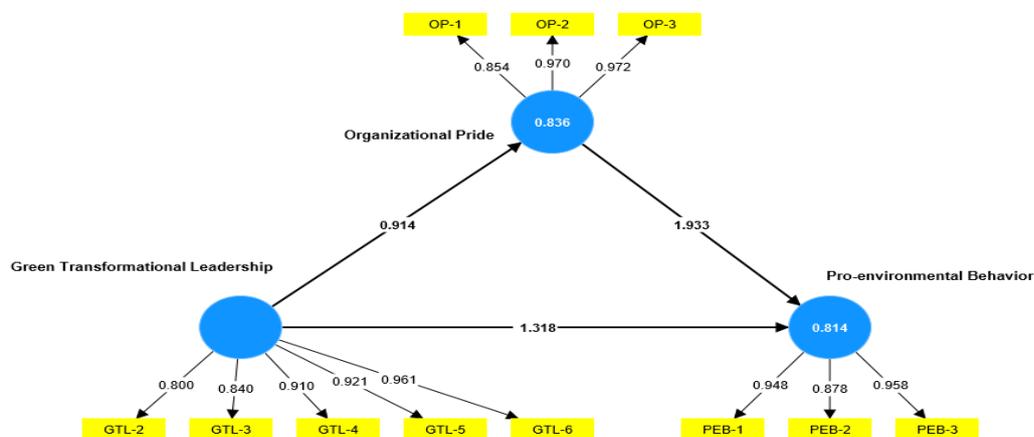


Figure 3. The final proposed structural equation model

*Hypotheses assessment (Significance of path coefficients)*

In order to determine the extent of consistency between the proposed theoretical model and the collected data (primary data), the path coefficients significance test was conducted. All hypothesis testing results are summarized below. See Table 7.

Table 7. Path coefficient of the study hypotheses

Hypothesis (Paths)	Effect	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T Value	P values	Results
H1: Green Transformational Leadership ->Pro-environmental Behavior	Direct	1.318	0.107	10.917	0.000	Supported**
H2: Green Transformational Leadership -> Organizational Pride	Direct	0.914	0.008	114.480	0.000	Supported**
H3: Organizational Pride ->Pro-environmental Behavior	Direct	1.933	0.095	18.750	0.000	Supported**
H4: Green Transformational Leadership ->Organizational Pride -> Pro-environmental Behavior	Indirect	1.607	0.098	16.420	0.000	Supported**

Significant at P\*\* = < 0.01

This study suggested 3 direct hypotheses and 1 indirect hypothesis (Figure 1), the structure equation model results (Tables 6&7. Figure 3) showed that GTL has a positive and significant impact on PEB (Effect size= 0.312, Std. Beta = 1.318, P = 0.000), and it has a positive and significant impact on OP (Effect size= 0.810, Std. Beta = 0.914, P = 0.000), so hypotheses H1 and H2 were supported. On the same context, OP has a positive and significant impact on PEB (Effect size= 0.221, Std. Beta = 1.933, P = 0.000), so hypothesis H3 was supported. In addition, the SEM results proved the mediation impact of OP in the relationships between GTL and PEB (Std. Beta = 1.607, P = 0.000),and the lower and upper level of bootstrapped confidence interval were both greater than zero, which means that zero did not fall in-between the two values, and P value was = 0.000, as recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008), which support the mediating impact of organizational pride, so hypothesis H4 was supported.

### Discussion and implications

This study was established to investigate the direct impact of green transformational leadership on pro-environmental behavior, and organizational pride among hospitality sector employees in Egypt, and the indirect impact between GTL and PEB through organizational pride (OP). The interrelationships among variables were examined. The results showed that GTL has a positive and significant impact on PEB among hospitality sector employees in Egypt, which is largely in line with Sobaih et al. (2022b) who underscored the pivotal role of GTL in influencing and driving the adoption of PEB practices by employees. Moreover, the results showed that GTL has a positive and significant impact on OP among hospitality sector employees in Egypt, which is consists with Mirzaei (2023) who declared that the presence of organizational pride significantly influences the development of pro-environmental behavior in a workplace. In addition, the results showed that organizational pride has a positive and significant impact on pro-environmental behavior among hospitality sector employees in Egypt, which is largely consistent with what addressed by Elshaer et al. (2023) who declared that OP contributes to a workplace atmosphere that encourages innovation and creativity, leading to the development PEB. Furthermore, the results emphasis the indirect impact between green transformational leadership and pro-environmental behavior among hospitality sector employees in Egypt, through the organizational pride, which confirm the mediating role of the organization pride between the two variables. According to the data and available references to the authors, this is the first proof of the existence of a direct positive significant impact between the two variables.

The study reached a number of results that have an impact and importance on the theoretical and practical aspects of the hospitality industry. It contributed to supporting the shortcomings in the literature on the role of organizational pride in the environmental behavior

of employees in the hospitality sector, as well as contributes to the limited literature on the mediating role of organizational pride in the relationship between green transformational leadership and pro-environmental behavior by employees in the hospitality sector. Also, this means that organizational pride has the potential to change the effect of green transformational leadership on pro-environmental behavior. Moreover, these findings have implications for management style in the hospitality sector, as leaders in these entities need to pay more attention to stimulating employees' organizational pride and subtly guiding them toward environmentally conscious behaviors, thus influencing their pro-environmental behavior, ultimately pushing their organizations toward improved environmental practices, which impact positively on the hospitality industry.

## Conclusion

This paper aims at investigating the direct impact of green transformational leadership on pro-environmental behavior, and organizational pride among hospitality sector employees in Egypt, and the indirect impact between GTL and PEB through organizational pride (OP). Data were collected from 444 employees in Egyptian hotels. The statistical package SPSS vs 24 and Excel Sheet 2010 were used to analyse the descriptive data and explore the demographic features of the respondents, additionally, the structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM V.4) was utilized to examine the direct and indirect impacts between variables and to test the research hypotheses. The SEM results showed that green transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on pro-environmental behavior of employees, and on organizational pride among hospitality sector employees in Egypt. Moreover, the SEM results proved a full mediating effect of organizational pride on the link between green transformational leadership and pro-environmental behavior among hospitality sector employees in Egypt, which means that organizational pride of hotel employees can play an important role in improved environmental practices for hotels as they strive towards green transformation, which may help and support decision-makers while planning, managing, and leading their hospitality entities.

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