ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI | Volume XII Issue X October 2025



Empowering Sustainability: Green Inclusive Leadership Role in Enhancing Employee Green Behavior in Indonesia

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DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.1210000202

Received: 20 October 2025; Accepted: 28 October 2025; Published: 15 November 2025

ABSTRACT

Due to a rise of climate change and global warming issues, environmental protection became an unavoidable subject for every single person, including managers and leaders of enterprises. As the biggest source of environmental destruction, enterprises try to seek ways to reduce the level of environmental deterioration. One of the strategies employees use is corporate green inclusive leadership. This study analyzes the effect of green inclusive leadership on employees' engagement in sustainable practices. Moreover, we also investigate the mediating effect of both pro-environmental goal clarity and green organizational identification and the moderating effect of green HRM practices. Using a questionnaire we developed to assess the green organizational condition, we collected responses from 202 participants in Indonesia. By incorporating the use of the SEM model and analysis, we found that green inclusive leadership positively impacts employees' engagement in sustainable practices. Pro-environmental goal clarity and green organizational identification were also found to be strong mediating factors in bridging the initial effect of green inclusive leadership on employees' sustainable practices. Moreover, green HRM practices also enhanced the positive influence of green inclusive leadership on our mediating factors. Through these findings, this study provides insights on the development of green managerial practices and green behavior studies in Indonesia, where environmental-focused goals and strategies in enterprises are still in the beginning stages.

Keywords: Green inclusive leadership, employees' green behavior, green HRM; environmental goals, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues have become prominent and unavoidable subjects to discuss in our modern society. Currently, more than 99% of the world's land area is exposed to air pollution (Yu et al., 2023). Additionally, greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase, with carbon dioxide concentrations exceeding 400 parts per million in 2023, a new record that highlights the severity of our environmental condition (WMO, 2024). One hundred companies are reported to be responsible for approximately 71% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Oldfield, 2022). There have been efforts to reduce the rapid speed of environmental deterioration and climate change, especially for firms and enterprises, such as waste reduction, sustainable sourcing, annual sustainable reports, and green inclusive efforts.

Over the years, scholars have tried to investigate and observe the effectiveness of these efforts toward environmental protection. In particular, they have examined how leaders can play an integral role in addressing and actively engaging with environmental issues. Leadership based on environmental awareness has proven to be positively associative with the adoption of green culture and innovation in the workplace (Fan et al., 2023; He et al., 2023). This could happen if a leader promotes collaboration and inclusion (Zhang et al., 2025), demonstrates green behaviors (Javaid et al., 2023), and establishes clear goals and strategies (Su et al., 2020). Leaders who align themselves with environmental protection tend to be more proactive in performing cooperation with their employees, which, in turn, helps to create a workplace atmosphere that is supportive and

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fosters employees' comfort and engagement (Ahsan et al., 2024; Iqbal et al., 2020). This environment has led employees to be more proactive and engaged with their workplace and environmental issues, resulting in greater participation in green and sustainable efforts (Mirahsani et al., 2024; Li et al., 2023).

Moreover, some studies have explored the different channels in which leaders can influence employees to engage in sustainable practices ranging from corporate social responsibility, green culture, and employees' commitment (Faezah et al., 2024). However, most studies have not yet considered how cognitive reception will influence employees' actions. Green inclusive leadership needs to implement their environmental protection action through clear pro-environmental policies and goals. In other words, align the organization with the leaders' own environmental values. In this way, employees will be more emotionally and cognitively driven to engage in green behaviors and sustainable practices (Quan et al., 2022). This assumption is supported by CognitiveAffective Processing System (CAPS) theory, where cognitive and affective factors within individuals will result in them performing a certain behavior (Denton et al., 2020). In this study, we are going to implement the use of CAPS theory to construct our hypotheses framework. This theory offers a unique perspective on how green inclusive leadership can influence employees' engagement in sustainable behaviors. We use mediating variables to represent the cognitive units between green inclusive leadership and employees' sustainable practices: PR environment clarity and green organization identification. These mediating factors were previously used by Quan et al. (2022).

In this study, we also use green human resource management practices as a moderating variable. HRM is an important aspect to observe the effectiveness of leadership within an organization. HRM provides insights for developing effective and supportive leaders, fostering workplace culture that is positive and productive, and ensuring employees' performance and behavior are in accordance with the organizational goals. Some studies (Darvishmotevali et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023; Quan et al., 2022) also have found that HRM that implements sustainable values in its practices has a strong positive association with employees' engagement in sustainable factors.

There are two contributions that this paper provides. *First*, by considering the cognitive and psychological reception of employees, we become one of the few studies that implement CAPS theory to observe the effectiveness of green inclusive leadership towards the sustainable engagement practiced by employees. *Second*, our study focuses on Indonesia, where the environmental awareness and protection in firms and enterprises are not yet thoroughly explored. With the proposed model we use in this study, we enrich the focus of sustainable, social behaviors and environmental studies that eventually could become the reference for the next studies to use.

Furthermore, the rest of the paper will be developed and divided into several chapters. Chapter two will provide some insights about previous literature and studies that help us to construct the hypothesis in this paper. Chapter three will provide the information about our data sources, data collection process, and methodology used in this study. Chapter four will provide the information of our data analysis and results. Chapter five will be the conclusion and implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green Inclusive Leadership and Employee Sustainable Practices

Green inclusive leadership refers to a particular type of leadership that mixes the inclusive approaches with environmental and sustainable values in its practices (Zhang et al., 2025). As the word "inclusive" within the term suggests, this type of leadership is characterized by three elements: openness, accessibility, and collaboration (Li et al., 2022). Openness symbolizes the engagement of a leader in open communication with employees in order to ensure inclusion and creative ideas in handling environmental issues. Accessibility refers to the availability of leader and organizational attributes to support employees to do their tasks in order to achieve environmental goals within their organization (Mirahsani et al., 2024). Collaboration showcases the culture that a leader fosters to create a strong camaraderie between employees in pursuit of environmental goals (Iqbal et al., 2020).

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According to Quan et al. (2022), a green inclusive leader's collaboration plays a key role in ensuring a company can achieve their goals in environmental protection. This collaboration can be achieved through the leader's influence on employees' green behaviors. Ren et al. (2024) and Javaid et al. (2023) further explained that green inclusive leaders encourage employees to actively participate in sustainable practices by demonstrating PR environmental practices in the workplace, such as energy and water saving, waste reduction through the use of reusable materials for eating and drinking, and waste recycling. Su et al. (2020) found that leaders can set clear goals and environmental programs to help employees adopt green behavior more effectively. Moreover, Ahsan et al. (2024) also found that a leader's support and encouragement of employees' innovative ideas resulted in employees' engagement in actively practicing sustainable acts. Accordingly, we construct our first hypothesis as follows:

H1: Green inclusive leadership has a significant effect on the increase of employees' engagement in sustainable practices

The Mediating Effect of Pro-Environmental Clarity

In Cognitive-Affective Processing System theory, behavior refers to a product of an individual's interpretation of certain information that emotionally motivates and stimulates them to do (Denton et al., 2020). The successful performance of a behavior can only be achieved when the information an individual receives is effectively encoded. In this theory, the clarity within the information is a key that leads to a successful outcome of behavior (Dingess et al., 2020). Therefore, in order to make employees engage in sustainable practices, organizations need to ensure that they have pro-environmental clarity.

Pro-environmental clarity can be understood as the extent to which an individual or a group understands environmental goals and the necessary steps to take in order to achieve them (Peng et al., 2020). Clear goals, policies, and procedures provide employees with a clear understanding of their roles in protecting the environment, fostering a sense of purpose within themselves, and ultimately leading them to take proactive actions toward environmental protection (Sun et al., 2025). Clear environmental goals also reduce ambiguities and misconceptions regarding employees' responsibilities, leading to a more effective implementation of environmental efforts in the workplace (Quan et al., 2022).

Green inclusive leadership is key in ensuring employees' pro-environmental clarity. A study by Maqsoom et al. (2025) found that green inclusive leaders encourage inclusion and active participation in environmental protection activities, leading to a clear demonstration of pro-environmental behaviors. Mirahsani et al. (2024) suggest that green inclusive leaders also enhance accessibility through the implementation of policies and procedures, establishing standards that help employees identify their roles and responsibilities in protecting the environment. Moreover, Peng et al. (2020) found that leaders who demonstrate green behaviors are open to collaboration and knowledge sharing, encouraging employees to voice their opinions, suggestions, and questions regarding their understanding of environmental goals. Based on these explanations, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Pro-environmental clarity mediates the effect of green inclusive leadership on employees' sustainable practices

The Mediating Effect of Green Organizational Identification

Green organizational identification is a term that is used to describe a collective consciousness of an organization in how they perceive organizational goals aligned with environmental protection efforts. Companies or organizations perceived as having a high level of green organizational identification place environmental goals at the forefront and align their practices accordingly (Chang et al., 2019). Within this environment, employees were also perceived to have a strong sense of connection and awareness regarding environmental protection (Quan et al., 2022). Unsworth et al. (2021) moreover found that an organization possessing a "green" image positively influences employees' sustainable actions. In this organization, employees are introduced to and actively in touch with a green culture that encourages them to foster a strong sense of belief in sustainability, leading them to act accordingly. Page 2285

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In this sense, green inclusive leadership is one of the key attributes for fostering strong green organizational identification in the workplace. Klein et al. (2013) suggest that leadership style has a strong association with organizational culture. Green inclusive leaders can foster encouragement where inclusivity and support are valued and encouraged, which, in turn, significantly boosts the implementation of green practices in the workplace. In this supportive environment, employees will be inspired to actively engage with organizational practices and align themselves with organizational goals (Liu et al., 2020). According to Abdou et al. (2023), a high level of employee engagement leads to a high sense of belonging towards the organization. Thus, enhance green organizational identification. Accordingly, we construct hypothesis three as follows:

H3: Green organizational identification mediates the effect of green inclusive leadership on employees' sustainable practices

The Moderating Effect of Green HRM Practices

Green HRM practices refer to a set of human resource management activities integrated with sustainable values and models. These practices can be reflected through recruitment that also considers candidates' environmental awareness, employee training that also features environmental issues and strategies, and employee evaluation that considers the environment and eco-friendly behaviors (Zihan et al., 2024). Green HRM practices have proven to be very crucial in realizing organizational environmental goals. Through green recruitment, a company can simultaneously perform sustainable practices through a paperless hiring approach and advocate for environmental priorities by selecting candidates who possess skills and personalities that align with environmental values (Jamil et al., 2023). Through training and development, companies can foster the culture when employees are educated on the importance of environmental protection and sustainable acts, aligning their individual goals with organizational goals, and actively encourage them to participate in sustainable practices (Barakat et al., 2023). Through green performance management, employees are encouraged to engage in ecofriendly practices in the workplace, allowing them to develop habits of green behavior and shape their mindset toward environmental protection (Alkhozaim et al., 2024).

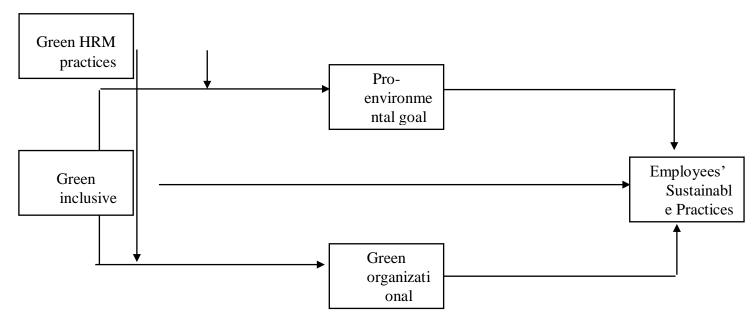


Fig. 1 Theoretical Framework

Based on several studies, green HRM practices have been found to significantly enhance the effectiveness of green organizational strategies in improving both organizational and employees' green performance. Darvishmotevali et al. (2022) found that green HR practices are significantly associated with employees' proenvironmental performance. Li et al. (2023) found that green HRM practices, through psychological green environments, significantly influence employees' in-role green behavior, supporting the findings of previous studies. Moreover, Quan et al. (2022) found that green HRM practices also positively moderate the effectiveness of green inclusive leadership. Accordingly, we construct our fourth and fifth hypotheses as follows:

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H4: Green HRM practices moderate the effect of green inclusive leadership on pro-environmental clarity

H5: Green HRM practices moderate the effect of green inclusive leadership on green organizational identification

METHODOLOGY

Samples and Data Collection

In order to collect a sample that is both timely and accurately, this study was conducted by incorporating realtime investigation and primary data acquired from questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was distributed to Indonesian employees from February to May 2025 through social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. In the end, we collected 202 samples that consist of employees from various organizations in Indonesia. The respondents' demographic profile is presented in Table 1 below. TABLE 1 Sample descriptions

Profile	Description	N	(%)
Gender	Male	88	43.6%
	Female	114	56.4%
Age	17-25	96	47.5%
	26-35	73	36.1%
	36-45	28	13.9%
	>45 years old	5	2.5%
Education	High school and below	37	18.3%
	Bachelor	124	61.4%
	Master	34	16.8%
	Doctor	7	3.5%
Monthly Income	<rp3 million<="" td=""><td>26</td><td>12.9%</td></rp3>	26	12.9%
	Rp3 million – Rp5 million	97	48%
	Rp6 million – Rp10 million	59	29.2%
	>Rp10 million	20	9.9%
Job Tenure	<1 year	25	12.4%
	1-3 years	89	44.1%
	3-5 years	52	25.7%
	>5 years	36	17.8%

Measures

To measure our sample data, we create a scenario based on the interaction of factors displayed in the constructed framework. The structure of this questionnaire was based on Quan et al. (2022). The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section consists of respondents' general descriptions, such as gender identity, age, job tenure, education, and income level. The second section is the main part, which presents statements related to the topic of this study. Green inclusive leadership, pro-environmental goal clarity, and green organizational identification each consist of three questionnaire items. While both HRM practices and

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employees' engagement in sustainable practices each have 4 questionnaire items. Furthermore, Table 2 below presents the list of questionnaires used in this study.

TABLE 2 Questionnaire Items

	Items	Source
Green Inclusive Leadership (GIL)	(1) The leadership in the organization is willing to discuss with employees environmental goals at work and new green ways to achieve these goals(2) Employees can consult with leaders in the organization about	Quan et al. (2022)
	environmental issues at work (3) Leaders are willing to listen and deal with employees' request related to environmental issues at work	
Pro-	(1) I am clear about my environmental responsibilities	
Environment	(2) I have a clear understanding of my environmental objectives	
Clarity (PEC)	(3) I am aware of the link between my environmental activities and overall objectives of my workplace	
Green Organization Identification	(1) I am very aware of the company's environmental management and conservative history(2) I believe that the company has established a clear set of environmental objectives and missions	
(GOI)	(3) I agree with the company's actions in environmental management and protection	
Green HRM Practices	(1) The environmental objectives set by company's management can be implemented	
(GHP)	(2) Company members participate in discussion on environmental issues	
	(3) Company provides training employees in environmental protection related knowledge and skills	
	(4) Employees are well-recognized and rewarded for their environmental initiatives	
Employee	(1) I will participate in environmental projects	
Sustainable	(2) I will save the use of unnecessary electricity and water	
Practices (EGB)	(3) I would make suggestions about environmental practices to improve the environmental performance of the organization	
	(4) I will throw trash into the trash bin according to their categories	

Five-point Likert scale was used in order to better masure and calculate the weight of each items with 1 symbolizes a strong disagreement with the item statement and 5 represent a strong agreement with the item statement. The use of a five-point Likert scale has proven to be a useful tool, providing a nuanced yet detailed means of capturing respondents' opinions and beliefs (Revilla et al., 2014). Thus, we implement the use of a five-point Likert scale approach to observe the relationship between variables.





RESULTS

Validity and Reliability Tests

In order to check whether our indicators used within this study are valid or not, we conduct a validity test by using Cronbach's alpha. We compare the values of our R_{Table} and R_{Value} . The value of R_{Value} is determined by using Pearson's correlation coefficient for a sample size of 202 and a significant level (α) of 0.05. The following table 3 shows that the R_{Value} is higher than R_{Table} , indicating that our indicators are strongly valid.

To ensure reliability of the variables used within this study, we also conduct a reliability test by incorporating the use of Cronbach's alpha. Table 3 showcases that all of the alpha (α) values of the variables are above 0.70, displaying a strong level of reliability of all the variables.

TABLE 3 Cronbach's alpha analysis results

Variable	Item	R.Table	R.Value	Alpha
Green Inclusive Leadership (GIL)	GIL1	0.138	0.5216	0.9733
	GIL2	0.138	0.6067	
	GIL3	0.138	0.5463	
Pro-Environment Clarity (PEC)	PEC1	0.138	0.7932	0.9306
	PEC2	0.138	0.8245	
	PEC3	R. Table	0.7974	
Green Organization Identification	GOI1	0.138	0.8191	0.9273
(GOI)	GOI2	0.138	0.8410	
	GOI3	0.138	0.7764	
Green HRM Practices (GHP)	GHP1	0.138	0.8117	0.9328
	GHP2	0.138	0.8067	
	GHP3	0.138	0.8233	
	GHP4	0.138	0.7713	
Employee Sustainable Practices	EGB1	0.138	0.8127	0.9289
(EGB)	EGB2	0.138	0.8114	
	EGB3	0.138	0.8137	
	EGB4	0.138	0.8063	

Model Fit

TABLE 4 Model fit

Fit Indices	Thresholds		Model Value
	Favorable	Acceptable	
χ2/df	1.00 - 3.00	3.00 - 5.00	2.215
CFI	>0.95	0.90 - 0.95	0.998

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TLI	>0.95	0.90 - 0.95	0.991
SRMR	<0.05	0.05 - 0.08	0.010
RMSEA	<0.05	0.05 - 0.08	0.078

We conducted several measurement tests in order to check whether our constructed SEM model is appropriate and compatible with our sample data. The fitness of the model was measured by several goodness-to-fit tests, such as chi-square, CFI, SRMR, RMSEA, and TLI. After checking the comparative fitness, incremental fitness, root mean square error, root mean square residual, and chi-square to the degree of freedom, we conclude that the model used in this study is strongly fit for our sample data and the relationship between variables is reliable. The detailed result is showcased in table 4.

Path Analysis

Through the use of the SEM model, we conducted simultaneous equations. By using these simultaneous equations, we can analyze the causal relationship between variables and check our hypothesis. In the following Table 5, we can see that GIL has a positive and significant association with both PEC and GOI at the 1% level. At the same time, GOI and PEC are also significantly associated with EGB at the 1% level, suggesting that H1 hypotheses are supported by the finding.

Moreover, the use of Hayes' Process program and the Bootstrap method is also used to determine whether PEC and GOI are effectively mediating GIL and EGB within this model. In Table 6, after running our bootstrap sample 5000 times, we found that GOI and PEC have strong mediating effects. PEC indirectly affects the relationship between GIL and EGB of 0.477 with a 95% CI of 0.348 and 0.607, and the confidence interval does not include zero. Therefore, H2 is accepted. GOI was also found to possess an indirect effect between GIL and EGB of 0.275 with a 95% CI of 0.161, 0.390; and the confidence interval does not include zero, indicating that H3 is also accepted. Furthermore, through the double-mediation comparison model, we also found that the estimated value of the combined mediators is 0.753 with a 95% CI of 0.577, 0.930, indicating a strong mediating power of both PEC and GOI.

TABLE 5 Path analysis results

Structural paths	Coefficient	p values	Significant
$GIL \rightarrow PEC$	0.833	0.000	***
GIL → GOI	0.144	0.009	***
$GIL \rightarrow EGB$	0.781	0.000	***
$PEC \rightarrow EGB$	0.591	0.000	***
$GOI \rightarrow EGB$	0.337	0.000	***

TABLE 6 Mediating effect analysis results

	Coefficient	Standard deviation	p values	Lower limits	Upper limits
$\begin{array}{c} GIL \rightarrow PEC \rightarrow EGB \\ (a) \end{array}$	0.477	0.066	0.000	0.348	0.607
$\begin{array}{c} GIL \rightarrow GOI \rightarrow EGB \\ \text{(b)} \end{array}$	0.275	0.058	0.009	0.161	0.390
(a,b)	0.753	0.090	0.000	0.577	0.930

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Moderating Effect Analysis

By using hierarchical regression, the significance of green HRM practices as a moderator is analyzed and observed. The following Table 7 presents the results of the moderating effects using hierarchical regression analysis. Moreover, to prevent multicollinearity that may arise during our analysis, we standardized both the mean of GIL and green HRP.

According to the results displayed in table 7, we found that green HRM practices (GHP) strongly moderate the effect of GIL towards PEC and GOI. As models (1), (2), and (3) suggest, the inclusion of GIL, GHP, and the interaction term between GIL and GHP significantly increases the R-squared value, indicating that GHP enhances the effect of GIL in improving employees' pro-environmental goal clarity. On the other hand, (4), (5), and (6) show that the addition of GL, GHP, and the interaction term of GIL and GHP also significantly increase the quantity of R-squared, indicating that GHP also enhances the influence of GIL in increasing organizational identification towards environmental protection and sustainable commitment. Thus supporting both H4 and H5.

TABLE 7 Hierarchical regression analysis results

Variables	PEC			GOI		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gender	-0.0465	-0.0204	-0.0231	0.000295	0.0246	0.0220
Age	0.0576	0.0486*	0.0286	0.0320	0.0223	0.00308
Education	0.0906*	-0.0470	-0.0424	-0.0671	-0.0255	-0.0210
Income	0.0295	-0.0330	-0.0237	0.0500	0.00100	0.00990
Tenure	-0.0256	0.0102	0.0140	-0.0205	0.00426	0.00786
IL		0.576***	1.729***		0.469***	1.574***
GHP		0.351***	1.430***		0.434***	1.468***
IL×GHP			0.288***			0.276***
Observations	202	202	202	202	202	202
R-squared	0.026	0.683	0.717	0.012	0.636	0.669

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

According to the results found in empirical analysis, we propose several key findings. *First*, green inclusive leadership found to have positive and significant impacts on employees' engagement in sustainable practices. *Second*, both green organizational identification and pro-environmental goal clarity are key factors mediating green inclusive leadership and sustainable practices performed by employees. *Last*, green HRM practices enhance the positive impact of an environmental-based leadership style on pro-environmental goal practices and green organizational identification.

Based on these findings, this study provides practical implications for firms in adopting and enhancing green behavior and performance. *First*, leaders and managers need to develop skills and knowledge about environmental issues and practices, encourage open communication and collaboration, encourage employees' participation in creating green innovation and voicing new ideas, and actively participate and demonstrate

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green behavior in the workplace. *Second*, training in encouraging open communication and knowledge on environmental protection and sustainable practices is crucial for managers and leaders. By incorporating this type of training for the higher-ups, they could foster green behaviors themselves and become the example that employees can refer to. *Third*, the implementation of environmental values in HRM practices, such as green recruitment, green performance evaluation, employee green behavior recognition, etc., needs to be actively encouraged. *Fourth*, firms should clearly establish environmental goals, standards, and procedures to ensure clarity for employees to identify their roles and responsibilities.

Overall, this study gives valuable insights that are both timely and integral to further increase the awareness of environmental issues and their practices. However, limitations need to be addressed in order to give a better direction for future research. *First*, this study emphasizes more on the cognitive-affective relationship between leadership and employees' behavioral patterns. Therefore, individual factors become the most prominent aspect, while other aspects, such as the institutional aspect, are not thoroughly explored. *Second*, the questionnaire was also constructed with a limited amount of items per one aspect; therefore, the observation found in this study only applies to specific conditions informed within the questionnaire. These will be the priority for future study to explore in order to broaden and widen our understanding of green behavior and its influence on firms' environment and prospects.

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