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## Fostering Green Behavior Through Inclusive Leadership: Unpacking the Roles of Engagement and Affect

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### ABSTRACT

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*Green behavior is crucial for firm success, sustained competitive advantage, and environmental protection. While existing research has explored diverse antecedents to employee green behavior, the role of leadership inclusiveness as a key precursor to employee green performance remains underexplored. There is also a dearth of research on how employee moods and emotions shape the pathway from inclusive leadership to green behavior through work engagement. Drawing on the Social Exchange Theory, we used data from 210 subordinate-manager dyads collected in two waves to investigate how leadership inclusiveness affects employee engagement, which subsequently prompts green performance among subordinates. We also examined how affect (PA and NA) buffered the mediated paths between inclusive leadership – work engagement, and between work engagement – employee green performance. Results confirmed that inclusive leadership precedes work engagement, which results in green performance among subordinates that showing good support for the hypotheses. Partial support was found for buffering effects of positive affect and negative affect, PA and NA, as moderators of the hypothesized mediated paths. These novel findings highlight that inclusivity initiatives are critical for creating an engaged workforce, as they foster a green work culture. Our study also accentuates the impact of affect (emotions) in relationships between inclusive leadership, work engagement, and employee green performance is also highlighted. We provide theoretical and managerial implications, strengths, limitations, and future research suggestions.*

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## 1. Introduction

Modern firms must prioritize environment-friendly, sustainable work practices (Gkorezis & Petridou, 2017) because these practices uplift employee satisfaction, productivity, firm reputation, and benefit the external environment (Tang *et al.*, 2023). Employee green performance is notably important in the hotel and tourism sectors (Mi *et al.*, 2020) because this sector, despite economic significance, is known for its negative environmental influence (Ahmad, Muslija, & Satrovic, 2021). Pro-environmental performance in the hotel and tourism industry is particularly important to attract an ecologically concerned clientele and attain significant financial, economic, social, and industrial sustainability (Tang *et al.*, 2023; Nasher, Puspa, & Survia, 2024).

Yet, employees in the hotel and tourism sector may find it difficult to adopt novel, green work methods due to insufficient training, established norms in interaction, service, and unforeseen events (Toeh *et al.*, 2019). The role of leadership becomes critical in this regard as instilling green performance among employees necessitates an apt leadership style – one that influences employees' aligned, positive emotional states and engagement for pro-environmental actions (Hsu *et al.*, 2019). Yet, an appropriate leadership style that inspires employee green performance through promoting positive psychological states and emotions is unaddressed in present literature. Given that inclusive leadership style encourages diversity, empathy, equity, openness, belongingness, and inclusivity when pursuing organizational decisions (Qasim, Usman, Ghani, & Khan, 2022) we argue for its suitability for inculcating green performance among employees - a proposition that has been scarcely researched.

Several studies have concluded that inclusive leadership and green work behaviours are positively related. For instance, Aboramadan, Crawford, Turkmenoglu and Farao (2022) concluded that inclusive leadership favoured employee green performance through mediation of green organizational support. Vakira, Shereni, Ncube and Ndlovu, (2022) found a mediating role of psychological safety between inclusive leadership and employee green performance, and recommended that other possible mediators between inclusive leadership and green performance should be tested within developing nations' context. Jiang, Ding, Wang, and Li (2020) found that psychological ownership mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee pro-environment actions. Huang, Huang and Chang (2022) recommended that different mediating variables should be tested in the inclusive leadership and employee green performance relationship.

A deeper review of these studies indicate that although inclusive leadership positively impacts employee green behavior, the underlying moderation and mediation mechanisms need deeper exploration across different contexts. Specifically, these studies do not address emotional states that can promote green behaviours among subordinates in the presence of inclusive leadership. Moreover, results of their study cannot be generalized in Pakistan due to varied market conditions. In sum, the role of positive and negative emotions in driving green employee behavior is inconclusive (Lan, Mao, Peng, & Wang, 2021), despite their known links to employee attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, while studies have examined the effects of PA and NA on job satisfaction, counterproductive behavior, proactive performance (Peng & Emily, 2024), and creativity (Park, Choi, & Wu, 2021), further research is warranted to gain knowledge about how these emotions interact with leadership and subordinate green behavior. It is imperative that the underlying role of emotions in relationships between inclusive leadership and employee green behavior be examined for sustained work performance.

This study tests the main effect of inclusive leadership on employee green performance. It also tests a mediating role of employee engagement in the inclusive leadership – employee green performance relationship, and also tests how emotions (positive and negative) change pathways between inclusive leadership, employee engagement, and employee green performance.

### **1.1 The Pakistan Tourism and Hotel Sector**

The economic importance of the Pakistani hospitality industry is indicated by its current value of USD 20 billion with an estimated 3% growth per annum. Hence, sustainability-driven programs within the hospitality industry is imperative for the country's reputation and business opportunities (Tang, Ren, Wang, Li, & Zhang, 2023). Thus, promoting green performance is imperative for sustained economic growth in this industry.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Inclusive Leadership and Employee Green Performance**

Leadership inclusiveness comprises of “words and deeds exhibited by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions” (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006, p. 947). Inclusive leaders advocate and practice equality, fairness, and true diversity by accepting employees' wide-ranging viewpoints and experiences and work to remove obstacles related to gender, color, ethnicity, religion, or age (Roberson, 2006). This helps them build a secure and inclusive work environment where employees share viewpoints despite differences (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon & Ziv, 2010). As they offer access to physical spaces, open communication systems, and procedures to support communication and dialogue, such leaders build engagement and communication among employees (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Through such initiatives, an inclusive leader fosters a culture of well-being, belongingness, and organizational diversity that satisfies subordinates (Umrani, Bachkirov, Nawaz, Ahmed, & Pahi, 2023; Shafaei, Nejati, Omari, & Sharafizad, 2023). An inclusive leader upholds employee individuality and belongingness with the firm (Gupta, Nawaz, Tripathi, Chaudhry & Agrawal, 2022; Shore & Chung, 2021) and maintains group cohesiveness, which is imperative for shaping a culture of shared power and beliefs. Plausibly, this culture of shared beliefs and togetherness would support employee green practices, which are defined as, ‘...variety of acts and behaviors employees engage in that are connected to and benefit from environmental sustainability as well as those that harm it’ (Ones & Dilchert, 2012, p. 74). These mechanisms are interpretable from the Social Exchange Theory viewpoint. The fairness, compassion, and empathetic interaction (Blau, 1960; Kusrkar, 2024) that inclusive leaders display at work encourage reciprocation in subordinates as subordinates feel psychologically empowered and engaged with assigned work tasks (Javed, Abdullah, Zaffar, Haque, & Rubab, 2018). Subordinates feel committed to management values and align work behaviours with these values, which includes committing to green work behaviours. In this way, the leader's inclusivity initiatives and the subordinate's green performance become a persistent social exchange over time.

Several studies empirically support this notion. For instance, Zhou and Zheng (2023) concluded a positive impact of leaders' sustainability-driven initiatives on green performance, while Liaquat et al. (2024) found that the leader communication favours employee green behavior. Khalid, Shahzad, Shafi, and Paillé (2022) found that leaders' rewards and recognition for green performance promote green actions. Employees demonstrate sustainability-driven actions as their managers encourage involvement in

contributing knowledge, ideas, and experience for green initiatives (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2020). These studies indicate that leadership inclusiveness encourages environmentally friendly actions in subordinates, builds worker commitment towards ecologically optimal performance, as inclusive leaders empower employees to contribute to fostering green practices at work through leader-employee connection and support. The following is, therefore, suggested:

*H1: Inclusive leadership has a significant, positive impact on employee green behavior.*

## **2.2 Work Engagement as Mediator between Inclusive Leadership and Employee Green Performance**

Saks and Gruman (2014) defined employee engagement as a state when an individual ‘... is actively involved in their work and combines cognitive, emotional, and physical processes leading to high levels of enthusiasm, extra effort, and passion in their job, often resulting in strong positive feelings within the workplace and strong organizational relationships’ (p. 19). Components of employee engagement include vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker, Shimazu, Demerouti, Shimada, & Kawakami, 2011). Inclusive leaders instill work engagement in subordinates through continuous improvement, learning, and encouragement (Hirak, Peng, Carmeli, & Schaubroeck, 2017) and through encouraging commitment, loyalty, and satisfaction, (Kwon, Jeong, Park, & Yoon, 2024). Such a leader encourages empowerment and participation in organizational aims (Boccoli, Gastaldi, & Corso, 2022), which facilitates employee engagement in green initiatives. Employee green behavior manifests in a stimulating and engaging work milieu, an idea that finds substantial support in past studies (e.g. Alam, Mendelson, Boamah, & Gauthier, 2022; Koekemoer, De Beer, Govender, & Brouwers, 2021). Even in a hybrid work context, leaders who provide autonomy and flexibility to their subordinates are able to sustain employee commitment to pro-green performance (Susanto, Syailendra, & Suryawan, 2023). Based on these studies, it seems rational to argue that inclusivity initiatives undertaken by inclusive leaders boost collaboration and commitment for green work performance that helps them in staying involved, lively, absorbed, and dedicated to the display of green initiatives. This leads to the following proposition:

*H2: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee green performance.*

## **2.3 Affect (positive and negative) as a Moderator**

Affect is a positive or negative psychological state that stems from an individual’s subjective feelings. The *state* nature of affect makes it malleable, unlike fixed traits (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Positive and negative affect are two distinct constructs that vary along the same continuum and can co-exist (Schmukle, Egloff, & Burns, 2002). Positive affect (PA) is characterized by energy, confidence, sociability, and emotional satisfaction, whereas negative affect (NA) encompasses anger, guilt, distress, fear and is often linked to emotional instability and diminished self-concept (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Given empirical evidence that PA favours goal realization, boosts confidence and well-being and NA downplays these (Isen, 2004) it seems reasonable to suggest a significant role of affect in determining subordinate outcomes.

As Bandura (1977) suggested, optimistic moods support workflow, and affect may be argued to either support or thwart work performance and motivation (Johnson, Johnsons, & Smith, 2018; Jones & Ekkekakis, 2019). For shaping desirable affect in subordinates, the leader’s role would be to offer needed work resources (Vacharkulksemsuk & Fredrickson, 2013) as well as to inspire, offer constructive advice,

and clarify goals (Martinent & Nicolas, 2017). These social interactions would foster a constructive mindset among those who experience positive moods and feelings, as they have greater work-focused energy and engagement compared to those subordinates who have high negative energy due to negative emotions (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). These subordinates would feel greater energy and commitment (DeJoy, Della, Vandenberg, & Wilson, 2010), which would reinforce engagement and pro-environment behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When such reciprocations are repeated, mutual trust, commitment, and affect-based exchanges become the norm, leading to a work culture where green performance is celebrated and sought.

Employees simultaneously experience positive and negative affect, as these are distinct, implying that their impacts on job outcomes should be separately explored. We argue that work engagement would lead to more green performance for employees with high PA as compared to high NA. Thus, PA would moderate the inclusive leadership–work engagement, and work engagement–employee green performance relationships in such a way that these relationships would be stronger when PA is high. NA would moderate the inclusive leadership–work engagement, and work engagement–employee green performance relationships in such a way that these relationships would be weak when NA is high. We propose the following:

*H3: Positive affect will moderate the mediated relationships between (i) inclusive leadership and employee engagement, and (ii) employee engagement and employee green behavior, such that these mediated paths will be strongly positive under high PA and weakly positive under low PA.*

*H4: Negative affect will moderate the mediated relationships between (i) inclusive leadership and employee engagement, and (ii) employee engagement and employee green behavior, such that these mediated paths will be strongly negative under high NA and weakly negative under low NA.*

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is presented in Figure 1.

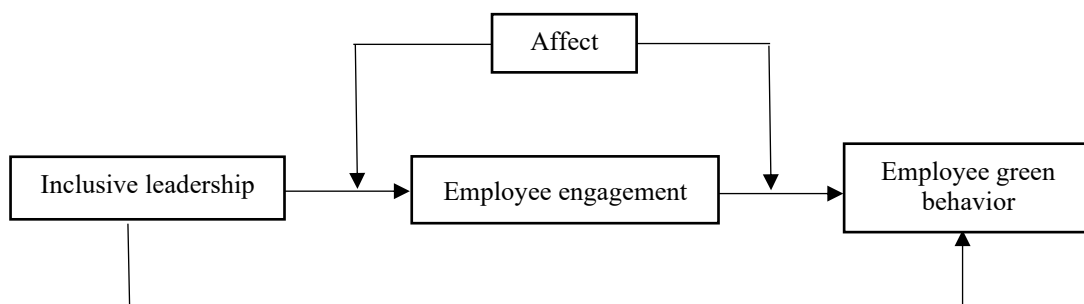


Figure 1: Theoretical Model for Study

## 3. Methodology

Contacts in the hospitality and tourism sector were obtained from the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation. In order to capture variance in size, ownership, and working practices, we selected five firms that were accessible for data collection. Formal consent for participation in the study was sought from each firm's HR office with assurance that only aggregated results would be used, and that data would be anonymous and confidential. To minimize common method variance, we collected data from

subordinate-manager dyads with a time interval of one month (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003). Using Google Forms and a printed version, we disseminated 400 copies of the research instrument that included 250 copies for subordinates and 150 copies for line managers. Only direct supervisors participated, each rating no more than three subordinates. Two reminders were sent weekly after each phase. Codes matched dyads across both time points. At T1, subordinates rated leaders' inclusivity and self-reported affect and engagement; at T2, managers rated green behaviors. In order to minimize possible non-response bias, we assured respondents of confidentiality, relying on official channels for contacts, and scheduled reminders (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Of the 400 subordinate surveys, 262 were usable; of the 250 manager surveys, 230 were usable. Final analysis included 210 matched dyads (32% response rate). Demographics included gender, age, academic qualification, job and organizational tenure, and organization type. The results are presented in Table I.

### 3.1 Instrumentation

**3.1.3 Inclusive leadership.** We asked subordinates to evaluate their immediate line manager's inclusive leadership using Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, and Ziv's (2010) 9-item Inclusive Leadership Scale. It is a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors ranging from '1=not at all' to '5=to a large extent'. Examples of items include: '*my manager is open to hearing new ideas*', and '*my manager is accessible for discussing emerging problems*'.

**3.1.4 Employee engagement.** We asked employees to rate their engagement levels, using Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker's (2002) 17-item Work Engagement Scale that assesses vigour, dedication, and absorption felt at work. along a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from '0=never' to '5=almost every day'. Sample items are '*time flies when I am working, and I feel happy when I am working intensely*'.

**3.1.5 Affect.** Using the 20-item Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) we asked respondents to rate moods, emotions and feelings that they had experienced at work over the past month along a 5-point Likert-type scale with '1=very slightly' to '5=extremely'.

**3.1.6 Employee green behavior.** Managers were asked to rate green behaviors demonstrated by their respective employees using McConnaughy's (2014) 27-item Employee Green Behavior Scale (EGB Scale). It is a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors ranging from '1=strongly disagree' to '5=strongly agree'. To minimize the chances of data nesting, two or three employees were rated by their immediate manager. Sample items for this scale are, '*(He/ she) suggests ways for other employees to act in a more environmentally friendly manner*', and, '*utilizes new technologies to benefit the environment*'.

### 3.2 Results

**Table I: Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=210)**

Variable	Category	Frequency
Gender	Male	133
	Female	77
Age (years)	<30 – 40	129
	41 – 50	46
	> 51	35
Academic Qualification	Intermediate	57
	Bachelor's degree	75
	Master's degree	57
	MS degree	21
Organization type	4 or 5 star hotel	97
	Restaurant	66
	Tourism agency	47
Job tenure (in years)	<1 – 5	148
	6 – 10	27
	> 10	35
Managerial level	Junior manager	91
	Middle manager	114
	Senior manager	05

Table II presents reliability and validity tests for all study constructs. For all items, standardized factor loadings were greater than 0.6, CR values were satisfactory as they were greater than 0.7, and the AVE values exceeded 0.5, which is the acceptable threshold (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). As scales were validated with established psychometric properties and there was no reason to alter them, it was deemed appropriate to adopt the scales.

**Table II: Reliability and Validity of Scales**

Variable	Item	Estimate	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Composite reliability (CR)	Convergence validity (AVE)
Inclusive leadership	IL1	.802	0.855	0.845	0.665
	IL 2	.811			
	IL 3	0.76			
	IL 4	0.75			
	IL 5	0.78			
	IL 6	0.88			
	IL 7	0.84			
	IL 8	0.82			
	IL 9	0.83			
Employee engagement	EE 1	0.82	0.853	0.934	0.706
	EE 2	0.86			
	EE 3	0.84			
	EE 4	0.86			
	EE 5	0.81			
	EE 6	0.88			
	EE 7	0.86			
	EE 8	0.84			
	EE 9	0.82			
	EE 10	0.82			
	EE 11	0.83			
	EE 12	0.85			
	EE 13	0.86			
	EE 14	0.86			
	EE 15	0.88			
	EE 16	0.82			
	EE 17	0.87			
Employee green behavior	EGB 1	0.77	0.882	0.853	0.675
	EGB 2	0.78			
	EGB 3	0.72			
	EGB 4	0.74			
	EGB 5	0.79			
	EGB 6	0.81			
	EGB 7	0.82			
	EGB 8	0.83			
	EGB 9	0.86			
	EGB 10	0.88			
Affect (PA-NA)	PA 1	0.771	0.771	0.715	0.700
	PA 2	0.773			
	PA 3	0.775			
	PA 4	0.774			
	PA 5	0.779			
	NA 1	0.823	0.780	0.713	0.735
	NA 2	0.861			
	NA 3	0.854			
	NA 4	0.813			
	NA 5	0.811			

**Table III: Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations among Study Variables (N=210)**

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	1.6	9.88	1									
2. Gender	2.3	1.04	-.07	1								
3.AQ	3.1	.78	.17*	-.31	1							
4.Org type	2.2	.47	.21	.32	.09	1						
5.Job tenure	2.7	.73	.23*	.25*	.16*	.20**	1					
6.Mngr level	1.8	3.61	.31**	.31*	.51**	.14**	.43**	1				
7.IL	2.7	.92	.03	-.13*	.11**	.09**	.31**	.42*	1			
8.EGB	2.4	1.18	.12	-.14*	.18**	.13**	.41**	.32*	.43**	1		
9.EE	1.3	3.21	.08	.11*	.16	.14**	.35**	.28*	.51**	.45**	1	
10. Affect	3.1	2.1	.22	.08	.13	.07	.24	.03				
PA									.34**	.43**	.46**	1
NA									-.26**	-.22**	-.30**	

Note: N=210; AQ=academic qualification; Org type=organizational type; Mngrl level=managerial level; IL=inclusive leadership; EGB=employee green behavior; EE=employee engagement; PA=positive affect; NA=negative affect; \*p<0.05; \*\*p< .01.

Table III presents the mean values, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among all study variables. Inclusive leadership correlated positively with employee green behavior ( $r=0.43, p<0.01$ ) with employee engagement ( $r=0.51, p<0.01$ ) PA ( $r=0.34, p<0.01$ ) and correlated negatively with NA ( $r= -.26, p<0.01$ ). Employee green behavior correlated positively with employee engagement ( $r=0.45, p<0.01$ ) with PA, ( $r=0.43, p<0.01$ ) and shared a negative correlation with NA ( $r=-.22, p<0.01$ ). Employee engagement shared positive correlation with PA ( $r=0.46, p<0.01$ ) and negative correlation with NA ( $r=-.30, p<0.01$ ). All correlations were in accordance with expectations, indicating basic support for hypotheses.

### 3.3 Hypotheses Testing

We tested for the moderated-mediation effects using Hayes and Rockwood's (2017) PROCESS Model 58. The conditional indirect effects of inclusive leadership on employee green behavior through employee engagement was tested at different levels of positive affect and negative affect in two separate analysis, as affect had to be split into positive affect and negative affect to test the suggested hypotheses.

**Table IV: Results of Moderated-Mediation Analysis with PA as Moderator**

	Coeff	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI	R <sup>2</sup>	F
<b>Outcome Variable: Employee Engagement</b>								
Inclusive Leadership	0.53	0.04	13.06	.000	.4547	.6159	0.353	170.8
Positive Affect	.118	.212	.555	.579	-.3006	.5368		
Interaction 1: IL*PA	-.026	.054	-.492	.622	-.1336	.0801		
<b>Outcome Variable: Employee Green Behavior</b>								
Employee Engagement	1.09	.139	7.87	.000	.8249	1.374	0.495	75.71
Inclusive Leadership	.1866	.0554	3.36	.000	.0776	.2957		
Positive Affect	.877	.232	3.76	.000	.4188	1.336		
Interaction 2: EE*PA	.187	.059	3.18	.000	.3040	.6181		
<b>Total, Direct and Indirect Effects</b>								
Direct Effect of X on Y	.1866	.0554	3.36	.000	.1776	.2957		
<b>Indirect effect of X on Y</b>								
Employee Engagement	.373	.057	6.54	.000	.2580	.4860		

Table IV shows that inclusive leadership relates positively with employee green behavior ( $\beta = 0.186, p < 0.000, CI=95\%, LCLI=.1776, UCLI=.2957$ ), which is in line with hypothesis 1 that had suggested a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and employee green performance. Hypothesis 2, which had postulated a mediation role of employee engagement between inclusive leadership and employee green behavior, finds support ( $\beta = 0.37, p < 0.000, CI=95\%, LCLI=.2580, UCLI=.4860$ ). The moderated mediated path between inclusive leadership and employee engagement with positive affect as a moderator is insignificant. However, positive affect moderates the mediated path between employee engagement and employee green behavior ( $\beta = 0.187, p < 0.000, CI=95\%, LCLI=.3040, UCLI=.6181$ ). This indicates that positive affect does not moderate the mediated path between inclusive leadership and employee engagement but moderates the mediated path between employee engagement and employee green behavior, rendering partial support for hypothesis 3.

**Table V: Results of Moderated-Mediation Analysis with NA as Moderator (N=210)**

	Coeff	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI	R <sup>2</sup>	F
<b>Outcome Variable: Employee Engagement</b>								
Inclusive Leadership	.684	.115	5.90	.000	.4561	.9122	0.386	65.17
Negative Affect	.180	.191	3.94	.000	-.1961	.5561		
Interaction 1: IL*NA	-.096	.049	-4.92	.000	-.1944	.0020		
<b>Outcome Variable: Employee Green Behavior</b>								
Employee Engagement	1.26	.136	9.33	.000	1.002	1.537	0.494	75.51
Inclusive Leadership	.1866	.0565	3.30	.000	.0776	.2957		
Negative Affect	1.06	.056	3.30	.000	.6189	1.506		
Interaction 2: EE*NA	-.268	.225	-4.71	.000	-.3852	-.1526		
<b>Total, Direct and Indirect Effects</b>								
Direct Effect of X on Y	.1866	.0554	3.36	.000	.0776	.2957		
<b>Indirect effect of X on Y</b>								
EE	.373	.057	6.54	.000	.2580	.4860		

*IL=inclusive leadership, EE=employee engagement, NA=negative affect.*

Results of moderated-mediation with negative affect as moderator are presented in Table V. The moderated mediated path between inclusive leadership and employee engagement with negative affect as moderator is insignificant, as the LCLI and UCLI values appear with opposite signs. However, negative affect moderates the mediated path between employee engagement and employee green behavior ( $\beta = -.268, p < 0.000, CI=95\%, LCLI=-.3852, UCLI=-.1526$ ). These results suggest that negative affect does not moderate the mediated path between inclusive leadership and employee engagement, but moderates the mediated path between employee engagement and employee green behavior. This implies partial support for hypothesis 4.

#### 4 Discussion

Institutionalizing employee green performance carries huge precedence for firms today. This study set out with three aims: one, to test direct effect of inclusive leadership on employee green behavior; two, to test employee engagement as a mediator in this relationship; three, to examine affect as a moderator in these relationships. Findings demonstrate that leadership inclusiveness promotes employee green performance, suggesting that leaders who include and involve subordinates encourage their

subordinates to adopt green performance, such as saving energy, reducing waste, recycling (Kim, Kim, & Han, 2019), which are affirmative actions for sustainability and competitive advantage. This finding agrees with the idea that inclusive leadership supports important work outcomes (Norton, Parker, Zacher, & Ashkanasy, 2015). It also corroborates with the earlier claim that inclusive leaders promote ecologically sustainable behaviors among employees through encouraging the relevance of eco-friendly methods, promoting individual obligation towards environmental conservation (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2018). Overall, our results suggest that inclusive leaders foster an eco-friendly culture through green discussions, green choices, eco-friendly tasks and projects (Thabet, Badar, Aboramadan, & Abualigah, 2022; Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon & Ziv, 2019). These are novel findings as they accentuates the importance of the leader's inclusivity measures that fosters subordinate's commitment and engagement in green tasks for sustaining green performance, while past studies recognize significance of green human resource management practices, such as green hiring, green training, green rewarding, green performance appraisal, for boosting environmentally conscious performance at work (Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1981).

This study also found support for a mediation role of employee engagement in the inclusive leadership – employee green behavior relationship, which corroborates with the earlier assertion that employee performance and engagement relate positively with inclusive leadership, as inclusive leaders value employees and their diverse viewpoints (Sugiyama, Cavanagh, Van Esch, Bilimoria, & Brown, 2016). This suggests that inclusive leadership fosters an engaging work environment necessary for encouraging green performance, which builds on Folkman and Moskowitz's (2003) claim that the job itself, the individual, as well as organizational elements generate an engaging, green work culture (Vacharkulksemsuk & Fredrickson, 2013). While Shore and Chung (2021) showed that leadership inclusiveness promotes psychological safety, psychological empowerment, and work group identification, our study further suggests that it is leadership inclusivity that fosters an engaging work milieu for green behaviours, which is a novel finding. While past studies have shown that components of the job itself, the individual, and the organization are necessary for higher levels of work engagement, (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2003), our results demonstrate the significance of leadership inclusiveness as a precursor to an engaged work environment, which differentiates findings of this study from earlier results.

Results pertaining to the suggested moderating effects of PA and NA as moderators yielded varied results. PA did not moderate the inclusive leadership – employee engagement path, but moderated the employee engagement – employee green behavior path. This suggests that leader inclusivity elicits engagement in subordinates, over and above the impact of subordinates' positive moods and emotions. Subordinates' positive moods, however, play an important role in eliciting green behaviors, once engagement in work tasks has set in. NA did not moderate the inclusive leadership – employee engagement path but moderated the employee engagement – employee green behavior relationship, implying that the inclusive leader's initiatives prompt engagement in employees beyond the effect of their negative feelings and emotions. Negative moods and emotions, however, influence green behaviors among engaged workers. Taken together, these results suggest that leader inclusivity supports engagement in work tasks regardless of employees' experiences of positive or negative affect. Yet, employee emotions – both positive and negative – impact the demonstration of green behavior,

which is a unique finding. While Park, Choi, and Wu's (2021) concluded that PA but not NA is important for creativity at work, our findings show that both PA and NA are important for offsetting green performance in an engaged workforce, as PA supports while NA suppresses green behaviours in an engaged workforce. These results concur with Junca-Silva and Caetano's (2023) findings that subordinates show reduced adaptive performance in the presence of negative emotions.

#### **4.1 Practical Implications**

Findings of this study suggest that managers and strategy makers need to incorporate an inclusive, participatory leadership style in dealings with subordinates. For instance, whenever an organizational change or policy is suggested for implementation at work, managers may hold feedback and review meetings with subordinates and invite discussions, sharing of viewpoints. This process should be formalized so as to integrate the agreed-upon agendas in company policies and procedures in order to promote a genuinely inclusive and diverse work culture. Moreover, as the manager's PA and NA can have a spillover effect on employees, workshops focusing on emotional management for work should be arranged for an affirmative, inclusive work ethos.

#### **4.2 Theoretical Implications**

The current study broadens the SET by establishing that employees reciprocate their leader's inclusivity initiatives in the form of green behaviours in the tourism and hospitality sector, where green behaviours are essential. From the SET perspective, results of this study mean that the inclusive leader's compassionate and encouraging actions are encourage work engagement in their subordinates, which further manifests as green work behaviours. A novel perspective that this study offers is that leaders and HR professionals must focus on enhancing emotional self-regulation among employees to cultivate positive emotions in employees (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001) for green performance.

#### **4.3 Strengths and Limitations**

This study has several strengths and limitations. A key strength is the testing of inclusive leadership in settings where diversity, inclusivity, and green initiatives are central. The study has limitations as well. 1) the sample size may limit the generalizability of the results, as a bigger sample would offer stronger inferences; 2) data from the Pakistani hospitality industry may restrict applicability to other sectors and cultures; 3) as noted by Joshanloo (2023), mood fluctuations could have influenced results as positive and negative moods co-exist within individuals; and 4) leader inclusivity may have directly impacted employee emotions during data collection, which may have affected the study's conceptualization of affect as a moderator in the leadership-outcome relationship (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001) at the time of data collection. Caution must be exercised when generalizing our results to different social environments. Hierarchy is an accepted norm in the manager-subordinate relationship in the collectivist Pakistani society, implying that leadership style easily gains acceptance. This is unlikely in individualistic cultures, where personal aims, self-expression, and freedom are the norm.

#### **5. Recommendations for Future Research**

In the evolving HR landscape, future studies would benefit by testing other possible ecological outcomes of inclusive leadership, such as green recruitment and selection, green development, workplace wellbeing, and green culture. Moreover, future research could add value to the literature by investigating the combined effect of PA and

NA, as these co-exist in individuals. As this study examined affect, an emotional state, future research could examine malleable psychological states, including confidence and resilience, as possible buffers of inclusive leadership and outcomes relationships.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study highlights three key drivers of employee green behavior: inclusive leadership, work engagement, and positive affect (PA). The right leadership style and emotional climate significantly impact green behavior. Specifically, inclusive leadership fosters employee green behavior by enhancing work engagement, particularly when employees experience positive emotions. Positive affect strengthens the link between inclusive leadership and green behavior, whereas negative affect does not facilitate this relationship. Leaders who aim to promote green behaviour for sustained performance should practice inclusivity in their style and practices so as to foster social connectedness with employees. They need to maintain positive emotions in their dealings as their positive emotional state is transmitted into the work culture, boosting morale and performance.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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## **Data Fabrication/Falsification Statement**

The author(s) declare that no data have been fabricated, falsified, or manipulated in this study.

## **Participant Consent**

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, and they were fully informed about the purpose of the study.

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