Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Green Behavior: The Mediating Role of Employee Over-Qualification Perception

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Abstract. This study examines the impact of Leadership Style on Employee Green Behavior and the mediating role of Employee Over-Qualification Perception. The findings reveal that Transformational Leadership significantly enhances Employee Green Behavior, while leadership support reduces Employee Over-Qualification Perception, thereby promoting pro-environmental actions. It is recommended that organizations focus on developing leadership capabilities and creating supportive environments to encourage Employee Green Behavior. The effect of leadership style is more pronounced for employees with high self-efficacy, indicating that companies should design incentive programs tailored to individual employee characteristics. The study also identifies that the influence of leadership style on pro-environmental behavior varies by company size, with larger enterprises needing to adjust strategies to effectively promote green behavior. Continuous training and cultural development are essential for building sustainable green organizations. Companies should establish dynamic evaluation systems to regularly update strategies and ensure the sustainability of pro-environmental behavior. Leaders should act as role models for green behavior, enhancing employees' sense of belonging and fostering a culture of environmental participation across the organization. Evaluation systems should include multiple indicators to ensure the effectiveness and specificity of strategies. Through diversified training and cultural initiatives, companies can strengthen environmental awareness, maintain the continuity and stability of green behavior, and ultimately achieve harmony between corporate development and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Employee Green Behavior, Employee Over-Qualification Perception, Paternalistic Leadership Style, Transformational Leadership Style.

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1. Global Environmental Issues and Corporate Green Responsibility

As global warming intensifies environmental challenges, countries around the world are implementing "dual carbon" strategies to address these issues. Enterprises, as a vital component of society, must play a key role in reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable development. Encouraging employees to adopt pro-environmental actions is crucial for the green transformation of enterprises.

Leadership styles significantly shape employees' behaviors and attitudes, convey core values, and establish the organizational environment. Promoting green and inclusive leadership styles can inspire employees to engage in discussions about green goals, thereby increasing their enthusiasm for work. However, research on how leadership styles influence Employee Green Behavior remains relatively limited, particularly regarding the mediating role of Employee Over-Qualification Perception, which is still unclear.

In modern organizations, employees often possess skills and qualifications that exceed the requirements of their positions, referred to as over-qualification. This over-qualification can lead to dissatisfaction and anxiety or motivate employees to pursue self-fulfillment, such as participating in pro-environmental activities. Investigating the mediating role of over-qualification in the relationship between Leadership Style and Employee Green Behavior is crucial for understanding the motivations behind employees' pro-environmental actions.

2. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Theoretically, this study delves into the relationship between Leadership Style and Employee Green Behavior, applying the Cognitive-Affective Processing System (CAPS) theory to the field of green behavior, thereby extending its scope. It also offers a new perspective on understanding the dual impacts of Employee Over-Qualification Perception and enriches research on the antecedents of Employee Green Behavior.

Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for corporate managers to improve leadership styles and motivate employees to engage in pro-environmental actions, ultimately enhancing the organization's environmental performance and social reputation. Moreover, this study offers references for human resource management practices, facilitating the rational allocation of employees' qualifications, reducing perceptions of over-qualification, and promoting the comprehensive development of employees.

The study proposes the synergistic effect of Green Transformational Leadership and Green Human Resource Management Practices, highlighting their complementary roles in jointly enhancing the likelihood of fostering Employee Green Behavior. This not only enriches research on the relationship between Leadership Style and Employee Green Behavior but also expands the application of the Cognitive-Affective Processing System (CAPS) theory in the field of green behavior. Additionally, it provides a new perspective on understanding the dual effects of Employee Over-Qualification Perception and refines research on the antecedents of Employee Green Behavior.

From a practical perspective, the findings can guide corporate leaders in optimizing leadership styles to

inspire Employee Green Behavior, thereby improving corporate environmental performance and social reputation. Furthermore, the study offers valuable insights for human resource management practices, facilitating the rational allocation of employee qualifications, reducing perceptions of over-qualification, and promoting employees' holistic development.

2.1. Research Objective

This study aims to explore the impact of Leadership Style on Employee Green Behavior and to examine the mediating role of Employee Over-Qualification Perception.
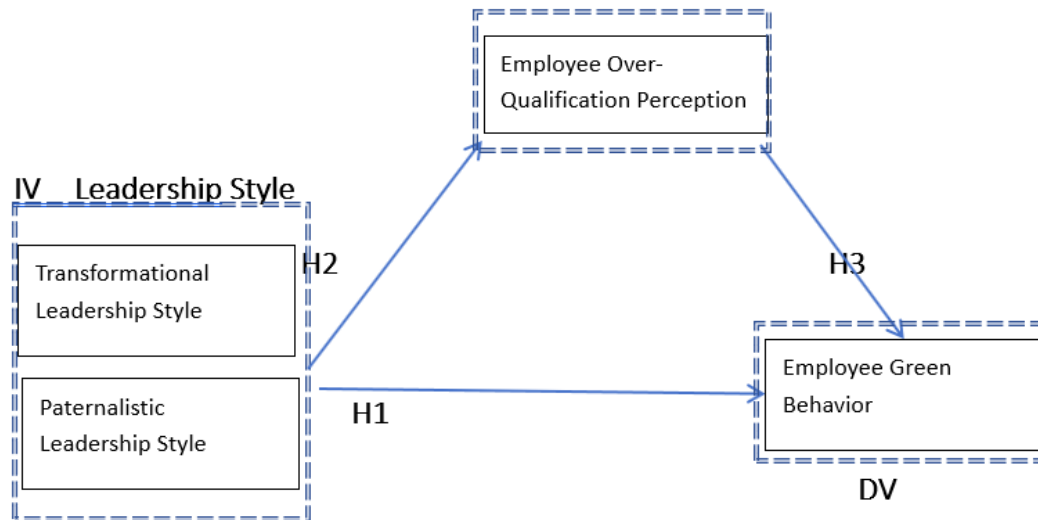
3. RESEARCH MODEL

Figure 1: Research model.

3.1. Hypothesis Development

H₁: Leadership Style positively influences Employee Green Behavior.

Employees observe and emulate their leaders' behaviors, including their pro-environmental actions. When leaders demonstrate a proactive attitude toward environmental protection, employees are more likely to follow suit, thereby increasing the likelihood of engaging in green behavior.

Chen, Y.-S., & Chang, C.-H. (2013): This study explored the positive impact of green dynamic capabilities, green transformational leadership, and green creativity on the performance of green product development. The results show that these three core factors are critical to enhancing corporate green performance.

Chen, Y.-S., Chang, C.-H., & Lin, Y. (2014): In-depth analysis revealed that green mindfulness and green self-efficacy play key mediating roles in the relationship between green transformational leadership and green performance.

Kim, A., Kim, Y., Han, K., Jackson, S. E., & Ployhart, R. E. (2017): This study examined how individual differences, leadership behavior, and peer advocacy collectively influence employees' voluntary green behaviors.

Roeck, M., & Farooq, O. (2018): This research investigated how green transformational leadership and green human resource management practices promote employees' proactive green behaviors.

Kura, K. M. (2016): The findings demonstrate that environmentally-oriented leadership and attention to ecological issues significantly influence employees' pro-environmental behavior, particularly through green goals and incentive policies set by leadership.

H₂: Employee Over-Qualification Perception positively influences Employee Green Behavior.

When employees perceive their abilities as exceeding job requirements, their sense of social belonging and self-confidence increases, making them more likely to participate in pro-environmental activities that enhance team and social image. Once employees recognize their advantageous position within a team, they are inclined to exhibit positive behaviors to maintain this favorable status.

Bandura, A. (1986): The Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the importance of observational learning and self-efficacy in behavior change, providing theoretical support for studying the impact of Employee Over-Qualification Perception on green behavior. The theory suggests that individuals learn new behaviors by observing others, and self-efficacy is critical for behavior transformation. Employees' perceptions of over-qualification may influence their attitudes toward and choices of pro-environmental behavior. Thus, Social Cognitive Theory helps explain the complex relationship between employees' intrinsic motivations and external expressions in green behavior.

Cheng, Y., & Yang, C. (2011): This study examined the impact of collective creative efficacy on team innovation performance and revealed the positive role of Employee Over-Qualification Perception in promoting

green behavior.

Leroy, H., Segers, J., van Dierendonck, D., & den Hartog, D. (2018): This research overviewed the role of leadership and human resource management in personnel management within organizations, highlighting their mutual influence in motivating employees and enhancing job performance.

Mazar, N., & Zhong, C. B. (2010): The study demonstrated that purchasing and using green products not only promote environmental sustainability but also enhance personal social image. These pro-environmental behaviors are widely perceived as positive and responsible, boosting personal self-identity. Consequently, green products and behaviors benefit both the planet and individuals, socially and psychologically.

Roeck, M., & Farooq, O. (2018): The study underscored the critical role of green transformational leadership and green human resource management practices in fostering employees' green behaviors.

H₃: Employee Over-Qualification Perception mediates the relationship between Leadership Style and Employee Green Behavior.

Through leadership's demonstration effect and incentive policies, employees' confidence in their ability to accomplish environmental tasks can be enhanced, thereby motivating them to actively participate in pro-environmental activities. This belief leads to an indirect positive influence of leadership style on green behavior.

Leadership styles influence employees' pro-environmental behaviors by impacting their sense of talent surplus. Positive leadership behaviors and incentive measures help enhance employees' sense of talent surplus, which in turn fosters their green behaviors.

Leroy, H., Segers, J., van Dierendonck, D., & den Hartog, D. (2018): This study explores the integration and interaction of leadership and human resource management within enterprises, analyzing seven interaction models. These models examine the influence of leadership on HR policies, feedback from HR management on leadership decisions, and their mutual interaction in organizational culture, strategic planning, and daily operations, jointly driving organizational goals.

Roeck, M., & Farooq, O. (2018): The research investigates the impact of green transformational leadership and green human resource management practices on Employee Green Behavior, highlighting their critical role in fostering and strengthening employees' pro-environmental behaviors.

Kim, A., Kim, Y., Han, K., Jackson, S. E., & Ployhart, R. E. (2017): This study examines the effects of individual differences, leadership behavior, and peer advocacy on employees' green behavior. Through multidimensional analysis, it reveals how these factors influence employees' green behaviors. Using empirical methods, the study collected extensive data and confirmed the relationship between these factors and Employee Green Behavior through statistical analysis, offering new perspectives on understanding pro-environmental behaviors.

Leroy, H., Segers, J., van Dierendonck, D., & den Hartog, D. (2018): This article provides an in-depth analysis of the interaction between leadership and human resource management within organizations, explaining their mechanisms of action and constructing a theoretical model. It also identifies gaps in existing research and proposes new directions for study, offering fresh perspectives and exploratory paths for academia and practice.

Roeck, M., & Farooq, O. (2018): This study analyzes how green transformational leadership and green human resource management practices encourage employees to exhibit positive green behaviors and provides empirical data to support these findings.

This study selected employees from Chinese restaurants in Shanghai as the research subjects. A total of 623 questionnaires were distributed, with 461 valid responses collected, resulting in an effective response rate of 74%.

4. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS
Leadership Style Scale:

This scale adopts established and validated measures, including two subscales for Transformational Leadership and Paternalistic Leadership, with 7 and 5 items respectively. A 5-point Likert scale was used for scoring.

Employee Over-Qualification Perception Scale:

Based on relevant literature, this scale includes dimensions such as work ability over-qualification and knowledge and skill over-qualification, comprising 5 items in total. It also uses a 5-point Likert scale.

Employee Green Behavior Scale:

This scale consists of two dimensions: proactive green behavior and passive green behavior, with a total of 5 items, scored using a 5-point Likert scale.

5. DATA ANALYSIS
This study utilized SPSS 29.0 and PLS 4 for data analysis.

5.1. Reliability and Validity Test
The reliability test results of this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Reliability Statistics

Clone Bach Alpha	Clone Bach Based on the Normalization Term Alpha	Terms
0.89	0.883	28

The validity test results of this study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The validity test results.

KMO And the Bartlett test		
KMO Number of sampling suitability quantities。		0.904
Bartlett sphericity test	Approximate chi square	7177.883
	free degree	378
	conspicuousness	<.001

The rotated component matrix of this study is in the same factor for each variable. Show good validity.

5.2. Measurement-Structural Model Analysis

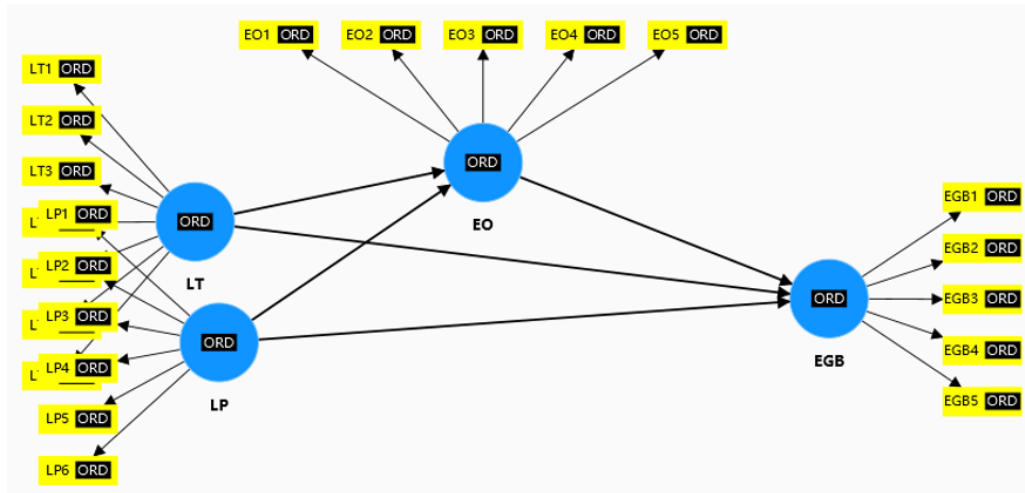The analytical model established in PLS 4 is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2: Study analytical model.

The measurement reliability and validity and AVE of this study are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Key indicators of reliability and validity AVE of the study.

Construct			Item	Loadings	AVE	Composite reliability (rho c)	Composite reliability (rho a)	Cronbach's Alpha
Leadership style paternalistic		-	LT1	0.815	0.668	0.934	0.918	0.917
			LT2	0.823				
			LT3	0.805				
			LT4	0.821				
			LT5	0.817				
			LT6	0.807				
			LT7	0.832				
Leadership style transformation		-	LP1	0.831	0.679	0.927	0.907	0.906
			LP2	0.814				
			LP3	0.835				
			LP4	0.835				
			LP5	0.818				
			LP6	0.818				
Employee over qualifications			EO1	0.812	0.678	0.92	0.891	0.891
			EO2	0.843				
			EO3	0.837				
			EO4	0.834				
			EO5	0.846				
Employee green behavior			EGB1	0.84	0.689	0.917	0.889	0.887
			EGB2	0.824				
			EGB3	0.83				
			EGB4	0.841				

Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	Composite reliability (rho c)	Composite reliability (rho a)	Cronbach's Alpha
	EGB5	0.816				

From the table above, the following can be observed:

Factor Loadings: All factor loadings for the measurement items exceed 0.7, indicating that each item significantly contributes to its corresponding latent variable. Cronbach's α: All latent variables have values greater than 0.7, demonstrating good internal consistency of the measurement tools. CR and AVE: Composite Reliability (CR) values are all above 0.7, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are all above 0.5, indicating good convergent validity and reliability of the model.

All indicators meet the standards, confirming the scientific validity of the model. The data analysis results show a significant positive correlation between Leadership Style and Employee Green Behavior, with Employee Over-Qualification Perception serving as a mediator. The study's conclusions provide practical guidance for organizational management, emphasizing the critical role of green leadership in driving sustainable development.

5.3. Analysis and Discussion of the Results

With the growing emphasis on environmental sustainability, Employee Green Behavior (EGB) has become a core approach for organizations to fulfill their environmental responsibilities. This study aims to analyze how Leadership Style and Employee Over-Qualification Perception influence EGB, focusing on how Transformational and Paternalistic Leadership Styles impact EGB through direct or indirect pathways. Table 4: Discussion of

5.3.1. Research Hypothesis Results

Table 4: Study hypothesis results are discussed.

Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	T-Statistics	P-Values	Conclusion
H1a-b: Leadership Style positively influences Employee Green Behavior.	0.151 (Transformational), 0.10.1 (Paternalistic)	3.224, 2.139	0.001, 0.033	Supported
H2a-b: Employee Over-Qualification Perception positively influences Employee Green Behavior.	0.060 (Transformational), 0.060 (Paternalistic)	3.709, 3.737	0.000, 0.000	Supported
H3: Employee Over-Qualification Perception mediates the relationship between Leadership Style and Employee Green Behavior.	0.038	2.903	0.004	Supported

Transformational Leadership Style (path coefficient = 0.151, T = 3.224, P = 0.001) and Paternalistic Leadership Style (path coefficient = 0.101, T = 2.139, P = 0.033) both significantly and positively influence Employee Green Behavior, supporting the hypothesis. Employee Over-Qualification Perception also significantly and positively influences Employee Green Behavior (path coefficients for Transformational and Paternalistic Leadership are both 0.060, T = 3.709 and 3.737 respectively, P = 0.000), supporting the hypothesis. Additionally, the mediating role of Employee Over-Qualification Perception between Leadership Style and Green Behavior is significant (path coefficient = 0.038, T = 2.903, P = 0.004), supporting the hypothesis.

Table 5: To study the effect of pathway coefficient.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
EO -> EGB	0.248	0.247	0.045	5.48	0.000
LP -> EGB	0.101	0.101	0.047	2.139	0.033
LP -> EO	0.244	0.243	0.046	5.346	0.000
LT -> EGB	0.151	0.151	0.047	3.224	0.001
LT -> EO	0.24	0.239	0.046	5.198	0.000

The table shows that Employee Over-Qualification Perception (EO) has a significant positive impact on Employee Green Behavior (EGB) (path coefficient = 0.248, T = 5.48, P < 0.001). Paternalistic Leadership Style (LP) significantly and positively influences both Employee Green Behavior (path coefficient = 0.101, T = 2.139, P = 0.033) and Over-Qualification Perception (path coefficient = 0.244, T = 5.346, P < 0.001). Transformational Leadership Style (LT) also significantly and positively affects Employee Green Behavior (path coefficient = 0.151, T = 3.224, P = 0.001) and Over-Qualification Perception (path coefficient = 0.240, T = 5.198, P < 0.001). Both Leadership Styles (Paternalistic and Transformational) significantly impact Over-Qualification Perception and Green Behavior, with Transformational Leadership having a stronger effect.

5.4. Research Conclusion

5.4.1. The Positive Impact of Employee Over-Qualification Perception (EO) on Employee Green Behavior (EGB)

The findings indicate that when employees perceive their abilities as exceeding job requirements, this perception has a significant positive effect on their pro-environmental behavior (path coefficient = 0.248, T = 5.48, P < 0.001). This result reveals that while over-qualification is often considered a negative experience, it can actually inspire a sense of responsibility and proactiveness among employees, particularly in conserving resources and promoting environmental sustainability.

Tendency for Self-Actualization: Employees who perceive themselves as over-qualified may strive to achieve personal value by engaging in pro-environmental behaviors in their daily work.

Expectations for Organizational Responsibility: These employees often expect their work environment to strongly embody social responsibility, which motivates them to take the lead in adopting green behaviors.

5.4.2. The Positive Impact of Paternalistic Leadership Style (LP) on Employee Green Behavior

Paternalistic Leadership Style has a significant positive effect on promoting employees' pro-environmental behavior (path coefficient = 0.101, T = 2.139, P < 0.05). This leadership style, centered on care and guidance, motivates employees to focus on environmental behavior through emotional support and clear value-based guidance.

Importance of Emotional Connection: Paternalistic leadership deepens employees' identification with organizational environmental values by establishing emotional bonds with them.

Leadership Role Modeling: Paternalistic leaders set an example for environmental protection through personal actions, encouraging employees to follow their lead.

Internalization of Values: Under long-term influence, employees internalize environmental concepts as personal behavioral norms.

Practical Demonstration Effect: Paternalistic leaders are more inclined to personally demonstrate how to engage in pro-environmental behaviors.

This leadership style also fosters a positive organizational environment, further enhancing employees' environmental awareness and actions, creating a virtuous cycle that promotes the continuous development of a green culture.

Further research suggests that the combined influence of various leadership styles is more effective in promoting pro-environmental behavior. Compared to Transformational Leadership, the influence of Paternalistic Leadership is weaker, as it is more suited to relationship-oriented environments rather than tasks requiring innovation.

5.4.3. The Positive Impact of Transformational Leadership Style (LT) on Employee Green Behavior

Transformational Leadership Style has a significant positive effect on promoting employees' green behavior (path coefficient = 0.151, T = 3.224, P = 0.001). The findings reveal that Transformational Leadership effectively enhances green behavior through the following mechanisms:

Inspiring Vision and Mission: Transformational leaders enhance employees' sense of mission by articulating the organization's green vision, thereby driving green behavior.

Encouraging Innovative Solutions: Transformational leaders tend to motivate employees to explore new approaches to integrate green practices into their daily work.

Building a Positive Culture: Transformational leaders often create an open and innovative work environment, encouraging employees to actively engage in green behaviors.
This finding aligns with previous research, demonstrating that Transformational Leadership plays a critical role in fostering employees' innovative behaviors and sustainable practices.

5.4.4. The Mediating Role of Employee Over-Qualification Perception Between Leadership Style and Employee Green Behavior

The study results indicate that Employee Over-Qualification Perception plays a significant mediating role between Leadership Style (including both Paternalistic and Transformational) and Employee Green Behavior, with path coefficients of 0.244 and 0.240, respectively, and P-values less than 0.001.

Influence of Leadership Style on Employee Self-Perception: Leadership styles shape employees' perceptions of their own abilities, indirectly influencing their behavioral decisions.

Positive Transformation of Over-Qualification Perception: Under the influence of positive leadership styles, employees' perceptions of over-qualification can be transformed into a driving force for green behavior. This transformation mechanism highlights the critical role of leadership styles in unlocking employees' intrinsic potential.

These findings suggest that managers should place greater emphasis on the indirect effects of leadership styles on employees' internal perceptions, thereby leveraging the positive potential of over-qualification perception to promote green behavior.

5.5. Policy Recommendations

5.5.1. Optimization of Leadership Behavior
5.5.1.1. Transformational Leadership Approach

Leaders should adopt a Transformational Leadership Style to inspire employees' green vision and sense of mission, encourage innovation, create an open work environment, and promote Employee Green Behavior. At the same time, they should transform employees' perceptions of over-qualification into a driving force for environmental protection, enhancing the green cultural atmosphere. Leaders must clearly articulate the organization's environmental goals and long-term plans to ensure employees understand their roles in environmental initiatives.

Motivate Employees to Explore Environmental Optimization Solutions: Reward employees who propose creative solutions to environmental problems.

Foster an Inclusive Work Atmosphere: Encourage employees to share their environmental protection ideas.

Enhance Employees' Sense of Belonging and Recognition: Use transparent communication and positive feedback mechanisms to stimulate employees' engagement in environmental actions.

5.1.2. Paternalistic Leadership

In Paternalistic Leadership, emotional care and moral guidance are equally important. Leaders should pay attention to employees' psychological needs and strengthen emotional connections:

Enhancing Emotional Bonds: The paternalistic management approach can increase employees' intrinsic motivation for pro-environmental behavior by focusing on emotional care, such as supporting their personal development.

Role Modeling: Leaders should personally practice green principles, setting a practical example for employees to emulate.

5.2. Employee Management Strategies
5.2.1. Positive Guidance for Over-Qualification Perception

Thoughtful Assignment of Work Responsibilities: Assign challenging environmental tasks, such as environmental project planning or process improvement, to highly talented employees to stimulate their potential.

Enhancing Employee Skill Development: Utilize education and cross-departmental collaboration to help employees transform their additional talents into tangible contributions to environmental actions.

Establishing Recognition and Feedback Mechanisms: Create a feedback system to provide timely acknowledgment of employees' efforts and achievements in environmental actions, enhancing positive motivation.

5.2.2. Stimulating Employees' Intrinsic Motivation、

Promoting the Value of Green Behavior: Organize activities or share case studies to help employees understand the long-term benefits of green behavior for the organization and society, thereby encouraging their proactive participation.

Providing Autonomy: Allow employees a degree of freedom to foster innovation and enthusiasm in practicing green behavior, avoiding negative work attitudes that may result from overly strict management.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE DEVELOPMENT
6.1. Building a Green Organizational Culture

Integrating Green Concepts into Decision-Making: Prioritize environmental protection and sustainability in business decisions to reflect the organization's core green values.

Establishing Green Standards: Clearly define the organization's expectations for green behavior and incorporate them into employees' responsibilities and performance evaluations.

Organizing Green Activities: Regularly host environmentally-themed events, such as "Zero Waste Day" or "Green Innovation Competitions," to enhance employees' engagement and sense of responsibility toward environmental protection.

6.2. Enhancing Resource Support

Providing Environmental Resources: Equip employees with the necessary tools and support (e.g., eco-friendly technologies and green training) to facilitate their participation in environmental initiatives.

Improving the Workplace Environment: Promote environmentally-friendly practices in the office, such as reducing resource consumption and prioritizing renewable energy, to gradually influence employees' behavior patterns.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Optimizing Incentive Mechanisms: Combine material rewards with recognition to ensure that employees' contributions to environmental protection are fairly acknowledged.

By improving leadership behavior, positively guiding employees' perceptions of over-qualification, and

fostering a green organizational culture, organizations can significantly enhance Employee Green Behavior. These efforts contribute to corporate sustainable development and social responsibility goals, while also laying a solid foundation for strengthening green competitiveness in an increasingly vital area.

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