

# The Interactive Role of Organizational Learning in the Relationship Between Modest Leadership and Employee Green Behavior Strategy

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## Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the interactive role of organizational learning in the relationship between modest leadership and the employee green strategy. In order to achieve the objectives of the study we collected data from commercial banks working in Muthanna Governorate (al-Rafidain, Al-Rasheed). In total 119 responses were collected from employees at different levels (Director, associate director, head of Department, Division manager, employee) of organization. The study found the most important conclusion that the indirect influence of organizational learning as an interactive role with the modest leadership in the behavior of green workers. The study recommends utmost need to develop modest leadership to motivate the employees toward green behavior. Further, this study draws useful insights for future research and recommendations for policy makers.

**Keywords:** Modest leadership; Organizational learning; Green worker strategy.



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## 1. Introduction

There is a growing tendency to investigate the subject of modest leadership by many scholars. The importance of this subject can be realized as most of researches emphasize the need for organizations to have a modest leadership. The need for leaders to be modest has been come to the surface after the losses suffered by organizations that are attributed to their managers in terms of Ego, arrogant and un humbled communication with employees at work. Lack of self-importance creates a suitable environment in which the people around the leader feel comfortable and confident in accomplishing their tasks. Thereby reducing the pressure they can experience, which increases the employee satisfaction and in turn reflects the quality of service. The modest leadership has an important role in increasing organizational learning within the organizations. The modest leadership encourages the staff to learn experience and knowledge and obtain information that will develop the skills leading to development of the behavior of workers. Furthermore, organizational sustainability increases by reducing the negative behavior caused lower organizational performance. Hence, co-workers improve their position in the face of changing environmental events and the maintenance of competitive advantage, thereby increasing their performance. Most business organizations have tended towards modest leadership in order to promote the green employee behavior under organizational learning as their intermediary role. It is in this context this study is aimed to investigate a direct or indirect impact of modest leadership on the green employee behavior through the interactive role of organizational learning in commercial banks operating in Muthana.

This is the first study of its kind in Iraq that addressed the subject of modest leadership and the behavior of green workers through the interactive role of organizational learning. This study is highlighting an important issue that contributes to the development of modest leadership in order to promote the green employee behavior. Furthermore, this investigation contributes to the preparation of an intellectual framework for the subjects. The findings of this study will helps the policy makers to understand the role of leadership in developing green employee behavior specially as it is one of the important sectors in Iraq because of major role in the development of economy.

The research is divided into four sections, where first part introduce research problem and significance, second section involved the theoretical aspect of the research, third part explains the methodology of this research including data analysis and discussion on results and fourth section concludes the research by providing useful recommendations for policy makers.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1. Modest Leadership

The leadership is the foundation in any organizational setting. Leadership is a very important concept to understand because it strongly influences the performance of the Organization. The concept of modest leadership is a contemporary concept which is at its early stages on academics. Humbleness is a leading behavior that is worthy for

several reasons, including an increasing number of active individuals calling for the increase of modest leaders in modern organizations (Kluitenberg, 2016). Chiu *et al.* (2012) define modest leadership is a desire not to brag while Smith (2009) asserted that modest leadership is a form of self-esteem and believes. Modest leadership is the desired personal quality of self-understanding through awareness of personal identities, strengths and limitations, as well as the perspective of self-relationship with others (Nielsen *et al.*, 2010). Owens *et al.* (2013) reinforced that modest leadership is a personal feature that emerges in social contexts explaining a clear desire for self-vision, an estimate of the strengths and contributions of others, and the portability of education. Similarly, explained the modest leadership as openness to new ideas, contradictory information and advice. Both Strüfing (2014) and Owens and Hekman (2012) have agreed that modest leadership leads to legitimizing the employee's development journey that increases the psychological freedom of employees.

The importance of modest leadership lies in creating a good awareness and understanding of the different phenomena of the organization (Nielsen *et al.*, 2010). It also enhances the strengths of managers and other personnel (Owens *et al.*, 2013). The ability to recognize the work of others by granting credit when credit is due also lies in the domain of modest leadership. It also enables to listen others and praise and give rewards for the good work they accomplish (Adlam and Villiers, 2003).

### 2.1.1. The Advantages of Modest Leadership

Modest leaders work to gain the organization's competitive advantage, as they play a crucial role in improving the organization's ability to identify and respond to external threats and opportunities (Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). Moreover, modest leaders have a tendency to create an organization that stimulates organizational learning, access to higher levels of service for the customer, and adaptation to change (Morris *et al.*, 2005). The modest leader enhance staff satisfaction, in addition, we believe that modest leaders make it easy to identify followers with the leader, confidence in the leader, self-efficacy, high motivation and a higher willingness to sacrifice. Moreover, Nielsen *et al.* (2010) it complements that organizations with modest leaders become easier standards in their industries because superior performance lasts for a long time (Collins and Collins, 2001). One of the reasons for the long-term success is that the modest leader places great importance on electing and preparing a suitable successor to ensure the future success of the organization (van der Meer and Kjellson, 2012).

### 2.1.2. Disadvantages of Modest Leadership

Some researchers believe that the organization is to benefit from modest leadership, and this stems mainly from the fact that modest leadership manifests itself in a privileged leader who opposes some traditional theories of how to gain influence (Maccoby, 2004). These theories stipulate that leaders are more effective when they are seen by their followers as superior to them, therefore, humbleness may be seen as a weakness (Exline and Geyer, 2004). The fact that staff believes that modest leaders are not sufficiently dominant in competitive positions (Morris *et al.*, 2005). Co-workers may associate modesty with a leader's failure and thus have less confidence in their leader (Exline and Geyer, 2004). In addition, they state that the employees prefer that the leaders are flawless and have a lot of confidence in themselves (van der Meer and Kjellson, 2012).

## 2.2. Organizational Learning

The modern studies suggest that the concept of organizational learning is essential for sustainable organizational success. It represents a modern management approach that can solve many of the problems faced by organizations. Richard Cyert and James March were the first to combine two words "learning" and "organization" to introduce the concept of "organizational learning" in the management literature in 1963. If organizational learning occurs, according to organization citizenship theory the employees positively respond to changes in the internal and external environment (Sobhani and Farzad Movahedi, 2011; Ugurlu *et al.*, 2016). Although researchers have learned organizational learning in many different ways, the essence of most definitions is that organizational learning is a change in organization that occurs when you get experience (Argote *et al.*, 2011). It is defined as the process in which the organization learns over time to continually improve its operations and progress (Mehra *et al.*, 2016). Organizational learning is defined as the process of improving the Organization's activities through access to knowledge and the process of detecting and correcting errors (Nazem *et al.*, 2014). Chiva *et al.* (2007) asserted that organizational learning in general can be defined as the process by which organizations learn through them. Alsabbagh *et al.* (2017) argued that learning is a process of obtaining new knowledge by employees who possess the ability and desire to apply those Knowledge in making decisions or influencing others within the organization. Similarly, Nafei and Wageeh (2014) defined that all the processes used by the organization to continuously improve the individual's potential to achieve specific goals related to individuals and organization is tagged as organizational learning. Hence, this results the participation of members of the Organization in the interaction and exchange of knowledge. Effective leadership is one of the most important things that help to succeed in organizational learning. As organizations must take into account how leaders are trained to educate employees by keeping in view the important role of organizational learning. Leaders create an atmosphere in which organizational learning finds a way in the organization. This can ultimately lead to the creation of knowledge and information systems which are important factors in any organization. The increased open relationship, cooperation, individual support and focus on professional learning, growth and development are among the most important behaviors of leaders that can promote organizational learning through organizational communication (Nazem *et al.*, 2014). The capacity for organizational learning facilitates an organization's ability to address knowledge, for instance, to create, acquire, transfer and

integrate knowledge as well as modify behavior with a view of improving Organizational performance (Gomes *et al.*, 2017).

Organizational learning increases organizational performance as it helps maintain sustainable competitive advantage, successfully meet environmental events and deal with upcoming and unexpected changes (Hui *et al.*, 2013). Organizational learning is essential to the success of organizations, as learning organizations can continuously acquire and maintain the necessary knowledge to improve their operations and increase the quality of the product and service they provide (Nazem *et al.*, 2014). The only source of strength and survival of organizations is to learn better and faster than competitors (Mehra *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, learning is the key factor that the organization needs to survive in the modern economic and competitive environment. Learning has a clear impact on human behavior in organizations. Learning-capable organizations depends entirely on individual to transform it into organizational learning to achieve success in the current business environment (Aslam *et al.*, 2011). As a result, learning organizations are more flexible and faster in responding to new challenges than competitors (Jiménez-Jiménez and Sanz-Valle, 2011). Hence, organizations can adapt to environmental constraints, avoid repeating past mistakes and acquire and maintain knowledge (Crossan *et al.*, 1999; Tohidi *et al.*, 2012).

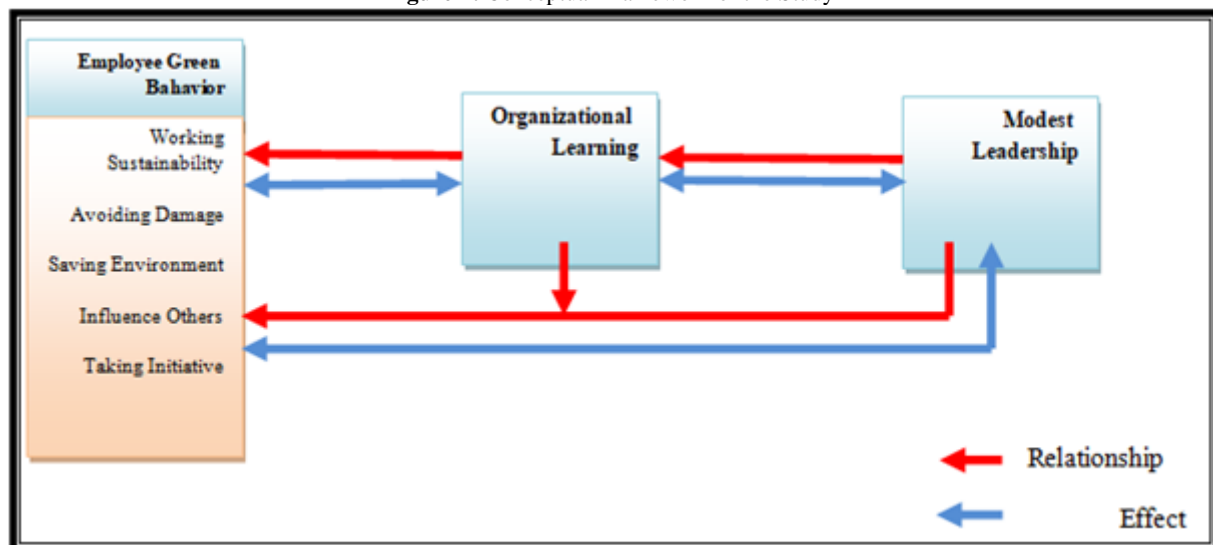
### 2.3. The Concept of Green Worker Behavior

Green worker behavior is any measurable individual behavior that contributes to minimizing impacts on environment in the context of regulatory action (Norton *et al.*, 2015; Starik and Marcus, 2000). In order to be environmentally sustainable, there is a need to influence and change employees' behaviors so that they conform to the objectives of sustainable environmental organizations (Anderson and White, 2011). Hence, a strong and positive leadership is necessary to achieve the employee green behavior. Employee green behavior is a set of scalable actions in which employees integrate and contribute to environmental sustainability (Wiernik *et al.*, 2016). This behavior can be implemented as a condition for employment or elective organizational citizenship behaviors.

In order to motivate workers to green practices within the organization, we have to motivate them first, Han *et al.* (2012). The reciprocal theory focused on the role of interactions, especially reciprocity between the individual and some other entities such as leaders or groups. It is assumed that the conduct is driven by obligations arising from reciprocal relationships such as the relationship between leaders and subordinates (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). In addition, Temminck *et al.* (2015) found that reciprocity between employees and the organization has mediated the impact of environmental attitudes on environmental citizenship behavior (Young *et al.*, 2013).

In the light of what was addressed in literature review the conceptual framework of this study is presented in the Figure1.

Figure-1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



## 3. Methodology

The study is aimed to investigate the interactional role of organizational learning in the relationship of modest leadership and employee green behavior. The study is conducted on the commercial banking industry operating in Muthana. The sample of the study consisted of the Group of individuals working in commercial banks at different professional levels. In total 128 forms have been distributed and (119) forms have been retrieved.

### 3.1. Data Collection Instrument

A field questionnaire was used as a key tool for data collection. The research instrument has been developed to record responses on three dimensions as mentioned in the table 1 below.

**Table-1.** questionnaire and measurements

Dimension	Variables	No. of Items	Code	Source
Modest Leadership	Modest Leadership	9	MLE	(Owens <i>et al.</i> , 2013)
Organizational Learning	Organizational Learning	4	ORL	(García-Morales <i>et al.</i> , 2012)
Green Employee Behavior	Working Sustainability	9	SOW	(McConaughy, 2014)
	Avoiding Damages/Harm	7	AHA	
	Saving Environment	10	SAE	
	Influencing Others	6	INO	
	Taking Initiative	8	TAI	

To measure the reliability and internal consistency factor analysis has been adopted using AMOS 23 version. Further to examine the proposed framework structural equation modeling is utilized. The mediation impact of organizational has also been examined using three step method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

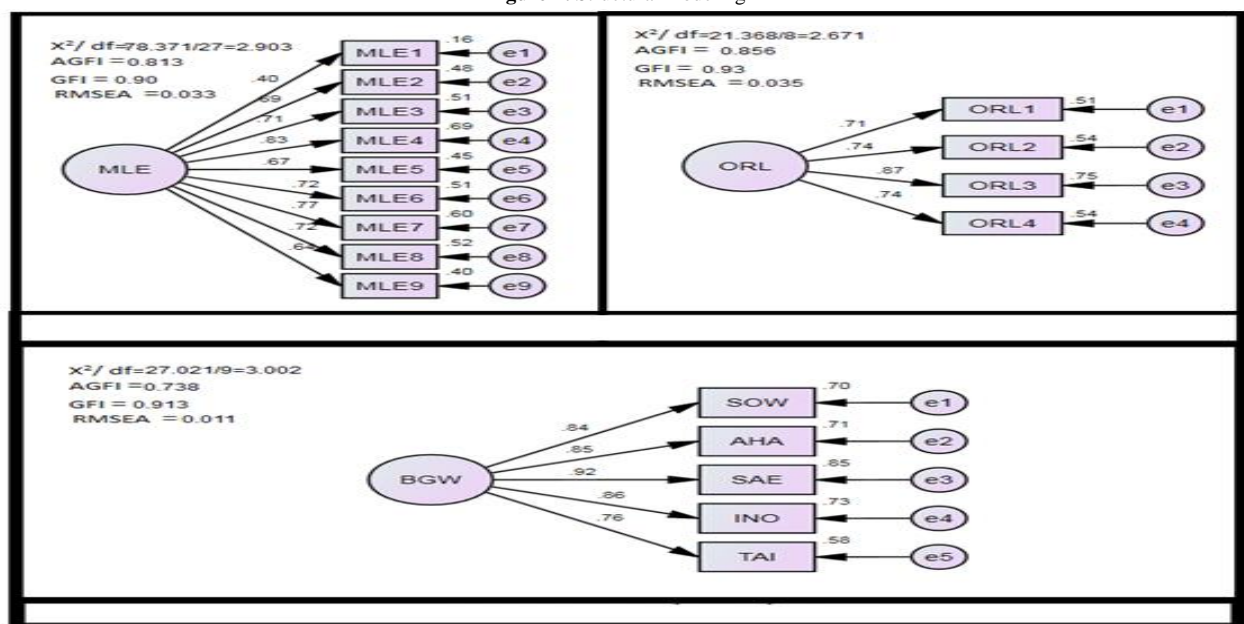
### 3.2. Results and Discussion

In order to measure the normal distribution of collected responses on the listed variables we applied normality test. Skewness and Kurtosis were measured to examine whether the responses are normally distributed. The results showed that all the responses on each variable are normally distributed as the valued lies within the standard range. Table 2 illustrates the results of Skewness and Kurtosis.

**Table-2.** Skewness and Kurtosis Results

Variable	Min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
ORL	1.000	4.000	1.023	4.556	.643	2.432
MLE	1.000	3.778	1.375	6.122	2.184	4.863
TAI	1.000	3.000	.825	3.675	.186	2.414
BGW	1.000	3.136	1.191	5.306	.896	1.995
INO	1.000	3.333	1.021	4.545	.418	3.931
AHA	1.000	4.000	1.240	5.521	2.027	4.513
SOW	1.000	3.444	1.156	5.150	.973	2.166
SAE	1.000	3.900	1.464	6.519	2.279	5.075
Multivariate					25.301	12.294

Further, factor analysis is carried out to measure the overall fitness of instrument and items measuring the variable. It is noted that all the items corresponding to respective variables achieved the acceptable score that is 0.50 on the factor loading. Figure 2 presents the results of factor analysis.

**Figure-2.** Structural modeling

In order to achieve the objective of the research the internal consistency of instrument is measured by Cronbach's Alpha. The standard value for cronbach's alpha is 0.60. Table 3 presents the results of cronbach's alpha for each variables separately.

**Table-3.** Cronbach's Alpha Results

Variables	No. of Items	Code	Cronbach's Alpha
Modest Leadership	9	MLE	0.952
Organizational Learning	4	ORL	0.954
Working Sustainability	9	SOW	0.952
Avoiding Damages/Harm	7	AHA	0.951
Saving Environment	10	SAE	0.950
Influencing Others	6	INO	0.953
Taking Initiative	6	TAI	0.958
Total			0.958

It is noted that all the variables have achieved the values greater than minimum standard value. Therefore, the responses on the subject matter are internally consistent.

The descriptive statistics on each variable is also calculated and presented in table 4. The responses were collected on a likert scale based on five (05) anchors (1=highly satisfied, 2= satisfied, 3= neutral, 4= dissatisfies, 5=highly dissatisfied). The results show that modest leadership has got 1.61 mean score with standard deviation of 0.556. The coefficient of variation explains that overall responses were deviating on 35%. Further, organizational learning has achieved a mean score of 1.66 with standard deviation of 0.676 and the coefficient of variation is 41%. Similarly employee green behavior has scored a mean value of 1.57 with 0.488 standard values explaining that the responses are deviating from the mean with a value of 0.488. The coefficient of variation for BGW is 31%.

**Table-4.** Descriptive Results

Variables	Code	Mean	S.D	CV
<b>Modest Leadership</b>	MLE	1.61	0.556	35%
<b>Organizational Learning</b>	ORL	1.66	0.676	41%
<b>Employee Green Behavior</b>	BGW	1.57	0.488	31%
<i>Working Stability</i>	SOW	1.58	0.553	35%
<i>Avoiding Damage</i>	AHA	1.55	0.553	36%
<i>Saving Environment</i>	SAE	1.6	0.62	39%
<i>Influencing Others</i>	INO	1.55	0.561	36%
<i>Taking Initiative</i>	TAI	1.57	0.489	31%

Before going to measure the influence of independent variables on dependent variables, correlation among variables has been measured. Table 5 presents the correlation results.

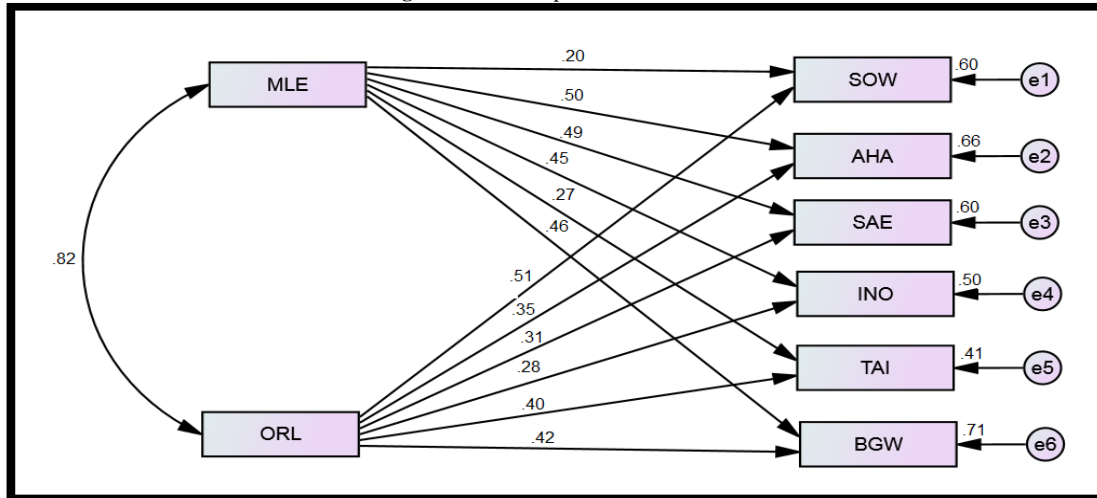
**Table-5.** Correlation matrix

		SOW	AHA	SAE	INO	TAI	BGW	ORL
MLE	Pearson Correlation	.718**	.787**	.751**	.688**	.600**	.810**	.842**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	119	119	119	119	119	119	119
ORL	Pearson Correlation	.756**	.759**	.719**	.658**	.622**	.802**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	119	119	119	119	119	119	119

Results conclude that, there is a correlation among modest leadership and organizational learning with the coefficient of variation of 0.842. Similarly modest leadership and organizational learning has a significant correlation with a value of 0.810. The correlation among organizational learning and employee green behavior is 0.802.

In next step the direct effect of modest leadership on the dimensions on employee green behavior has been estimated using AMOS. Following figure 3 present the results of direct effect of modest leadership on employee green behavior. In addition to this direct influence of the modest leadership on organizational learning has also been identified.



**Figure-3.** Direct Impact of Search Variables**Table-6.** Standard Values for Direct Effect

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
BGW	<---	MLE	.408	.077	5.325	***
BGW	<---	ORL	.303	.063	4.801	***
SAE	<---	MLE	.551	.115	4.780	***
SOW	<---	MLE	.294	.102	2.864	.004
AHA	<---	MLE	.500	.095	5.271	***
INO	<---	MLE	.457	.116	3.935	***
TAI	<---	MLE	.240	.110	2.189	.029
SOW	<---	ORL	.420	.084	4.987	***
AHA	<---	ORL	.283	.078	3.635	***
SAE	<---	ORL	.286	.095	3.020	.003
INO	<---	ORL	.236	.095	2.476	.013
TAI	<---	ORL	.287	.090	3.180	.001

The results of direct effects has presented in the table 6. A direct effect of modest leadership on the employee green behavior (0.408) with a standard error (0.077) has recorded. Furthermore, there is a direct influence of organizational learning on the employee green behavior (0.303) and standard error is 0.063. There is a direct influence of modest leadership on each sub-dimension of the employee green behavior. The estimated value for SOW is 0.294 with a standard error 0.102. Similarly avoid damage (AHA) has a value of 0.500 and a standard error is 0.095). SAE has an estimated score of 0.551 with a standard error of 0.115. INO has a score of 0.457 with a standard error of 0.116). Taking Initiatives (TAI) has a value of 0.240 while standard error is 0.110.

In addition to this, a direct impact of organizational learning on the sub-dimensions of the green behavior of employees shows that for the sustainability of work (SOW) the score is 0.420 and standard error is 0.084. Avoid Damage (AHA) has got 0.283 and standard error is 0.087. Saving Environment (SAE) has got an estimation value of 0.286 and a standard error is 0.095. Influence Others (INO) is recorded with 0.236 with a standard error 0.095. Taking Initiatives (TAI) has an estimation value of 0.287 with standard error of 0.090. The interactive effect of organizational learning with modest leadership to influence the employee green behavior has also estimated. Figure 6 illustrates the interactive impact results and dimension on impact.

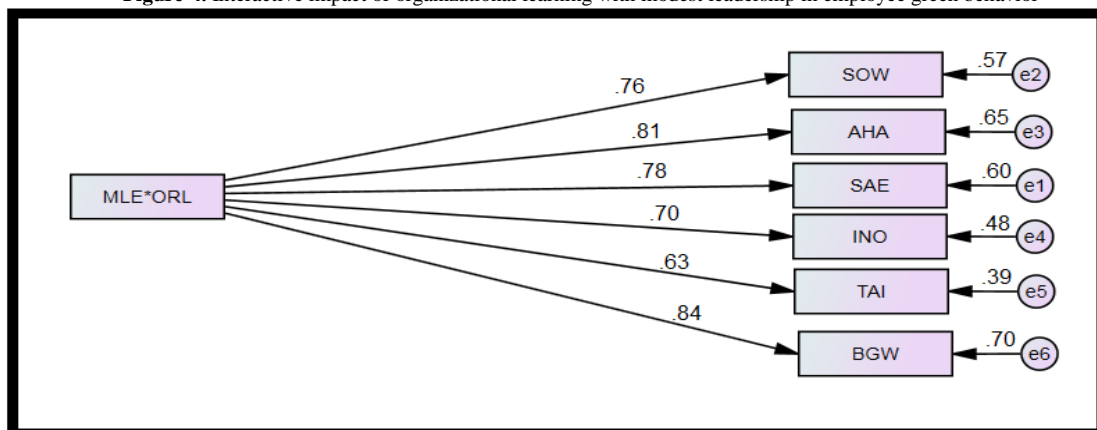
**Figure-4.** Interactive impact of organizational learning with modest leadership in employee green behavior

Table-7. Results of the interactive effect

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SOW	<---	MLE*ORL	.175	.014	12.607	***
AHA	<---	MLE*ORL	.186	.013	14.788	***
SAE	<---	MLE*ORL	.200	.015	13.330	***
INO	<---	MLE*ORL	.162	.015	10.509	***
TAI	<---	MLE*ORL	.128	.015	8.733	***
BGW	<---	MLE*ORL	.170	.010	16.571	***

The results has confirmed an indirect influence of organizational learning (ORL) as an interactive role (MLE \* ORL) with modest leadership (MLE) on the Employee Green Behavior (BGW) (0.170). In the line of this, the indirect effect of organizational learning as an interactive role with modest leadership on each sub-dimensions of the Employee green behavior is sustainability of work (SOW) (0.175) , Avoiding Damage (AHA) (0.186), Saving Environment (SAE) (0.200) Affect Others (INO) (0.162) and Taking Initiatives (TAI) is 0.128.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study is aimed to investigate the interactive role of organizational learning on the relationship of modest leadership and employee green behavior. It is found that there need for modest leaders to have the ability to provide advice to others in order to guide them towards accomplishing the required tasks. Therefore, organizations may acquire a unique competitive advantage through the modest leadership who can influence and motivate employees towards green behavior. Hence Modest Leadership, organizational learning and the employee green behavior are found to be positively related to each other. The statistical results have demonstrated a direct influence of modest leadership on employee green behavior. This concludes that the role played by the leadership helps in developing the behavior of employees. Further, indicate that there is a direct effect of modest leadership on organizational learning, which proves the importance of the modest leadership role in accessing and benefiting from the knowledge within the organization. The existence of a direct influence of organizational learning on the employee green behavior demonstrates the importance of organizational learning in introducing knowledge and generating experience with minimizing environmental impacts. Moreover, there is an indirect impact of organizational learning as an interactive role with modest leadership and the employee green behavior. This proves the importance of the interactive role of organizational learning in the relationship between modest leadership and the employee green behavior.

This study provides useful insights for academics and policy maker. The firms should take interest to develop exemplary leadership to influence employees in a positive direction. Further, there is a need to develop internal processes in order to use natural resources that have less impact on the environment. Organizations should work to ensure that managers are modest and explain the importance of this principle in increasing the cooperation of individuals within organization. Therefore, managers should induce this recommendation while make decisions to protect the environment and reduce the losses.

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