

**The Role of Green Management Style in Fostering Employee Green  
Behaviours:**

**A Social Exchange Perspective in a Multinational Operating in Mexico**

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## Abstract

Environmental sustainability has emerged as a relevant strategy for multinational corporations, yet the dynamics through which management strategies are developed to translate environmental policies into employee behaviours remain unclear, specifically in high Human Development Index emerging economies. This study aims to investigate the mechanisms between Green Management Style (GMS) and Employee Green Behaviours (EGB) in a multinational brewery manufacturing in Mexico. Psychological mechanisms such as Social Exchange Theory (SET) were used as a theoretical framework to explore the underexamined relationship between management practices and employee environmental commitment.

This study adopted an interpretivist philosophy and qualitative case study as a methodological framework. The research was conducted through five semi-structured interviews across the organisations, including Quality Management, Packaging Management, Malting Operations Management, and Utilities Management. A six-step thematic analysis was used as a framework for the data analysis to identify patterns from five managerial perspectives and experiences of environmental leadership and employee engagement in sustainability initiatives.

The findings reveal four primary themes: Empowering green leadership as a driver of environmental engagement, the evolution of EGB from compliance to authentic environmental citizenship, the interconnected nature of voluntary and compulsory EGB, and differentiated social exchange mechanisms underlying environmental motivation. Contrary to what the literature suggests, that mandatory and voluntary green behaviours are mutually exclusive, this study demonstrates the interconnectedness of both categories by identifying the transitioning dynamics in real corporate settings from mandate-driven compliance to authentic ecological stewardship through Green Management Style approaches.

The research contributes to the existing literature by extending the Social Exchange Theory implications to environmental contexts, revealing that compulsory EGB are performed within economic exchange dynamics, while voluntary EGB are interconnected with social exchange patterns. In addition, the study identifies the difference in environmental awareness across generations, demonstrating that younger generations are more naturally inclined towards engagement with sustainable initiatives, influenced by their personal values and therefore, require fewer motivational elements. The findings suggest that to integrate environmental initiatives to transform the corporate culture to achieve sustainable organisational practices, the management approach must simultaneously consider addressing corporate sustainable strategies and motivate authentic environmental citizenship through empowering green management leadership, genuine employee support, and rewarding systems that compensate both mandatory and voluntary EGB.

**Keywords** – Employee Green Behaviours, Social Exchange Theory, Mandatory Behaviours, Compulsory Behaviours, Green Management Style, multinational enterprises, Mexico.

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## **Acknowledgement**

Firstly, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Paul, whose extraordinary support and guidance have been consistently exceptional for the completion of this thesis. You are an outstanding professor who has had the most significant influence on my life.

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## Introduction

The adverse impact of environmental degradation, the effects of climate change, and the scarcity of resources have made sustainability a priority within global policy frameworks and business strategies (World Economic Forum, 2024). Corporations, as a consequence, have started to adopt sustainability frameworks and models, for example, the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) model, to aid in their transition to the adoption of more sustainable business practices. The TBL is a multidimensional model that offers a balanced approach between the social implications and environmental impact of business operations alongside the traditional profit-focused business model (Nogueira *et al.*, 2025). It encompasses a more societally driven perspective than previous corporate performance evaluation models and more accurately reflects the scope and targets of modern multinational organisations that operate within a nexus of stakeholders with diverse needs and perspectives, and within an overarching framework of corporate and social responsibility (Mamic and Elkington, 2005).

Much of the evolution in the way in which large multinational organisations now operate can be informed by the theoretical debate between the shareholder and stakeholder perspectives. This debate on the nature of sustainability and its key drivers in society, the economy, and organisations has progressed in how performance is viewed and measured with regard to corporate entities. Traditionally, the key conceptual framework for evaluating business performance has been shareholder theory (Friedman, 1970), which has, at its core, the firm's profit and economic value. This theory, however, often neglects ethical and environmental aspects of business operations. On the other hand, stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) broadens the firm's responsibility to incorporate the employees of the firm and nature. This has led to the evolution of the TBL, which states that businesses should pursue economic, social and environmental objectives not in silos but in tandem (Al-Shamaileh *et al.* 2023). In this ecosystem, employees do not remain as passive implementers of strategies handed down by a board of directors but become a living embodiment of an organization's sustainability vision (Chen *et al.*, 2021; Dumont, Shen and Deng, 2017). This employee perspective, and the role played by social exchange and management leadership, is a key focus of this dissertation.

The research to date has been encouraging in terms of the TBL framework and its impact on organisations and their drive towards more societal and environmentally aware strategies, processes and operations (Huang and Li. 2017: Jum'a *et al.* 2022; Sitepu *et al.*, 2025). Overall, the findings indicate that, when businesses introduce sustainability strategies in their day-to-day operational structure, corporations can see an increase in their performance across their key performance indicators, including KPIs encompassed by the TBL. However, these findings are not consistent in the literature; the significant factors that affect how TBL is implemented are related to aspects such as geographical location, the regulatory environment and certain

organisational factors (Despeisse *et al.*, 2015; Aranda-Usón *et al.*, 2020). Although MNEs are large enough to possess the resources and expertise to adopt sustainability measures across their organisations, the actual implementation of these is predicated on managerial and employee adoption on the ground and the effective translation of strategies and aspirations into real world practice. This translation into day to day strategies can vary, and the mechanisms and motivations behind this process are not fully understood in the literature to date, especially in different development contexts and across different levels and management structures within an organisation (Küçükgül and Aksoy, 2023). Moreover, most of the literature to date has concentrated on the “very high” Human Development Index (HDI) countries, such as Japan and the UK (Despeisse *et al.*, 2015), with less focus on MNEs in “high” HDI countries like Mexico, which has distinct structural and environmental conditions that influence the adoption of sustainability practices, in addition to cultural differences which may impact on the social exchange of sustainability practices from managers to employees, and across employee groups.

This research undertakes a case study qualitative study approach to gain in depth insight into the mechanisms by which organisational sustainability policy is translated into business practice through the lens of cross departmental management perspectives on the ‘greening’ of employees and the application of social exchange theory. This dissertation aims to help fill key gaps in the literature as outlined by analysing the impact of Green Management Style (GMS) on Employee Green Behaviour (EGB) in a large MNE based in Mexico. While the TBL model provides a structure to evaluate sustainability at the corporate level, this study applies Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Thibaut, and Kelley 1959), which suggests that people perceive a reciprocal obligation in response to organisational rewards, and associated behaviours to analyse how supportive leadership and organisational support cultivate or inhibit EGB. This research is particularly concerned with the distinctions between voluntary and compulsory green behaviours, aiming to determine which type drives greater employee engagement and more sustainable results.

This study will enhance understanding of the link between an organisation's management style, individual's actions, and its performance on sustainability by looking at a neglected, yet vital, field of study. It attempts to fill the literature gap by analysing how a core sustainability model, TBL, can be put into practice through employee participation and management leadership, thus providing engagement and operational elements, as well as proposing concrete approaches to the implementation of sustainability from the use of a case study of a multinational company in Mexico. Specifically, this dissertation aims to examine the impact of Employee Green Behaviours on organisational sustainable strategies commitment in the context of Green Management Style and investigate the role of Social Exchange Theory in

promoting Employee Green Behaviour from a voluntary and compulsory green behaviour perspective.

## **Structure of the document**

**Chapter 1- Introduction:** This chapter describes the context of the study and examines different viewpoints so as to provide an insightful background to the research questions and objectives of the study

**Chapter 2 – Literature Review:** This chapter analyses the existing literature that relates to the topic of research, encompassing a wide scope of peer-reviewed publications in an attempt to highlight gaps and common recurrent trends. This literature sheds light on the prior work that has been done in this field.

**Chapter 3 – Methodology:** This section particularly focuses on the research design along with the methods concerning the results. It focuses on the philosophical underpinnings of the research, the research design and approach, how the participants were selected, the design of the interview schedule including the codification, processing, the approach to thematic analysis of the qualitative primary data, while also discussing the ethics of the methodology.

**Chapter 4 – Research Findings and Analysis:** In this chapter, the interpretation and discussion of the key thematic results will be undertaken. Preliminary links will be made to the literature, with further development of key findings in the Discussion chapter.

**Chapter 5 – Discussion:** This chapter tackles the assessment and evaluation of the research findings in comparison with the literature in relation to core research objectives, while also discussion key managerial implications. Furthermore, it considers the possible flaws that the study might have and proposes some possibilities for further research.

**Chapter 6 – Conclusion:** This chapter describes the research in relation to the research questions and summarises the key findings and their implications for the literature.

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review**

This literature covers both the theoretical and the empirical core aspects of the dissertation. It begins by outlining the background context to the dissertation and focuses on the evolution from shareholder to stakeholder theories of corporate performance to indicate the shift to greater ecological and sustainability concern for corporations over time, instead of merely profit motivated. The core framework of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is also outlined, and this is assessed in conjunction with Green Management Style (GMS) and Employee Green Behaviour (EGB). In particular, the role of GMS and its impact on the psychological and emotional engagement of employees with the sustainability strategies of companies is evaluated. The compulsory and voluntary actions of employees in sustainability motivated behaviour are also discussed, in addition to the nature of social exchange mechanisms in this process and the reciprocal nature of organisational dynamics and employee engagement. This review provides key context for the research question on how Green Management Style influences EGB within a multinational company located in a high Human Development Index (HDI) country, Mexico, thus responding to the current literature gap.

### **1.1 Background Theoretical Context: Shareholder Versus Stakeholder Theory**

The concept of corporate sustainability can be investigated from a top-down shareholder theory perspective or, alternatively, from a bottom-up stakeholder theory perspective. Shareholder theory is based on the work of Milton Friedman (1970), who purports that the key focus of the business should be to maximise shareholder profits. This dominant model of thinking ensured that managers and companies focused on short term goals at the expense of long term growth and sustainability, and this led to the removal of more ethical goals, corporate responsibility and environmental responsibility from core business principles, to the detriment of long-term sustainability (Flammer, 2015).

Stakeholder theory, in contrast, argues that firms hold ethical and strategic obligations to a wider range of stakeholders, including employees, communities, and, based on the focus of this dissertation - the environment (Freeman, 1984). This evolution in theory was necessary to ensure sustainable growth and engage a broader range of key stakeholders in the value chain, which is a predeterminant of fundamental change in an organisation (Miska, Witt and Stahl, 2019). This, in turn, has important implications for the focus of the current dissertation and forms the conceptual basis for concentrating on Employee Green Behaviours (EGB) from a business operations perspective, which is fundamental to an understanding of strategic decision making that focuses on sustainability in corporate entities.

A top down approach in business, based on rigid hierarchies of management, can be effective in some instances such as goal setting, however, while it results in compliance

to a range of policy initiatives, it does not tend to produce the fundamental employee engagement necessary for real behavioural change in an organisation (Lo, Peters, and Kok, 2017). Some factors constantly recognised in literature as key elements to drive change in organisations are attributable to employee engagement and autonomy, which is particularly noticeable when sustainable initiatives are implemented in the operational strategy. Zhang and Zhao (2019) have highlighted the relevance of the role of employees and their willingness to contribute to sustainable initiatives, which is crucial to adopt, support, and innovate green practices and green product development. This requires real engagement, participation and culturally embedded ecological awareness where employees are viewed as agents of change (Chen *et al.*, 2021).

Recent evidence has shown that green training, performance appraisal and empowerment can have a significant effect on EGB and generate fundamental business change from a bottom-up approach (Dumont, Shen and Deng, 2017). Similarly, social and psychological factors have been shown to be equally important to the enhancement of eco-driven initiatives, particularly where informal sustainability leadership is supported (Kim, Kim and Han, 2020). Prior research in the field of strategic management underscores that employees are not only agents who work on strategic initiatives; instead, they are key proactive creators of strategic success when they comprehend and engage with the company's objectives (Chen *et al.*, 2021). The employees' engagement has a positive and direct impact on the execution of the company's strategies and transforms them into quantifiable results. The manufacturing industry is a good example of this, and they are at the forefront of sustainability adoption strategies that improve and enhance operations, leading to more efficient and ecologically friendly outcomes (Feng Hu *et al.*, 2025). These are key aspects of the literature which will be discussed in the following sections and help to inform the development of the research questions for this dissertation.

## **1.2 Translating Theory into a Research Framework: Triple Bottom Line (TBL) model**

In the last decades, sustainability has become increasingly relevant for both corporate strategy and academic discourse. The last quarter of a century has witnessed a rise in sustainability concerns, and organisations are looking to embrace more environmental practices as a consequence of the continuous increase in demand for climate change (Nogueira *et al.*, 2025). In conjunction with this, the academic landscape has changed and new models and means of assessing sustainability performance in the corporate landscape have emerged. Prime amongst these is the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) model which evaluates three core dimensions of corporate performance - economic, social and environmental. This multidimensional model advocates for a balanced approach between dimensions, encompassing a more societally focused and nuanced perspective of organisational performance than previous that aims to add value equally

and sustainably across the three dimensions, challenging the traditional business perspective that prioritised a financial focus exclusively (Nogueira *et al.*, 2025). Within the TBL approach, companies hold not only responsibility for their shareholders in terms of the economic dimension, but also for the safety and well-being of customers and workers, and for protecting the environment (Zacher *et al.*, 2023). This has entailed a widening of corporate objectives underpinned by developments in corporate social responsibility and concern over the climate and sustainability. Consequently, TBL has become a prerequisite for any organisation during the manufacturing process (Jum'a *et al.*, 2022), and this wider societal perspective informs the conceptualised view of firm performance applied in this dissertation.

The evidence arising from an assessment of firm performance based on the TBL model is growing and is largely positive. For example, Jum'a *et al.* (2022) and Sitepu *et al.*, (2025) explored the connection between the TBL model and the lean manufacturing methodology, their studies demonstrated that traditional process methodologies focused on maximising efficiency of the production process can be reflected in the TBL elements, improving the social, economic, and financial aspects of organisational performance. Moreover, Huang and Li (2017) evaluated the decrease in production costs and consequent increase in profits by incorporating sustainable strategies such as the reduction of energy consumption, optimisation of resources, and redefinition of operational strategies that positively impacted the three dimensions of the TBL framework. Additional evidence suggested that firms that invested in sustainable practices, for example, reducing or substituting the packaging materials, reducing disposal waste or material storage, tend to outperform firms that fail to invest in sustainable practices (Epstein and Roy, 2001). The evidence suggests that integrating the TBL model in business strategies necessitates organisations aligning their business functions with sustainable goals, which results in not only operational, but also social and financial benefits. This emphasises the importance of business performance measurement and the key role played by a multidimensional approach as advocated in the literature. This informs the approach taken in the current study, which expands the performance measure to encompass, in particular, the environmental dimension of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) model.

Additionally, numerous studies conducted in various countries and business sectors have found that government regulations impact TBL organisation strategies differently. A recent study in Spain assessed 52 companies and their sustainable efforts, revealing that particular regulatory frameworks in the region might shape the operational initiatives, such as waste management and circular economy policies, influencing companies, and leading to a transition from linear to circular processes, where the production processes ended up substituting some components by recycled ones or reduced the usage of resources in the manufacturing process (Aranda-Usón *et al.*, 2020). A further study compared the motivation of industries in Japan and the UK to

reuse, recycle and recover end-of-life vehicles practices (Despeisse *et al.*, 2015). The study highlighted how external factors, such as the government organisation of Japan automobile Recycling Promotion Center (JARC), the EU directive for the UK, and the land scarcity in Japan are external factors that shape business sustainable strategies.

Therefore, mandatory regulations and regional characteristics do not guarantee the same level of implementation of the TBL principles across regions. Specific enablers, such as geographical constraints, have an impact on the integration of sustainable practices globally (Despeisse *et al.*, 2015). For instance, water scarcity in Mexico is a significant constraint in the industrial sector, which has become a motivational element for industries to not only seek alternative solutions, such as desalination of seawater, but also to reduce water consumption within their operations (Roggenburg *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, the Mexican government's policies constantly change, such as the cancellation of auctions, reversals, or privatisation efforts. These external forces have shaped industries, creating certain instability in the industry sector, thereby affecting the sustainable efforts that corporations aim for and complicating the long-term environmental development (Hernandez *et al.*, 2024).

To date, the primary focus in the literature has been on “very high” human development index countries such as the UK and Japan. This study will expand the evidence in this area by focusing on an understudied country – Mexico – and an understudied category – a country in the “high” Human Development Index category, linked to a distinct set of drivers, enablers and constraints, thereby adding to the knowledge base of the extant literature.

Despite the increasing relevance and progressive emergence of sustainability business concerns, the implementation of sustainable practices is not uniform across organisations. The limitations arise from geographical differences (as discussed), but also from operational constraints, differences in stakeholder engagement, organisational differences in sustainability strategy and policy implementation, and the size of the enterprise (Depken and Zeman 2018). Landry (2008) categorises the organisations' sustainable efforts into five groups: non-compliance, compliance, beyond compliance, fully integrated and born sustainable. Each group impacts the three dimensions of the TBL model at a different level, mostly influenced by the organisation's size and financial stability. Large enterprises have access to skilled personnel and well-structured strategies that enable them to successfully operate within the TBL framework. Contrarily, small and medium-sized enterprises lack the required capacity and financial capital to broaden their business goals to the TBL framework (Depken and Zeman 2018). Moreover, studies suggest that growing financial stability plays a crucial role in enterprises to invest in sustainable practices (Sulich and Sołoduch-Pelc, 2025). This study will focus on a large multinational enterprise with financial stability and a strong set of core corporate social responsibility guidelines.

Evaluating fully integrated sustainable strategies in this context in Mexico will facilitate a comparison with similar large multinational enterprises operating in countries with a different human development index category, such as ‘very high’, to assess differences in outcomes and approaches across countries and cultures, potentially offering considerable value and insight to the literature.

Multinationals are at the forefront of consumer pressures to implement green initiatives that lead to changes in their operational practices and value creation (Nogueira *et al.*, 2022; Epstein and Roy, 2001). A previous study revealed that by integrating sustainable strategies as a core operational principle in 34 Saudi Arabian firms, the perception of financial stability by stakeholders increased, promoting green innovations and thus maximising value not only for the firm itself but also for its community (Ammer *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, organisations recognised the adoption of sustainable practices as a key element in achieving long-term growth in both the environmental and social aspects (Svensson *et al.*, 2018). This shift in perception accentuated the evolving role of organisations to act not only for economic incentives but also as social and environmental stewards, which aligns with the three elements of the TBL framework. This dissertation will focus on evaluating a large multinational that has embedded sustainability within its organisational structure by integrating sustainable practices as a core responsibility, and will enable the researcher to gain an understanding, not only of the unique operator role in the implementation of sustainability practices, but also the positive influence of corporations in integrating sustainable practices on individual behaviours.

### **1.3 Green management style and employees' commitment to sustainable actions**

Although corporate strategies and frameworks like the TBL shape how sustainability is managed within organisations, achieving sustainable goals often hinges on employees' individual behaviours (Zacher *et al.*, 2023). Employees play a key role in implementing the organisation's strategies, positioning their actions as critical to achieving competitiveness, long-term growth, and strategic success, while transforming objectives into tangible and measurable outcomes (Feng Hu *et al.*, 2025). Some studies explored the key elements that have an influence on individual behaviours in terms of sustainability, suggesting that they are impacted by the commitment organisations demonstrate to employees, the green human resource management (Xie, H. *et al.*, 2024; Widjanty *et al.*, 2025), the sustainable training programs (Bodhi *et al.*, 2025), the workplace characteristics (Stein *et al.*, 2025), and the Green Management Style (GMS). Sulich and Sołoducha-Pelc (2025) highlighted the relevance of GMS in production companies, being a key driver of sustainable practices within the TBL framework. As referred by Sulich and Sołoducha-Pelc (2025), GMS is a type of management that focuses on environmental protection, resource management, and the consideration of

the social and ecological context of organisations while pursuing balanced, sustainable development. The GMS emphasises employee empowerment by fostering autonomy, innovation, motivation and proactive attitudes towards sustainability, ultimately promoting green job development and creating an environment of community-oriented growth while reducing negative ecological impacts. The author's intention is not to discuss all the factors that promote the EGB within workers, but to focus instead on exploring the understudied topic in the literature of the impact of GMS on employees' commitment to sustainable actions, consequently fostering EGB while proactively contributing to the organisation's sustainability performance.

The literature findings consistently highlight that the agility and adaptability of managers are essential for addressing and guiding changes within the organisation while fostering the growth of team members in line with strategic and sustainable goals (Sitepu *et al.*, 2025; Din *et al.*, 2025). A change in sustainable leadership and workforce practices is a growing necessity driven by environmental challenges, which emphasises the relevance of a holistic change in organisations, where management and employee behaviours can evolve simultaneously, setting the foundations to transition to sustainable practices (Din *et al.*, 2025). The literature suggests that management roles are an essential element in addressing efforts to achieve sustainable goals, encouraging actions and behaviours among workers that directly contribute to the organisation's sustainable growth, actively shaping a green culture that fosters environmentally friendly behaviours (Farrukh *et al.*, 2022). In addition, Jiang *et al* (2022) underscore the direct influence of immediate employees' managers and peer workers on employees' behaviours and attitudes towards sustainability, highlighting the relevance of green, empowering and transformational leadership styles as the key characteristics to influence others. This underscores the relevance of critically evaluating how management style and leadership strategies can either promote or constrain the EGBs in daily work activities. In this dissertation, the direct influence of the Green Management Style on employees will be discussed, considering two potential impacts. Firstly, how employees develop the EGB, and secondly, whether this EGB can be propagated and help "greening" the rest of the employees or areas within organisations, the core aspects of which will be discussed in the next section.

#### **1.4 Evaluating Employee Green behaviours theory and evidence**

In recent years, there has been an increasing body of interdisciplinary research focusing on Employee Green Behaviours (EGB), including fields such as management, law, and psychology. Initially, the definition of EGB was considered an extension of pro-environmental behaviour, encompassing activities such as environmental activism, non-activist behaviours or influencing sustainable actions within organisations (Zacher *et al.*, 2023). However, EGB, as defined in its modern sense by Ones and Dilchert (2012),

refers to “measurable actions and behaviours that employees undertake that either support or hinder environmental sustainability”, making it distinct from previous definitional iterations. An illustrative example of the positive influence of EGB within an organisational context is evident in India. In this setting, EGB are demonstrated through various strategies, including the development of innovative recycling solutions, the reduction of electronic waste, and the mitigation of plastic pollution in manufacturing processes (Bodhi *et al.*, 2025). Recent studies revealed that Employee Green Behaviours are the perfect mechanism for success in the sustainability organisational process, which highlights the importance of employees in achieving the company's sustainable goals (Ercantan and Eyupoglu, 2022 and Faeni, 2024).

Ones and Dilchert (2012a) categorised the EGB into five domains, denominated as the green five taxonomy of the EGB. Each domain reflects specific types of employee engagement with sustainable goals. The first domain is Transforming behaviours, encompassing attitudes and actions that actively alter the products or processes. This includes proposing alternative ways to produce while reducing waste, redesigning workflows to use resources or creating sustainable products. The second domain is Conserving Behaviours, which focuses on the optimisation of resources and waste mitigation, including recycling, reusing, and reducing. Avoiding harm behaviours include actions to prevent negative impact on the environment, such as preventing water or air pollution. The fourth dimension is Influencing Others, encompassing the social aspects of sustainability, such as discussing sustainable practices and leveraging leadership skills. The last dimension is Taking Initiative, referring to all proactive and self-driven behaviours, such as developing environmental initiatives or defending sustainable principles (Zacher *et al.*, 2023). These five domains together reveal how nuanced EGB can be.

For the purposes of this research, Transforming Behaviours and Taking Initiative will be focused on in terms of Green Management Style. Each domain captures behaviour that is fundamentally change-oriented and proactive. Their importance is anchored in the way managers can potentially transcend merely fine-tuning current operations to independently launch sustainability projects that might not be addressed in formal policy. What this shows is that genuinely transformative green behaviour usually occurs outside of explicit instructions, promoted instead by ingenuity and a personal sense of responsibility.

Further aspects will also be focused on including the fourth dimension of Influencing Others. Social Exchange Theory (SET) is one of the frameworks within the Social and Environmental psychology, which helps to understand how the EGB works within organisational environments (Paillé *et al.*, 2019). SET posits that people perceive a reciprocal obligation in response to rewards, suggesting the organisational rewards structure can positively influence the employees' attitudes and behaviours. For

instance, Paillé *et al.* (2019) found evidence of a positive association between EGB performance and the level of organisational support being offered when the relationship is mainly reciprocal in nature. Further research by Hernandez *et al.* (2024) revealed that SET consists of four key pillars necessary to maintain positive reciprocal engagement: trust, commitment, reciprocity, and power. These pillars serve as the basis for understanding how employees determine their commitment. Moreover, Bangwal *et al.* (2025) reinforced the argument by demonstrating that workers are likely to engage in environmental behaviours at the same level of commitment as they perceive organisational efforts in their well-being, creating a sense of mutual obligation that encourages employees to adopt and demonstrate sustainable behaviours within the workplace. SET offers a perspective on understanding how workers reciprocate Green Management Style and commit to sustainable strategies, consequently developing EGB and proactively contributing to the organisation's sustainability performance.

Finally, recent research indicates that EGB are not merely voluntary behaviours but are also influenced by job duties, leading to the widely accepted current notion that EGB encompass both voluntary and proactive environmental actions as well as compulsory behaviours that employees must perform in their workplaces (Zhang and Zhang , 2024). Compulsory EGB can contribute directly to the corporation's sustainable performance, such as waste reduction, energy savings and resource management (Bangwal *et al.*, 2025). However, voluntary EGB, such as tree planting and efforts to purify water in rural regions, can also arise and enhance the positive environmental impact of manufacturing firms beyond their boundaries (Bodhi *et al.*, 2025). Prior research suggests that the conceptualisation of EGB has transitioned from a broad interpretation of Pro-environmental attitudes to a more nuanced approach that encompasses both voluntary and job duty-driven behaviours that contribute to the organisational sustainability outcomes, however this aspect is still understudied in the literature, particularly in non “very high” human development index countries. This dissertation will explore the comparative effects of compulsory and voluntary EGB on organisational dynamics, with a particular emphasis on determining which type serves as a more effective incentivising mechanism for employees. The proposition is that both compulsory and voluntary EGB are perceived by employees as valuable and, that both are necessary to motivate and embed ongoing sustainability behaviour in employees leading to a more significant positive impact on the organisation's sustainable performance.

## 1.5 Conclusion

The literature review has laid out the theoretical framework and a comprehensive body of research to explore how Green Management Style (GMS) influences Employee Green Behaviours (EGB), and focused on a multinational company operating in Mexico, a country with a relatively high Human Development Index (HDI). The study began by recognising a transition from focusing solely on shareholder interests to prioritising stakeholder relationships. This transition can be supported by the adoption of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework, which is a central concept of the dissertation. The TBL model considers three elements as key measurable outcomes of organisational success: 1) Economic balance within the industry, 2) social responsibility, and 3) environmental initiatives to contribute to the last 25 years of environmental concerns, each driven by the choices and actions of employees during its implementation.

The review is based on three mechanisms by which a change in corporate sustainability can be achieved with proper green management strategies: 1) empowerment, 2) innovation, and 3) transparency. The literature suggests that fostering voluntary and compulsory actions towards sustainability is achievable when leaders demonstrate green competencies in the workplace, in which both green activities and actions can emerge as a consequence of authentic environmental awareness. Grounded in Ones and Dilchert's (2012a) Green Five framework, these actions include conserving resources, avoiding emissions, transforming existing systems, and launching novel environmental practices.

The literature review also emphasises the differences between Voluntary and Compulsory Environmental Green Behaviours (EGB) in terms of their motivations and outcomes within organisations. Compulsory behaviours are usually driven by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), whereas voluntary EGB are influenced by intrinsic motivations and cultural values. Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides useful insights, suggesting that supportive organisational practices, such as recognition and resource availability, encourage employees to engage in both types of behaviours.

This review highlighted a gap in the evidence base concerning Green Management Style (GMS) in countries with 'high' Human Development Indices, with Mexico as an example case study. Previous investigations have predominantly centred on contexts categorised as "very high" HDI, thereby neglecting the organisational processes situated in comparably advanced but less examined regions. This dissertation explores the relationship between green leadership and the adoption and diffusion of EGB within a distinct industrial and geographical context, thereby addressing a significant research gap.

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the methods used to examine the impact of the Green Management Style(GMS) on employee commitment towards organisational sustainable strategies that encourage Employee Green Behaviours (EGB). As noted by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), a well-defined methodology is most effective in proving the credibility and trustworthiness of a research project. The study focuses on the interactions and relationships among GMS, EGB, and Social Exchange Theory (SET) in a multinational brewery in Mexico.

This chapter first discusses the research philosophy and theoretical framework that underpins this study and, subsequently, the research approach, strategy, and design. In addition to this, the chapter addresses practical elements such as the sample design, data collection, interview scheduling, and data analysis. Finally, this chapter discusses the pilot study and the ethical considerations which informed the process of the research.

### **2.2 Research Philosophy**

This research follows an interpretivist philosophy, as it seeks to understand how the organisation's Green Management Style can positively influence EGB, which requires social meanings and interpretations within the organisation's framework (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). This philosophy focuses on determining social reality as a product of socio-human interaction. The interpretivist framework suits this research because it understands the phenomenon of environmental behaviours and management practices as socially constructed realities. Such realities can only be grasped through the analysis of participants' lived experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This framework understands that how employees perceive GMS, their motivations and their commitment to sustainable practices are deeply rooted in social contexts and individual interpretations. While the positivist paradigm aims to find universal principles and objective realities, interpretivism, with its focus on the uniqueness of human experiences, is better for investigating intricate social realities like organisational culture and individual actions in the framework of sustainability.

For this research, GMS and EGB are considered social processes rooted within corporations organisational and social cultures. This viewpoint facilitates an understanding that social and organisational awareness, as well as sustainability actions, result from collective dynamics and social processes rather than something predetermined.

## **2.3 Research Framework**

This study is based on a theoretical framework composed of four core ideas, which are: Green Management Style (GMS), Employee Green Behaviour (EGB), the difference between Voluntary and Compulsory Green Behaviour, and Social Exchange Theory (SET). GMS is framed as an independent variable, while EGB is regarded as the dependent variable, which is differentiated into compulsory EGB (organisational policies and performance-related) and voluntary EGB (discretionary acts of environmental stewardship). SET explains the reciprocal relationship framework of how EGB are influenced by green management practices. It also distinguishes between economic exchange relationships, which are based on contract, obligation, and reward, and social exchange relationships, which rely on trust and obligation without tangible compensation. Understanding this difference is essential to explain the different responses of various types of environmental behaviours to management style and the type of incentive offered. Other contributors to the effectiveness of green management practices are organisational culture and the socio-educational framework, which this study considers as moderating contextual variables.

## **2.4 Research Questions**

This dissertation is organised around a primary research question along with two sub-questions that contribute toward a more comprehensive understanding of the chosen research topic. The purpose is to explore insights from the participants' lived experience instead of testing pre-set causal relationships.

Core Research Question: What is the impact of Employee Green Behaviours on organisational sustainable strategies commitment in the context of Green Management Style?

Sub-question 1: With regards to Social Exchange Theory, which of the two categories of Employee Green Behaviour, Compulsory or Voluntary role, is more rewarding? How does this perception impact the level of Employee Green Behaviour performed?

Sub-question 2: Within the Social Exchange Theory framework, how do perceptions of organisational support and management leadership impact the commitment to compulsory and voluntary role behaviour?

The following hypotheses were developed from the theoretical framework and literature review.

H1: The impact of green management styles will empower both compulsory and voluntary employee green behaviours, but with a stronger impact on voluntary behaviours.

This hypothesis stems from the literature on transformational leadership and environmental leadership, which argues that more empowering approaches to management tend to be more effective in achieving intrinsic motivation and voluntary environmental citizenship behaviours (Robertson & Barling, 2013).

H2: Employees will perceive voluntary green behaviours as more intrinsically rewarding than compulsory green behaviours, and this perception will impact the frequency and degree of environmental actions.

This hypothesis stems from Social Exchange Theory, which states that behaviours that are intrinsically motivated are more sustainable and rewarding than those which are compulsory and required (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

H3: Employees' perceptions regarding organisational support, as well as management leadership, will have a positive association with the commitment to both compulsory and voluntary environmental behaviours. However, the relationship will be stronger for voluntary behaviours.

This hypothesis rests on organisational support theory and Social Exchange Theory, which argues that perceived support from the organisation is more closely associated with reciprocal obligations, especially in the case of voluntary behaviours (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986).

H4: Contextual factors such as organisational culture and educational attainment will moderate the impact of Green Management Style on Employee Green Behaviours.

This hypothesis integrates the organisational behaviour theory and the significance of contextual factors in context to their effectiveness in the organisational practices (Johns, 2006).

## **2.5 Research approach**

In this study, a qualitative case study-based research method was chosen. Given the exploratory nature of the investigation, a qualitative research method is well suited for this study because it seeks to understand complex social systems, unique subjective processes, as well as green management and employee environmental behaviours. The

qualitative approach allows for the capture of the complexity of environmental behaviour by documenting the experiences and perspectives of the participants (Malterud *et al.*, 2016). This level of understanding facilitates developing insights which help in uncovering effective practices in green management and environmental leadership.

More specifically, this approach starts with interviews with the participants based on an interview schedule developed from robust and widely cited theoretical constructs to capture specific observations, then gradually builds and expands on these theoretical insights based on the case under study. Contrasting with a deductive approach, which relies solely on existing theories as a foundation for research, inductive reasoning relies on data collection to develop meaningful and relevant theoretical development (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). This approach is suited for research in Green Management Style, a relatively new area, where the understanding and theoretical frameworks still need to evolve.

## **2.6 Research strategy and design**

This study uses a single case study approach (Yin, 2018) with a multi-national brewery company in Mexico to understand in detail the green management strategies and employee environmental actions in relation to organisational culture and contextualise it in the local culture. This methodology is particularly suited to this research because it allows the author to understand the factors that interact and shape the effectiveness of green management in the organisation.

The design is both explanatory and exploratory with an aim to define green management and employee environmental actions, define the general themes under which these interact, and explain the relationships that operate among the identified themes (Yin, 2018). The context of the case study is interesting because it is positioned in a highly polluting industry that is under increasing pressure for socially responsible and sustainable practices. The cultural context of Mexico enriches the study further in showing how GMS is adapted to a culture that is becoming more environmentally aware and struggling with specific local environmental problems.

The primary method employed for data generation is semi-structured interviews, which have a balance between structure and flexibility (Malterud *et al.*, 2016). This format allowed the researcher to address the concerns of GMS, EGB, and SET, while giving the participants the space to articulate their thoughts and the flexibility to probe deeper into interesting responses with follow-up questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

## 2.7 Sampling

This research uses purposive sampling because it focuses on participants who possess deep, pertinent insights on the GMS and EGB (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). This approach tries to cover variation within management practices in different functional areas while ensuring that all participants have firsthand experience with environmental management and EGB. This method does not use random sampling, as it relies on the researcher's judgment of the specific attributes of the participants, and as such it possess limited generalizability and has the potential to contain selection and confirmation bias, however it was deemed appropriate given the exploratory nature of the research, the focus on a specific case, and the need to achieve a deep understanding of researchers (Patton, 2015).

The sample includes five managers from the case study organisation's different areas: Quality Management, Packaging Management, Malting Operations, and Utilities Management. These diverse departments provide representation of various operational and environmental challenges, thereby providing the research with the opportunity to examine different functional areas and operational requirements concerning the application of green management practices. Participants were selected based on their roles and responsibilities related to sustainability to ensure that they had valuable insights into the key concepts of the study. This approach provided depth and richness of data rather than statistical generalizability (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Participants were chosen according to the following requirements: (1) they have management responsibility for environmental projects in their department, (2) oversight of staff directly involved in environmental practices, and (3) at least two years of experience in the position to provide adequate context regarding environmental management practices.

A sample size of five participants is appropriate for this qualitative study since it allows for a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of individual experiences (Morse, 2000). Such an approach is consistent with interpretivist research philosophy, and the single case study reached theoretical saturation with this sample size.

## 2.8 Data collection

Data collection was undertaken through the use of semi-structured interviews, which allow attention to be paid to major themes of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2015). All interviews were conducted in Spanish, given the country of origin of the participants and their native language. This approach also reduced the risk of language problems that might compromise the qualitative research. As the dissertation is in English, a

thorough translation process was done to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data.

To protect confidentiality while promoting honest sharing about workplace dynamics, all interviews were conducted over Microsoft Teams. Given the participants' time constraints, the 45-minute duration of the interviews ensured both comprehensive coverage of the research topics and respect for the participants' limited time.

To guarantee accuracy in capturing participant responses and to facilitate comprehensive analysis, all interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent. The recording made it possible for the researcher to listen fully and to ask follow-up questions without being limited by the need to document the interview. During the interview, additional notes were made about the participants' responses as well as their facial expressions and other actions which might be relevant to the data being analysed.

## **2.9 Interview Scheduling design**

To address the key theoretical constructs and the research questions, an interview guide was created following the literature review on Green Management Style, Employee Environmental Behaviour, and Social Exchange Theory (Kallio *et al.*, 2016). While covering important research areas, the guide had to be flexible enough to cover areas of interest that emerged naturally in the discussion.

The interview schedule was structured around four key sections corresponding to the key research relevant elements: (1) Green Management Style, exploring participants' perspectives on environmental leadership and motivational strategies to foster environmental engagement; (2) Employee Green Behaviours, to allow an understanding of the perceived types of environmental behaviours and their development over time; (3) Voluntary versus Compulsory Environmental Behaviours, allowing the researcher to explore the difference between the required and the discretionary environmental actions and their distinctive attributes; and (4) Social Exchange Theory, investigating how institutional policies dictates the reward systems and its influence on Employee Green Behaviours.

For every section, a combination of descriptive questions (participants were asked to describe their in-role experiences), structural questions (participants were asked to explain relationships among various factors), and contrast questions (participants' comparative perspective of different approaches or outcomes) was used (Spradley, 2016). As highlighted by Patton (2015), the questions aimed to be open-ended, non-specific and non-judgmental to allow participants to respond freely and to reduce the influence of the researcher.

**Table 1. List of participants**

Participants	Role	Years of Experience
P1	Quality Manager	10
P2	Packaging Manager	5
P3	Utilities Manager	2.5
P4	Malting Manager	7
P5	Packaging Manager	9

## 2.10 Analysis – coding and thematic analysis

Data analysis followed the Braun and Clarke (2006) framework of thematic analysis with a focus on inductive and deductive reasoning within a two-dimensional framework. The following sections provide examples to explain each step of the data analysis approach.

### Step 1: Familiarisation with the data

The analysis started with deep immersion in the data by reading interview transcripts and listening to the audio recordings several times to capture all the details and nuances in the respondents' replies. The same process was repeated for every interview transcript, listening to the audio more than three times and making detailed notes on first thoughts, themes, and emergent phenomena worth exploring further and the gaps within the current analysis.

During this phase, participants' preliminary observations were documented, which included:

- Enabling leadership approaches emerged with all participants
- Change from compliance to engagement among employee behaviours
- Intricate interplay between voluntary and mandatory environmental behaviours
- Divergent attitudes towards reward and recognition systems
- Organisational and cultural context related to the effectiveness of green management.

### Step 2: Initial Coding

Initial coding consisted of applying analytical descriptions to the data, which permitted the author to capture meaningful aspects of the analysis. Descriptive codes were assigned to capture the essence of participant statements. In total, 98 initial codes were developed from the five interview transcripts.

The Primary initial code examples from the interviews were:

**Table 2. Examples of initial codes with supporting data**

Code	Example Quote	Participant
Leading by example	"I demonstrate my commitment to sustainability in everything I do, I genuinely believe and am committed to sustainability outside and inside the brewery"	P1 (Quality Manager)
Educational approach	"I empower my team, so they challenge themselves, giving this particularity or authenticity that each one possesses toward the objectives"	P4 (Malting Manager)
Compliance to habit transformation	"Initially, it was something done out of obligation... over time, this transformed into habits"	P2 (Packaging Manager)
Spillover to personal life	"I personally brought many of the behaviours learned in the company to home, I transferred them to my family"	P2 (Packaging Manager)
Economic exchange expectations	"I think the annual bonus received for meeting environmental indicators or KPIs influences the type of sustainable behaviours"	P3 (Utilities Manager)
Intrinsic satisfaction	"For me, the simple fact of doing it is enough, knowing that I am contributing to the plant is more than sufficient"	P1 (Quality Manager)

### Step 3: Searching for themes

Identifying overarching themes in the data required examining the associations among the initial codes to find broader patterns of significance that aligned with the research questions. This necessitated constructing a thematic map that organised grouped codes into possible themes and sub-themes.

**Initial thematic Map:**

Potential theme 1: Empowering green management style

Leading by example

Educational approaches

Delegation strategies

Creating environmental urgency

Connecting local to global frameworks

Potential theme 2: Employee Green Behaviour Evolution

Adherence to habit change

Change in behaviour motivated by knowledge

Sincere concern of environmental issues

Tension due to performance stress

Potential theme 3: voluntary vs. compulsory behaviour dynamics

KPI-driven mandatory behaviours

Discretionary environmental actions

Behaviour interconnectedness

Spillover effects to personal/community contexts

Sustainability and scope differences

Potential theme 4: social exchange mechanisms

Economic exchange relationships

Social exchange relationships

Organisational support reciprocity

Generational differences in exchange preferences

Potential theme 5: recognition and reward systems

Formal organisational recognition  
 Informal recognition approaches  
 Extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation balance  
 Individual differences in recognition expectations

Potential theme 6: organisational and cultural context

Global sustainability framework alignment  
 Technological and infrastructure constraints  
 Cultural/educational context factors  
 Regional environmental crisis influence

#### Step 4: Reviewing Themes

Theme review involved examining each potential theme to ensure coherence, distinctiveness, and adequate data support. This process included checking themes against both the coded data and original transcripts to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness.

**Table 3. Final Theme Structure with Data Support**

Theme	Sub-themes	Supporting Codes	Data Extracts
<b>1. Empowering Green Management Style</b>	- Leading through example- Educational strategies- Delegation and empowerment	32 coded references across all participants	"I like to give an example so that people see what I am doing and get engaged. And I also like, once I have convinced them, to cede that action or delegate it" (P1)
<b>2. Employee Green Behaviour Evolution</b>	-Compliance to authentic engagement- Knowledge-driven transformation-	24 coded references	"What initially was compliance, we have increasingly managed to get people to join,

	Habit formation as an intermediary stage		understand, and have this awareness" (P4)
<b>3. Voluntary vs. Compulsory Behaviour Dynamics</b>	- Behaviour interconnectedness- Spillover effects- Sustainability differences	19 coded references	"I think many times voluntary and mandatory behaviours are intertwined" (P2)
<b>4. Social Exchange Mechanisms</b>	- Economic vs. social exchange- Recognition and reward systems- Organizational support reciprocity	14 coded references	"I don't expect any reward or recognition, for me the simple fact of doing it is enough" (P1)

### Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes

This step necessitated formulating accurate descriptions for defining each theme as well as identifying names that accurately reflect their essence and relationship to the research questions.

Final themes definitions:

**Theme 1: Empowering Green Management Style as a catalyst for environmental engagement**

**Definition:** This theme highlights the ongoing pattern of empowering leadership styles that managers use to encourage employees to engage with environmental issues. They set the tone by leading by example with sustainable practices themselves, developing training initiatives to create a deep and authentic understanding, and gradually assigning more environmental duties to team members to build a sense of ownership and enhance their capabilities.

**Theme 2: Transitioning Employee Green Behaviour from mandatory to authentic environmental awareness**

**Definition:** This theme describes the evolution of sustainable behaviours from initial compliance-driven attitudes to genuine motivation towards sustainability citizenship, fostered by knowledge acquisition and mindset transformation.

**Theme 3: Interconnected voluntary and compulsory green behaviours for motivation and impact**

Definition: this theme encompasses the nuanced relationship between required and voluntary sustainable behaviours, revealing their interconnected characteristics and the different nature of their impacts across organisations and personal backgrounds.

Theme 4: Reciprocity in Green Employee Behaviours (Social Exchange Mechanisms)

Definition: This theme explores various social exchange relationships showing that compulsory behaviours are mainly driven by economic exchange frameworks and voluntary behaviours are more associated with social exchange relationships.

Step 6: Producing the results

Overall, the rigorous application of coding, code frequency analysis, theme relationship mapping and theme defining ensured a highly systematic approach to primary data analysis and that the findings presented in the results chapter are grounded in rigorous, transparent analytical procedures.

## **2.11 Pilot test**

A pilot interview was carried out with one manager who satisfied the study's selection criteria but was excluded from the final sample. The interview served three related objectives: to evaluate the interview questions for clarity and cultural compatibility, to confirm the expected duration of each exchange, and to identify enhancements for the overall data collection design.

Based on the manager's answers, some questions were reworded to extract more detailed, comprehensive narrative accounts, and additional terminology that was in line with the linguistic preferences of the participants and the cultural background of the participants was added.

Additionally, the pilot provided critical experiential learning regarding the recording instruments and confirmed the necessity of encouraging respondents to elaborate while attempting to minimise the interviewer's own biases.

## **2.12 Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the university research ethics committee before data gathering commenced. Before engaging in the study, all participants provided their informed consent. The objectives of the study were clearly communicated to them. Participants were informed that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time and that involvement was completely voluntary.

Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured during the entire process of the dissertation. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym, and all transcripts were checked for any potentially identifying details. Access to the audio recordings and transcripts was restricted through password protection, and secured storage protocols were observed. Participants were assured that their individual responses would not be revealed, but that results would only be produced in aggregated form.

## **2.13 Conclusion**

This methodology chapter has outlined the approach adopted to investigate the influence of GMS on EGB through the lens of SET. The qualitative research approach and case study strategy provide an appropriate framework for exploring the complex social processes that characterise environmental management and employee behaviour in organisational settings.

The research design integrates a purposive sample of managers across departments, which encompasses a range of perspectives on GMS and EGB in a focused case study approach of a multinational brewery operating in Mexico. Data collection involved the use of an interview schedule developed in line with the literature reviewed for the dissertation and semi-structured interviews. Participant recruitment followed strict principles of accessibility, informed consent, and an openness to critically reflect on the interplay of environmental and economic goals. Thematic analysis followed the six steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). This framework, and the iterative process aimed to produce rigorous results that can be used to extend known theoretical constructs in the area, in addition to adding to management knowledge of how to nurture green behaviour in an organisation, thereby supporting continuous and scalable enhancements in green management strategies.

## **Chapter 3: Thematic Analysis Results - Green Management Style and Employee Green Behaviours**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This thematic analysis draws on five detailed interviews with managers from diverse areas—Quality Management, Packaging Management, Malting Operations, and Utilities Management—within a multinational brewery operating in Mexico. It reveals recurring themes around GMS, employees' engagement in environmentally motivated actions, the differences between behaviours motivated by personal choice and those imposed by regulations, and the interplay with SET. The results illustrate how particular leadership styles shape the company's dedication to sustainability by fostering a range of EGB that support the organisation's environmental goals.

### **3.2 Leadership as a driver of Environmental Engagement through Green Management Style**

The findings confirm a steady and intentional use of empowering green management practices by all five participants. All participants demonstrated behaviours focused on sustainability projects, prioritised education, and assigned responsibilities to team members as essential elements to foster a collective culture of environmental stewardship. This finding aligns with recent research by Zacher *et al.* (2024) on multilevel antecedents of leader green behaviour and sustainable leadership's impact on environmental performance. Participant 1 (Quality Manager) exemplified this approach, stating:

"I demonstrate my commitment to sustainability in everything I do, I genuinely believe and am committed to sustainability outside and inside the brewery... I like to lead by example so people can see what I am doing and get engaged. And I also like, once I have convinced them, to cede that action or delegate it."

This empowering approach reflects green leadership perception's effect on environmental commitment and employee green behaviour. The leadership approach is further characterised by leaders who are guided by and demonstrate a strong commitment to ecological preservation, serving as ecological role models. For instance, Participant 1 noted,

"Our CEO constantly talks about our carbon footprint, and I personally champion every green project. It makes you feel like it's genuinely important."

The empowering green management style was also evidenced through educational strategies aimed at creating environmental awareness and urgency. Participant 4 (Malting Manager) demonstrated this approach:

"I empower my team, so they challenge themselves, giving them this authenticity that each one possesses and lead them toward the objectives... I also provide them with the necessary tools so they can feel in an environment that favours green behaviours, actions and ideas."

This educational dimension of green leadership corresponds to recent findings on how environmental leadership boosts employees' green innovation behaviour through organisational identity mechanisms (Xu *et al.*, 2022). The consistent emphasis on explaining the reasoning behind sustainability initiatives across all participants reflects what Feng *et al.* (2024) identify as employee motivation, values, and leadership being the most important variables affecting green behaviour.

Furthermore, the green management style observed in this study involved connecting local actions to global environmental frameworks, particularly the UN 2030 Agenda. Participant 2 (Packaging Manager) explained:

"By explaining to operators why it is important to identify and work on environmental improvements, what they are for, and how this contributes to sustainability, I can create this sense of urgency and belonging for environmental issues."

This strategy is supported by the latest findings on green transformational leadership and employees' organisational citizenship behaviour when viewed through the social information processing lens. This dissertation underscores the need to integrate environmental initiatives into larger organisational narratives so people develop a sense of psychological ownership and a committed sense of accountability for ecological outcomes (Yuan *et al.*, 2024).

### **3.3 Environmental Citizenship and Employee Green Behaviour**

The analysis reveals a progression of EGB from initial compliance-driven actions towards environmental citizenship behaviours. This progression challenges the traditional view of Mandatory versus Voluntary environmental behaviours, suggesting more of a development over time and a degree of complementarity between the two. Participant 2 provided insight into this evolution:

"When the company's sustainable strategy became more institutional and part of operational strategies, initially, it was something done out of obligation or to be aligned with this new environmental strategy. However, over time, this transformed into habits; people at all levels are now conscious and do it genuinely and automatically."

This finding supports recent evidence of employee green behaviour as a compound construct which can be reinforced not only by tangible incentives provided by the organisation, but also contains intangible motivation elements that arise from employee ownership of organisational ideals and additional voluntary behaviour

motivated by a sense of belonging to the firm and its community and environment based commitments (Norten *et al.*, 2015).

The transformation process appears to be facilitated by knowledge acquisition and understanding of environmental impact. Participant 4 (Malting Manager) observed:

"What initially was compliance, we have increasingly managed to get people to join, understand, and have this awareness of the environment. We are generating a vision of what they are going to leave to the people of the next generations."

This knowledge-to-behaviour pathway aligns with research on environmentally specific transformational leadership and employee green attitude and behaviour, which emphasises the role of environmental knowledge and awareness as critical factors to both voluntary and mandated environmental behaviours in organisational environments (Chen *et al.*, 2014).

The analysis also reveals persistent tensions between genuine environmental concern and performance pressure. Participant 1 acknowledged:

"I perceive that ecological actions within the company are mostly to comply with the KPIs... I don't consider that all people have the mentality to worry about sustainability genuinely, and I think it happens because it's not a genuine priority for the company."

This tension reflects what contemporary research on voluntary eco-friendly actions within green technology innovation has discovered regarding the interplay between green HR practices and leaders' personal environmental traits (Li *et al.*, 2020). This analysis suggests that while a cohesive green management strategy sets a general direction for employee behaviours, the actual organisational climate and a genuine commitment to sustainability determine whether an individual's environmental engagement feels genuinely authentic or simply routine compliance.

### **3.4 Green Behaviour longevity and motivation: Voluntary versus Compulsory Behaviour**

The interviews revealed an interesting finding regarding the connection between voluntary and compulsory green behaviours that goes further than mere classification. Participants consistently identified compulsory green behaviours as those directly tied to key performance indicators (KPIs) such as water consumption, energy usage, and carbon emissions, while voluntary behaviours encompassed activities like waste separation, energy conservation habits, and community environmental initiatives. However, the data suggested these categories are not mutually exclusive and often interconnect in practice. Participant 2 illustrated this complexity:

"I think many times voluntary and mandatory behaviours are intertwined. When the company launched the sustainable operations strategies, I was clear that this would contribute to the company's strategies, but the company also had genuine concern for the environment."

The distinction between voluntary and compulsory behaviours appears to influence their sustainability and scope of impact. Participant 4 provided a particularly insightful analysis:

"Mandatory behaviours that are within the role are where a change is made precisely because they are mandatory; however, they are not sustainable. Sustainable efforts stop because the goals are finite and are short-term. On the other hand, I believe that voluntary behaviours have the potential to contribute significantly and majorly to the planet, because in the community, they can be reflected and thus represent a greater impact on consumption of natural resources than companies ."

This observation aligns with recent research examining voluntary pro-environmental behaviour, which argues that voluntary environmental behaviours tend to be more stable and transferable across contexts than mandated behaviours, as they are driven by intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation. (Graves *et al.*, 2013).

The spillover effect of voluntary green behaviours to personal and community contexts emerged as a significant theme. Participant 2 noted:

"I personally brought many of the behaviours learned from the company to home. I transferred them to my family, and I also permeated all these sustainable behaviours with my son."

This is a highly significant and important finding, and helps to reveal how organisations can help the environment through employee green behaviour, which emphasises that voluntary organisational environmental behaviours can extend beyond the workplace, creating broader environmental impact through behavioural spillover effects where pro-environmental actions in one domain can generate similar behaviours in other life areas.

Participants did acknowledge the greater immediate organisational impact of compulsory behaviours due to their structured nature and measurable outcomes.

Participant 4 explained:

"I believe that sustainable behaviours that are within the role impact positively more to the sustainable organisation strategies, because these will have a clear focus, defined and structured deliverable... if someone at workplace is not asked to challenge themselves to reduce water consumption to a certain key performance indicator, and is not given that target to reach, it will be nothing more than romantic ideas of wanting to improve an indicator, and without anything concrete or specific actions."

This view reveals the complementary effect of mandatory environmental behaviours, which can also provide the foundation necessary for systematic environmental improvement in organisational settings.

### **3.5 Reciprocity Mechanisms and Reward Perceptions in Green Behaviour**

The Social Exchange Theory serves to understand how the Employee Green Behaviours reflect the reciprocity mechanisms for voluntary and compulsory environmental actions. The analysis outlined that traditional economic exchange mechanisms are intrinsically related to compulsory green behaviours, where specific forms of reward and recognition are performed, such as bonuses, formal ways to recognise employees, and career opportunities. Participant 3 clearly acknowledged this exchange mechanism:

"I think the annual bonus received for meeting environmental indicators or KPIs influences the type of sustainable behaviours that other employees might perform."

This finding reinforces prior research on Social Exchange theory, which highlights that the relationship with mutual reciprocity is based on exchange mechanisms and mutual interdependence, where benefits are expected from both sides (Paillé *et al.*, 2014). It can be inferred that tangible benefits play a key role in performing engagement with sustainable behaviours and attitudes, which serves as an influential element to motivate sustainability among employees.

In contrast, voluntary green behaviours seem to be interconnected with personal values as stated by Norten *et al* (2015). The voluntary behaviours operate with what prior research describes as green psychological climate and organisational pride, which is one of the social exchange relationships where benefits are not necessarily tangible but offer social approval, individual satisfaction, and alignment with personal values and characteristics. Participant 1 explained:

"I don't expect any reward, for me, the simple fact of doing it is enough, knowing that I am contributing to the plant is more than sufficient. For me, knowing that I am doing something positive for the environment is enough. This also aligns with my belief system and values."

These findings reveal that voluntary behaviours can be performed under the Social Exchange Theory lens, where voluntary prosocial behaviours can be influenced and motivated by internal satisfaction mechanisms, in addition to the organisation's reward and recognition system.

The organisational support becomes a key element of reciprocal obligation within organisations and employees with all five participants acknowledging that employee

well-being efforts generate a reciprocal sense of responsibility to the organisational goals and strategies, including sustainable initiatives. Participant 5 explained:

"I think the operators and I commit equally to all strategies when we notice genuine concern from the company. When benefits are good or well-being programs are genuine, I do think there is greater or reciprocal commitment, but not exclusively toward environmental issues, but to all strategies or objectives the company requires."

This finding suggests that employees' perception of organisational efforts creates an obligation to contribute to the organisation's strategies reciprocally. However, this reciprocity is not only reflected in sustainability objectives but also in all corporate initiatives.

In addition, participants underscored the importance of recognising employees outside the given structured reward system in the organisation, acknowledging the intrinsic value added of environmental behaviours.

"In addition to this, I like to motivate the team and reward them in my own way, that is, outside of what is already established institutionally. I sponsor uniforms for the soccer team they are part of, I invite them to breakfast within the company facilities, or I give them verbal recognition in the team meetings we have. This way of rewarding and genuinely promoting green behaviours has given immense results and unmatched commitment from employees."

This finding underscores and aligns with the corporate social responsibility role as a key driver for a green organisational climate that fosters pro-environmental behaviours. While external rewards serve as motivation to perform routine tasks, individual and complex behaviours like environmental citizenship require different approaches that foster community-oriented awareness.

This analysis also showed how different generations can perform differently in terms of Social Exchange Theory, mainly due to different preferences and ecological sensitivity. Participant 2 observed:

"I also consider that environmental concern is different between generations. Younger generations are born with genuine environmental concern, which could lead them to have a greater number of voluntary and, of course, mandatory behaviours than older generations. I think the economic factor is an incentive for all generations, but it could be stronger for older generations."

The value of this finding is that it demonstrates that social exchange relationships in the context of environmental actions may be affected by the generational nature of employees, which stands out that younger employees may need less motivational factors and demonstrate greater voluntary ecological actions because of their stronger environmental values, as documented in the literature on green leadership and

environmental behaviour. Wiernik (2016) found different attitudes reflected across generations, with younger employees, such as millennials and Gen Z, performing stronger individual environmental values, creating a natural engagement with ecological initiatives, and proactively performing voluntary green behaviours, even in the absence of rewards or recognition incentives. Furthermore, Lu (2020) reinforced that younger generations naturally demonstrated a strong commitment to leadership styles that use sustainable values as a core element of their management style. In consequence, it often requires fewer motivational factors, such as economic rewards, to perform environmental actions.

### **3.6 Organisational Culture and Context: Enabling and Constraining Factors**

The examination recognised the culture of the organisation and the contextual aspects as key in the green management approach and the role of employees' environmentally friendly activities. Most of the participants emphasised the concern of the organisation's integration with global frameworks of sustainability, especially with the support of the UN 2030 Agenda, as offering the backbone and framework needed for the environmentally friendly activities. On the other hand, the participants also pointed out the significant limitations, especially within the context of technology, funding, and the educational level, which seem to hinder the effectiveness of green management.

Participant 2 illustrated that:

"Limiting factors are infrastructure and investment, but the leadership of department managers also had a lot of influence; many proposals were good, but didn't scale because some bosses or managers didn't follow up on them."

The cultural context in Mexico in terms of the educational system emerged as relevant, with participants highlighting its limitations in the broader society, affecting the organisational Green Management Style when implementing sustainable initiatives.

Participant 5 observed:

"Also, I must comment that it's not the same to present a sustainable idea or project to the management team as to the operational team... the issue is that sometimes there may be a lot of ignorance in the operational team and therefore not as much sustainable impact and commitment from them."

This finding highlights the importance of ecological competencies that employees possess, becoming relevant when managers encounter limitations that constrain employees' commitment due to a lack of environmental knowledge.

The analysis also reveals that geographical limitations, such as water scarcity in the north of Mexico, have a profound impact on its citizens. Consequently, creating an

authentic environmental urgency to contribute not only to the organisational sustainable indicators but also to impact on the community.

"When these environmental crises are lived, it makes these sustainable behaviours be carried outside the company, it is lived in their daily life, and people understand the level of impact that can be reached. As a worker, I think it becomes clear that actions have an impact, and employees don't do it just for an economic benefit within the organisation, but genuinely they are seeking to impact society because they know what water scarcity is"

This suggests that the circumstances may become an integral component of the motivation and the decision of an employee to engage with the environment in an authentic manner. This agrees with the recent literature focused on the influence of environmental identity on the motivation towards performing environmentally responsible actions, in particular the study by van der Werff *et al.* (2013), which demonstrated that environmental self-identity, particularly when developed through meaningful and emotionally charged encounters, can ensure voluntary and persistent environmentally responsible behaviours. This also aligns with the results of Scannell & Gifford (2013), which showed that personal relevance as well as an emotional bond to climatic or environmental concerns greatly enhances the motivation to change one's behaviour in an environmentally responsible manner.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This thematic analysis shows that managers who adopt a green style play a critical role in shaping employees' environmental actions by using empowering leadership that drives both adherence to policies and genuine engagement with sustainability. The dynamic between voluntary and involuntary green actions is far more intricate than is usually perceived. These actions and behaviours are often intertwined, serving multiple purposes in organisational efforts towards sustainability. Social exchange theory illustrates the diverse motivational components and different types of environmental behaviours, indicating that effective green management goes beyond all forms of recognition that are strictly economic or social. Moreover, the results emphasise the organisational setting, sociocultural framework, and good faith engagement to sustainability in the effective green management's motivators of employee environmental behaviours.

## **Chapter 4 Discussion: Green Management Style and Employee Green Behaviours**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This discussion integrates and explains the results from the thematic analysis of the five interviews conducted with managers from a multinational brewery company based in Mexico. It also focuses on how these results advance the existing knowledge on the green management style, employee green behaviours, and the social exchange theory. In addition, the chapter addresses the implications for the practice of organisations aiming to improve their sustainability performance by implementing effective green leadership and describes some future research that would extend the theoretical and practical understanding in this area.

### **4.2 Theoretical contributions and implications**

#### **4.2.1 From Directive to Empowering Green Management Styles**

Findings from this research contribute toward the understanding of effective green management approaches by revealing extensive application of empowering leadership across all participants of the sample, irrespective of their discipline or work functions. This consistency supports the emerging participative environmental leadership model and refutes the dominant command-and-control styles of environmental management. The empowering green management style revealed by this research extends the green transformational leadership model of Chen and Chang (2013) and contributes a valid addition to the literature by revealing a developmental viewpoint considering employees as active participants in the transformation, as opposed to passive observers to a set of implemented environmental policies.

The findings from this study offer new insights into the role of environmental leadership in shaping enduring behaviour change on the part of employees and also support the emerging theoretical concepts of the educational dimension of green management (Farrukh *et al.*, 2022). Unlike more basic models that lean on inspirational and motivational elements, the leaders in this study focused on information and knowledge transfer and explanation of impact as core leadership activities. This resonates with more recent developments in environmental leadership theory that focus on green behaviours and the need of cognitive engagement with the relevant issues of the environment and the development of relevant competencies (Zacher *et al.*, 2024). The focus on creating environmental urgency motivates employees and leads to a sense of mission in the corporation that is help by employees and management alike. This leads to more effective and integrated green behaviour that can be sustained over time (Hart, 1997).

The contribution to understanding the situational framework of environmental leadership, as revealed in the findings of this study, is the appearance of education and

engagement that occurs prior to delegation and empowerment. This finding suggests a green leadership developmental model that appears to be under-researched based on the literature review. The shift in strategy from prescriptive environmental management to participative environmentalism reveals scaffolded green leadership, where management, choice and a sense of ownership and agency is delegated in a gradual manner to employees alongside supportive supervision. This result enhances the work of Robertson and Barling (2013) on environmental leadership by suggesting that effective leaders are those who skilfully change their role from director to facilitator of green initiatives, thereby motivating greater ownership of green behaviours and initiatives on the part of employees.

#### **4.2.2 Reframing Employee Green Behaviour: A Dynamic Development Perspective**

The study's results suggest that employee green behaviours may evolve over time from those that are incentivised by compulsory means to those that are voluntary in nature and involve more emphasis on employee agency and environmental citizenship. This shift from compulsory sustainability engagement to voluntary participation makes a substantial theoretical contribution to understanding organisational environmental behaviours. Understanding habit formation as a transition between compliance and genuine green behaviour engagement sheds light on the underlying psychological mechanisms that pertain to the green transformation

The findings in this research further extend the categories of employee green behaviours proposed by Ones and Dilchert (2012) by suggesting that, instead of being fixed, the behaviour categories represent stages in a changing relationship between employees and environmental stewardship. Recent literature findings tend to support the idea that compliance evolves into genuine concern over time (Liu *et al.*, 2023). This poses crucial implications for the strategy that an organisation might pursue in regard to behavioural change, suggesting that strictly enforced environmental policies, if supported by managerial commitment and motivational practices, can foster genuine long-term participation rather than being viewed solely as compliance mechanisms.

This study's findings also highlight the interplay between voluntary and compulsory ecological actions and provide fresh insights into the motivational frameworks concerning the environment in relation to organisational settings. The result that numerous environmental actions both abide by organisational compliance procedures and reflect individual environmental values critiques the simplistic division between extrinsic and intrinsic environmental motivational factors (Ryan and Deci, 2000). This suggests that the success of environmental programs needs to cater to each type of motivational factor, and this may result in more reinforced environmental actions that reach organisational objectives while also enhancing the personal ecological identity of individual participants.

#### **4.2.3 Advancing social exchange theory in environmental contexts**

The social exchange model of reciprocity is expanded in this study by distinguishing voluntary and compulsory environmental actions. The compulsory employee motivation towards green actions falls within a transactional economic exchange while voluntary acts are more aligned with a social exchange framework, which advances the understanding behind the adoption of differing environmental actions. This distinction supports recent revisions of Social Exchange Theory highlighting that multiple exchanges within a single organisation are important for real and significant change (Tahir *et al.*, 2022), and it is the combination, rather than one set of motivational strategies that is important, especially for advancing green behaviours in employees.

Demographics also emerged as important factors in the social exchange processes. It was revealed in this analysis that younger employees' intrinsic environmental values are stronger and less dependent on extrinsic motivators compared to older employees. This suggests that the social exchange relationships that exist around environmental concerns are shifting in response to changing generational values. This is a critical insight for organisational designers of environmental programs and recognition systems aimed at meaningfully engaging employees from multiple generational cohorts with perhaps alternative combinations of strategies necessary depending on the age demographic of employees, with more targeted incentive and motivational strategies, as a consequence, Managerial training would be necessary to fully align leadership education in this regard.

The notion that investments in employee well-being generate a broad organisational commitment that can be leveraged toward environmental goals expands organisational support theory by showing the extent to which reciprocal obligations are transferable (Kautish *et al.*, 2025). This indicates that organisations aiming to improve environmental performance might need comprehensive employee support programs aimed at creating broad reciprocal commitments, which can then be channelled toward targeted environmental goals in addition to other strategic goals, indicating a positive externality from broad employee wellbeing programs.

### **4.3 Practical and managerial implications**

#### **4.3.1 Developing effective green management capabilities**

The findings of this study indicate that all respondents favoured and advocated for participative empowerment leadership. This shifts the focus away from top-down management traditions and toward leadership training and points to the necessity to improve the competencies of managers concerning environmental goals of the firm, participatory governance, and empowerment.

The results also show that managers need to focus on the communication and environmental knowledge gaps to be more effective in their green management roles. Managers have a greater chance of achieving authentic employee environmental engagement if they can articulate and operationalize complex environmental issues and link local actions to global issues (Alt *et al.*, 2015) This suggests that green management development programs need to emphasize environmental literacy, systems thinking, communication skills, and move away from a primary focus on compliance and measurement systems associated with environmental regulation.

The research findings on green management point out the need for organisations to create processes and structures that move away from prescriptive to participative environmental management for the purposes of delegation and empowerment. New systems of corporate environmental governance that blend the empowerment of employees and the development of environmental citizenship with the necessity to meet accountability requirements may be needed, and this needs to be modified depending on the demographic of the employees, with older employees more motivated by traditional compliance systems, and younger employees motivated more by a feeling of agency towards environmental goals and citizenship.

#### **4.3.2 Designing integrated environmental behaviour programs**

The finding that employees' green motivational behaviour evolves from mandatory compliance to genuine engagement is important for the structuring and execution of organisational environmental programs. Instead of segregating obligatory and discretionary green actions into distinct initiatives, organisations are likely to gain from cohesive strategies that acknowledge and support the move from rule-based adherence to proactive ecological stewardship. This insight implies that programs should incorporate deliberate, sequenced pathways enabling employees to move smoothly from initial compliance to roles characterised by authoritative environmental leadership that involve agency and a sense of common purpose. The findings also suggest that organisations and their employees can potentially have a wider positive impact on the community. Initiatives could involve collaborative projects that link workplace activities with community programmes and partnerships with regional and national environmental agencies, indicating a broader role for corporations in broader society.

#### **4.3.3 Creating Supportive Organisational Contexts**

The organisational and cultural variables that emerged as significant influencers of green management indicate that firms should examine the wider situational ecosystem prior to launching environmental programmes. Participants pointed to infrastructural

and technological shortfalls as barriers to sustainable conduct. These findings suggest that corporate eco-objectives should be developed with existing operational capacities in mind and that requisite investments in enabling technologies must precede employee mobilisation in environmental initiatives.

Cultural and educational factors also emerged from the dissertation. Multinationals operating in low-awareness settings may be called upon to assume educational roles that exceed the conventional remit of the workplace. This expanded mandate can potentially develop a more cohesive and rounded approach to employee environmental motivation, where external concern for the environment feeds back into intrinsic concern and motivation in the organisation. This may involve structured programs that combine employee training and community-facing environmental literacy initiatives.

Finally, the study documented that ongoing regional ecological crises can shape the perceived authenticity of employee environmental conduct. By explicitly connecting personnel to local ecological concerns, organisations can enhance the level of environmental engagement, effectively mobilising a grassroots authenticity that resonates with workers' lived experiences and aids in driving sustained behavioural change.

#### **4.4 Limitations and Areas for Future Research**

##### **4.4.1 Methodological Considerations and Extensions**

The existing literature contributes to understanding the green management approach and the related employee green behaviours, but there are some important limitations that require discussion. Although taking a managerial viewpoint enhances comprehension regarding green leadership, the understanding regarding green management in relation to how employees perceive and respond to different styles of green management remains limited. Employee perceptions and attitudes toward green management. How green management is viewed from the employee perspective, as well as how differently it might be understood from the managerial perspective discussed here, requires further exploration.

The case study approach used in this dissertation limits the scope of the results and their applicability to other contexts. It is suggested that further research seeks to assess the impact of green management in other industries, organizational types, cultures, and even through different regulatory lenses to explore the contextual factors that impact the effectiveness of green management.

The cross-sectional design of the dissertation means that the progression of strategic employee involvement in green management over time cannot be evaluated. The progression from compliance to authentic engagement with the environment revealed

in this research suggests opportunities for longitudinal studies that would examine the evolution of employee engagement in environmental issues and the extent to which different styles of green management facilitate or inhibit that evolution.

#### **4.4.2 Theoretical development opportunities**

The scaffolded green leadership approach described in this study offers an important theoretical development gap which adds value to the literature on the understanding of effective environmental leadership. More work is needed however to understand how and why green leaders shift from more directive to empowering styles of leadership and what organisational and individual constructs enable or inhibit this shift.

This study suggests an important gap around the design of environmental programs that fulfil compliance requirements and simultaneously foster intrinsic environmental motivation. This research should also study the circumstances in which these different systems of motivation will complement or conflict with each other.

The gaps that emerged from this study may inform the blend of organisational and environmental psychology. Further inquiries should analyse the methods by which workplace environmental learning transfers to other contexts in one's life and study how organisations can design programs that positively encourage environmental spillover while minimising the chances of negative spillover.

#### **4.4.3 Practical research applications**

The cultural and educational context factors highlighted here reveal avenues for advancing knowledge on green management effectiveness across varied cultural and developmental regions. Future studies should analyse how green management techniques must be adjusted to encompass the unique characteristics of the underlying culture of the geographic area in which the manufacturing entity is situated, and investigate the institution-wide environmental education initiatives needed in settings where environmental awareness remains weak at a societal level.

The technological and infrastructural limitations on environmental behaviour revealed by this work indicate an interesting area for further research. Future studies could investigate how available technological ecosystems either facilitate or impede specific environmental actions, and assess how firms can weigh technological expenditures against behaviour-focused strategies to improve environmental performance.

#### **4.4.4 Addressing contemporary environmental challenges**

This study's findings point to a need for action that stretches beyond simply greening office practices and aims for genuine, large-scale societal change. When individuals bring eco-conscious behaviours from the office into their community, it suggests that workplaces can act as powerful incubators for neighbourhood-wide changes, amplifying the impact of their formal sustainability programs. Future investigations should focus on how workplaces can produce community-level ecological involvement and whether structured environmental initiatives at work can drive wider, sustained behavioural shifts in society.

This study revealed the importance of demographics in terms of corporate employee green behaviour motivation. Future work should map out incentives and communication strategies that can facilitate cross-generational engagement, and should customise approaches to the specific values by culture, income level, and life stage.

#### **4.4.5 Conclusion**

This research adds to the literature in analysing the interplay between an organisation's green management practices, the green behaviours of its employees, and the social exchange processes within the organisation's environmental framework. The theoretical contributions concerning employees' green behaviours reveal the novel aspect of social exchange theory applied to environmental motivation, supportive green management and employee green behaviour development theories, highlighting their practical significance for organisations which aim to enhance sustainability performance.

Along with organisations striving for sustainability, these findings raise a question for society about the tangible impact of green management and the environmental engagement of employees. Organisations can utilise their influence, particularly on the greener management principles that promote genuine employee environmental citizenship. The workplace environmental behaviours were also shown to exhibit spillover effects that extend to personal and community contexts.

The insights offered in this discussion highlight that, although this research helps advance the understanding of the effectiveness of green management, there is still much work to be done in the context of approaches to the development of theories and practices. The combination of organisational behaviour and environmental sustainability is an important area of ongoing work, given that businesses are beginning to realise that they have to participate in managing the environment through effective green management and workforce environmental stewardship.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

This study investigated the influence of Green Management Style (GMS) on Employee Green Behaviours (EGB) within a multinational brewery which operates in Mexico, under the lens of Social Exchange Theory (SET). The research attempts to fill a number of gaps in the literature by focusing on a “high” Human Development Index (HDI) country, where elements like cultural, infrastructural, and regulatory frameworks can impact how sustainability measures are translated into practice in the company. Specifically, this research examined the dynamics between voluntary and compulsory EGB, exploring how the leadership style, organisational support, and reciprocal exchange dynamics influenced employee engagement and attitudes to sustainable practices. Adopting an interpretivist philosophy, this research used a qualitative case study method, which was based on semi-structured interviews with five managers across different areas within the organisation, allowing the researcher to explore the sustainable managerial perceptions and dynamics for an in-depth thematic analysis.

The findings reveal that GMS, characterised by leading by example, promoting an environmental mindset, and progressively delegating sustainable responsibilities, can play a pivotal role when a transition in employee-performed behaviours from mandatory to genuine EGB is needed, leading to an ecological authentic citizenship. Both compulsory and mandatory EGB were found to be interconnected when they are performed in routine activities, rather than mutually exclusive. Voluntary behaviours mostly rely on individual values and beliefs as well as community contexts, thereby impacting not only the organisation’s sustainable strategies, but also extending to society. Compulsory EGB were typically found to be intended to achieve Key Performance Indicators, when results are well measured and seem to have an immediate sustainable contribution. However, compulsory EGB lacked enduring influence due to the finite, short-term nature of the KPIs. The key role played by Social Exchange Theory showing that voluntary EGB are motivated by social exchange relationships and individual values and beliefs is also highlighted.

This research contributes to the body of literature by recontextualising the EGB and the interconnectedness of compulsory and voluntary behaviours, where a transitioning dynamic may occur from compulsory behaviour to authentic environmental awareness when supported by robust GMS strategies, educational support, and strong empowering leadership. The Social Exchange Theory was used to explain the EGB mechanisms across departments, generations and within the same organisational framework. The findings provide insight for organisations aiming to incorporate sustainable initiatives into their culture, suggesting that for long-term success, it is important to focus on both compulsory and voluntary EGB fostered by GMS strategies.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1- Interview schedule in Spanish

P1. Describe tu rol y relación con la sostenibilidad

P2. ¿Cómo clasificarías el nivel de madurez en sostenibilidad de Heineken? (Nacido sostenible, cumplimiento, etc.)

P3. ¿Cómo demuestras tu como líder tu compromiso con la sostenibilidad?

P4. ¿Tu estilo de liderazgo es más empoderador, directivo u otro?

P5. ¿Cómo se reconocen o recompensan los esfuerzos ambientales?

P6. ¿Se perciben los esfuerzos de sostenibilidad como genuinos o como un cumplimiento?

P7. ¿Qué comportamientos ambientales observas (obligatorios vs voluntarios)?

P8. ¿Qué te motiva a ti a ir más allá de lo requerido?

P9. ¿Has visto que los comportamientos verdes se propaguen a otros equipos?

P10. ¿Qué factores ayudan o limitan la propagación de comportamientos verdes?

P11. ¿Esperas reconocimiento por sus acciones verdes?

P12. ¿Qué tiene más impacto, las EGB obligatorias o las voluntarias?

P13. ¿La inversión en bienestar del empleado afecta su comportamiento verde?

P14. ¿Promoverías comportamientos verdes obligatorios o voluntarios? ¿Por qué?

### Appendix 2 - Interview schedule in English

Q1. Describe your role and relationship with sustainability.

Q2. How would you classify Heineken's level of maturity in sustainability? (Born sustainable, compliance-based, etc.)

Q3. How do you, as a leader, demonstrate your commitment to sustainability?

Q4. Is your leadership style more empowering, directive, or other?

Q5. How are environmental efforts recognised or rewarded?

Q6. Are sustainability efforts perceived as genuine or as mere compliance?

Q7. What environmental behaviours do you observe (mandatory vs. voluntary)?

Q8. What motivates you to go beyond what is required?

Q9. Have you seen green behaviours spread to other teams?

Q10. What factors help or limit the spread of green behaviours?

Q11. Do you expect recognition for your green actions?

Q12. What has more impact: mandatory green behaviours or voluntary ones?

Q13. Does investment in employee well-being affect their green behaviour?

Q14. Would you promote mandatory or voluntary green behaviours? Why?