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An Examination of Faculty Members' Perceptions of Green Transformational Leadership and Green Organizational Climate, as Well as Their Green Organizational Behaviors in Terms of Various Variables

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Abstract

Global climate change, the rapid depletion of natural resources, and the increasing importance of environmental sustainability compel all organizations, including educational institutions, to implement green transformation and guide their employees toward environmentally friendly behaviors. The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of green transformational leadership, green organizational climate, and green organizational behaviors among academic staff in higher education institutions, and to examine the relationships among these variables. In this cross-sectional study employing a quantitative relational survey design, data were collected via a web-based questionnaire from 368 academic staff members at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, selected through convenience sampling. The results indicate that the participants' perceptions of green transformational leadership and green organizational climate are at a moderate level, whereas their green organizational behavior level is high. Furthermore, moderate, positive, and significant relationships were found among all three variables, and the examined perception and behavior levels do not differ significantly based on gender, age, or marital status. In conclusion, although the individual green behaviors of the academic staff are high, institutions need to internalize sustainability policies further and enhance incentive mechanisms to support green behaviors.

Keywords: green transformational leadership; green organizational climate; green organizational behavior; faculty members

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1. Introduction

The increasingly diverse and growing needs of individuals and organizations are leading to greater consumption of natural resources. As institutions utilize these resources, they simultaneously impact the environment in myriad ways, rendering human-induced environmental degradation a critical global challenge. To mitigate this, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), initially established in 2015, along with subsequent progress reports (e.g., the 2026 SDG Report), emphasize the urgent need for concrete organizational practices, particularly concerning responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) [1,2]. Today, these global targets are being

integrated into organizational policies through action-oriented networks and frameworks, such as the UNESCO "Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030" global network and the outcomes of the European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production [3]. Furthermore, the institutional impacts of these concrete actions—particularly the "sustainability pathways" strategies within educational and research institutions—are transparently measured and monitored on a global scale using international metrics like the Times Higher Education (THE) SDG 12 Impact Rankings [4]. Consequently, organizations are making concerted efforts to integrate corporate sustainability into their core strategies, guide their employees toward eco-friendly behaviors, and realize green transformation. This momentum notably accelerated following the announcement of the European Union Green Deal in 2019, which outlined actionable policies for climate neutrality and the conscious use of energy resources [5]. To effectively operationalize these policies, it is essential to establish a clear understanding of the capabilities required from the workforce. Consequently, comprehensive sustainability competence frameworks—such as the European Sustainability Competence Framework (GreenComp)—have been introduced to explicitly define the knowledge, skills, and attitudes desired from staff. These anterior frameworks serve as a foundational blueprint, outlining the core competencies necessary for employees to transition into green jobs, drive eco-innovation, and exhibit green leadership [6,7]. Achieving these concrete sustainability targets largely depends on the internal dynamics of organizations and how the workforce perceives these initiatives. Studies conducted across various countries and institutional contexts demonstrate that employees' perceptions of their organizations' environmental commitments significantly drive global sustainability trends. For instance, macro-level studies examining the achievement levels of responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) goals across European Union member states indicate that the micro-level actions of institutions and employees are critical in attaining global targets [8]. However, research focusing on employee perceptions and practices in specific contexts, particularly higher education institutions, highlights a critical paradox: while staff awareness of sustainability may be high, their competencies in translating and applying SDG 12 principles into concrete actions often remain limited [9]. In this context, international research reveals that high environmental awareness alone is insufficient; employees are more likely to overcome this "implementation paradox," exhibit proactive pro-environmental behaviors, and support green initiatives only when they perceive a strong and supportive green organizational climate [10,11]. Thus, concepts such as green behavior, green organizational behavior, green organizational climate, and green transformational leadership have become increasingly crucial in contemporary academic research to understand and foster this global shift.

Although environmental protection behaviors have long been a subject of focus, shifts in environmental perspectives, globalization, and the belief that environmental sensitivity is a competitive advantage have led to a surge in research on eco-friendly behaviors [12]. Today, building an environmentally friendly and sustainable society has become a mainstream trend, with the green behaviors of organizations and individuals increasingly taking center stage [13]. Facing pressure from stakeholders regarding environmental sustainability, organizations have begun to prioritize this issue in their operations. This interest has driven organizations to initiate green behaviors, compelled employees to participate in sustainability-based initiatives [14], and prompted managers to take measures that encourage eco-friendly conduct in the workplace [15]. Consequently, the concept of "green" has become prominent across all scientific disciplines. Reasons for this growing interest include environmental degradation, the adverse effects of climate change on life, and the proliferation of unnatural production methods [16].

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Research highlights two main factors necessitating green organizational behavior [17]. The first is the escalating social, normative, and regulatory pressure on organizations [10,17,18]. The second is that the success or failure of environmental interventions largely stems from employee behavior [17,19,20]. It is insufficient for organizations to merely possess an environmental policy and a corresponding management philosophy; employees must also exhibit behaviors aligned with this direction [21]. Organizational managers play a critical role in spreading eco-friendly behaviors and responsible production/consumption practices throughout the organization. By integrating environmental sustainability values into organizational policies, managers are instrumental in forming and developing a green organizational climate. Here, the green transformational leadership traits of managers come to the forefront.

The Twelfth Development Plan (2024–2028) in Türkiye was notably prepared within the vision of "an environmentally sensitive Türkiye in the Century of Türkiye" [22]. However, research focusing on these concepts within the educational sector in Türkiye remains limited. Studies in education have predominantly focused on the behaviors of teachers [15,23,24], administrators [25], or higher education academics broadly [26]. Believing it is crucial to investigate these concepts within higher education institutions where researchers operate, this study aims to determine academic staff's perceptions of green transformational leadership and green organizational climate, alongside their levels of green organizational behavior.

The research problems are as follows:

1. What is the level of academic staff's perceptions of green transformational leadership, green organizational climate, and green organizational behavior, and is there a significant relationship between these levels?
2. Do these perceptions and behavioral levels show a significant difference based on gender, age, and marital status?

2. Conceptual Framework

This section reviews the literature concerning the core concepts of the study: green transformational leadership, green organizational climate, and green organizational behavior.

2.1. Green Transformational Leadership (GTL)

Leaders are individuals who distinguish themselves from others through their unique attributes [27] and possess the potential to transform and reconstruct society. In this context, transformational leaders emerge as figures who enhance the skills and confidence of their followers [28]. The primary role of transformational leaders is vital in constructing and establishing a vision that encourages proactive steps toward diverse organizational tasks, addresses environmental concerns, and ensures the realization of green initiatives [29,30]. Accordingly, as perceived managerial support increases, employees' engagement in green organizational behaviors is expected to rise [31]. Aboramadan et al. [32] stated that when green behaviors are supported by managers, there is a significant increase in employees' environmental performance.

The proliferation of green behaviors within organizations can be facilitated through "green transformational leaders"—those who prioritize environmental issues, acknowledge the green sensitivities of their employees, act as role models through their own eco-friendly conduct, and contribute to the internalization of environmental goals by supporting employees in achieving them [33]. Generally, transformational leadership is defined as the process of inspiring and motivating employees, fostering their creativity, and ensuring their identification with organizational objectives [34]. Throughout this

process, leaders establish an emotional bond with their followers by understanding their needs, values, and priorities [35]. By exhibiting coaching and mentoring behaviors, these leaders aim to unlock employee potential and enhance productivity, while simultaneously motivating and inspiring them to exceed expectations in reaching environmental targets [36].

Defined as a reflection of transformational leadership where the leadership capacity is focused on encouraging pro-environmental initiatives [37], green transformational leadership (GTL) is an approach that ensures the internalization of an organization's environmental goals by its members, enhances environmental awareness, and motivates followers to achieve high-level environmental performance [33,36]. GTL, also characterized as environmental transformational leadership, aims to motivate employees toward green objectives and promote green change within the organization [38–40]. This leadership style emphasizes the ability to mobilize both individuals and the organization toward a vision of environmental sustainability [41] and is critical for both employee-level and organizational outcomes [42]. By encouraging green behaviors, GTL ultimately fosters environmental concern and awareness among followers [34,39]. Furthermore, these leaders influence the attitudes, ideals, and thoughts of their followers by defining a green perspective and promoting eco-friendly methods and production [43,44]. In summary, GTL can be described as a specific manifestation of transformational leadership where the content is centered on supporting pro-environmental and green initiatives [40,45].

Green transformational leaders encourage employees to participate in pro-environmental behaviors by emphasizing a green vision [37]. Their charismatic, ethical, and visionary approach inspires employees [40]. Within the context of the dimensions of transformational leadership, the green transformational leader increases employees' sensitivity to environmental problems and green consciousness through intellectual stimulation, providing motivation for sustainability. Through individualized consideration, they enable employees with high environmental awareness and green intrinsic motivation to align their efforts with the organization's environmental goals. Through inspirational motivation, they create a vision that supports employees in generating ideas for green practices. Finally, through idealized influence (charisma), they act as role models by exhibiting green behaviors, thereby increasing the environmental sensitivity of employees and fostering green actions throughout the organization [33]. Consequently, green transformational leadership contributes to the formation of a green organizational climate and encourages the multidimensional development of employees' environmental behaviors [46].

2.2. Green Organizational Climate (GOC)

Organizational climate is conceptualized as the shared meaning that employees attach to organizational events, practices, and procedures, representing their collective experience of the internal environment [47]. Defined as a set of policies, practices, and procedures that reveal an organization's priorities and guide employee behavior [11,48], this climate serves as the aggregate perception of its members. When this perception centers on environmental sustainability and guides employees toward eco-friendly orientations, it is categorized in the literature as "green organizational climate" (GOC) [16]. GOC reflects the collective perceptions of employees regarding the organization's commitment to environmental sustainability, pro-environmental policies, and practices that embody green values [11,49–51]. Furthermore, it encompasses institutional commitments to corporate social responsibility, green culture, and corporate environmentalism [52,53].

The formation of a green organizational climate is heavily influenced by social interaction within the workplace. When employees observe positive environmental behaviors among their peers or supervisors, they tend to adopt similar actions to strengthen social bonds, thereby reinforcing the overall green climate [54–56]. Research indicates that when a robust GOC is established, employees' voluntary environmental initiatives increase significantly [17,51]. GOC is composed of two primary elements: the eco-friendly values of the organization and the eco-friendly values of the employees [13]. Beyond promoting specific actions like recycling, a green climate directs daily operational activities toward sustainable practices [57].

Working within a green organizational climate has been shown to enhance employee job satisfaction and foster mutual support for green behaviors among colleagues [58]. Similarly, Norton et al. [59] argued that establishing a green climate is an essential precursor to facilitating employee green behavior. To ensure environmental sustainability, organizations must develop eco-sensitive attitudes within their climate and reflect these in institutional applications [11,60]. Ultimately, maintaining the continuity of GOC, informing employees of its significance, and making the necessary investments to support green organizational restructuring are vital for fostering a generation that is conscious of and proactive toward nature [53].

2.3. Green Organizational Behavior (GOB)

Within the framework of corporate social responsibility, organizations must consider the interests of the society in which they operate and their stakeholders [61]. This necessity directs organizations to protect the environment, be sensitive toward it, and use natural resources more carefully [25]. For organizations to succeed in their sustainable environmental policies, it is not sufficient for managers alone to exhibit pro-environmental behaviors; employees at all levels of the organization must also demonstrate such behaviors [12]. Green behaviors, which contribute to reducing human actions that negatively impact the environment, increasing beneficial behaviors, and improving the environment [62], are proactive, eco-friendly actions aimed at protecting the environment that individuals perform voluntarily [63].

While employees' green behaviors can be defined as actions contributing to the environmental sustainability of their organizations [64], green organizational behavior may differ from individually exhibited green behaviors. Even if not explicitly defined by the organization, these behaviors involve a certain degree of organizational oversight [65] and represent eco-friendly actions exhibited by employees within the workplace [66]. Green organizational behavior refers to employees performing their tasks in an environmentally sensitive manner [67] and is a voluntary effort reflecting employees' willingness to cooperate with the organization and its members by engaging in actions that benefit the natural environment [68]. This concept, also characterized as employees' pro-environmental behaviors [31], encompasses responsible behaviors toward the environment and actions contributing to organizations' environmental sustainability [33,65,66,69–71].

The importance of green organizational behavior is increasing day by day, and organizations are developing various policies to demonstrate their environmental sensitivity. These policies encourage employees to participate in environmental initiatives [72]. To motivate the transformation of eco-friendly activities into the desired state within organizations, it is crucial to unite around a shared vision at the individual, group, and organizational levels [50]. Furthermore, green management practices alone are insufficient to create environmental consciousness; organizational employees must also actively participate in and exhibit pro-environmental behaviors [26]. Green organizational behaviors can be evaluated across a broad spectrum, ranging from acquiring

environmental knowledge, reducing the organization's harmful environmental impacts, using pro-environmental production processes and generating outputs, recycling, and questioning harmful practices [17,73], to consciously and voluntarily avoiding actions that harm the environment [33]. Finally, green organizational behavior can consist of mandatory in-role behaviors within the scope of job descriptions or completely voluntary extra-role behaviors [33,74,75].

2.4. Institutional Context and Sustainability Practices at the Research Setting

To better understand the micro-level dynamics examined in this study—namely, green transformational leadership, green organizational climate, and green organizational behaviors—it is essential to evaluate the macro-level institutional context of the research setting, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (ÇOMÜ). In recent years, ÇOMÜ has increasingly prioritized institutional sustainability, transitioning from theoretical commitments to tangible campus-wide practices. Notable institutional milestones include the establishment of the Green Transition Coordination, active participation in global sustainability metrics (such as a significant advancement in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings), and the implementation of comprehensive zero-waste management, energy efficiency projects, and campus greening initiatives.

The positive or negative environmental perceptions of the academic staff are fundamentally linked to these institutional actions. When an institution actively implements visible sustainability policies—such as eco-friendly campus planning, recycling campaigns, and sustainability-focused workshops—it provides tangible proof of leadership's commitment, directly shaping what employees perceive as a supportive green organizational climate.

Regarding the mechanisms through which staff develop their attitudes, the university utilizes institutional communication channels, civic engagement projects, and stakeholder workshops (such as ecosystem restoration programs and regional sustainability workshops) to foster environmental awareness. However, the development of these positive attitudes is not uniform across all departments. As suggested by the variations in staff responses, while macro-level institutional actions establish a general baseline for environmental awareness, individual attitude formation heavily depends on the presence of supportive departmental leadership and localized communication. In instances where specific, structured training plans regarding green practices are perceived as limited or fragmented, staff may experience the aforementioned "implementation paradox"—where high general awareness does not consistently translate into advanced practical competencies without direct leadership encouragement and clear institutional scaffolding. Thus, the findings of this study reflect the interplay between ÇOMÜ's overarching sustainability pathways and the everyday perceptual realities experienced by its academic personnel.

2.5. Assessment Approaches for Staff Sustainability Competences

A review of the existing literature reveals that evaluating staff competencies and behaviors related to sustainability, green jobs, and environmental leadership typically involves distinct methodological approaches. Desk research indicates that organizations and researchers predominantly utilize three main mechanisms to assess workforce sustainability integration: (1) self-assessment perception scales, where employees evaluate their own green behaviors, climate perceptions, and leadership impacts; (2) behavioral observation checklists and task-based audits, focusing on actual pro-environmental practices within daily institutional routines; and (3) multi-rater (360-degree) performance appraisals, incorporating leadership and peer evaluations regarding sustainability commitments [6,7]. Among these, self-report perception scales remain the

most widely adopted and practical tool in organizational behavior research, as they effectively capture the internal psychological drivers, climate perceptions, and voluntary eco-friendly actions of academic and administrative personnel. Consequently, the present study aligns with this established methodological framework by employing structured psychometric scales to evaluate instructors' perceptions and green organizational behaviors within the university ecosystem.

3. Materials and Methods

This section provides information regarding research design, the population and sample, the data collection instruments used, the data collection process, and the data analysis.

3.1. Research Model

In this study, a correlational survey design, which is a quantitative research method, was employed to examine the relationships between academic staff's perceptions of green transformational leadership, green organizational climate, and their green organizational behaviors [76]. Correlational survey models are research approaches that aim to determine the existence and degree of co-variation between two or more variables, as well as to understand how one variable predicts another [77,78]. Since the main objective of the research is to reveal the effect and relationship structures among the specified green organizational variables within a statistical framework, this design aligns with the core problem of the study. Furthermore, as the data were collected at a single point in time from a sample of academic staff members, the research holds a cross-sectional design characteristic [79]. The developed research model is structured to test the potential effects of green transformational leadership and green organizational climate on the green organizational behaviors of the academic staff, and to explore how the relationships among these variables differ according to various demographic characteristics.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population of the research consists of instructors working at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, while the sample comprises 368 instructors accessed through convenience sampling. In the context of this study, convenience sampling—a non-probability sampling technique—was operationalized by distributing the web-based survey to the entire target population (all 2028 academic staff) via institutional e-mail and including those who voluntarily agreed to participate and possessed digital accessibility during the data collection period. This approach is widely utilized in online organizational research, as it allows researchers to efficiently gather data from willing respondents within a defined institutional boundary without imposing forced participation [80]. Provided that the target population is well-defined, web-based survey applications serve the function of directly representing the researched topic [81].

According to 2026 data, a total of 2028 academic personnel work at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. A total of 390 academics participated in the study; however, after preliminary evaluations, 22 surveys were excluded due to missing data, and 368 surveys were included in the analysis. Consequently, the response rate for the surveys was approximately 18%.

While the literature indicates that the response rate for web-based surveys is generally lower than that of traditional methods [82], and varies widely between 6% and 73% [83], the 18% response rate obtained in this study was considered adequate for this specific population for two primary reasons. First, from a statistical perspective, achieving 368 valid responses from a finite population of 2028 academics exceeds the minimum required sample size (approximately 323) necessary to maintain a 95% confidence level

with a 5% margin of error. Thus, the absolute sample size provides robust statistical power for the analyses. Second, considering the specific occupational characteristics of the target population, academic professionals frequently experience high levels of "survey fatigue." Due to their intensive administrative workloads, peer-review responsibilities, and constant exposure to digital evaluation requests, lower response rates are inherently expected and widely accepted in studies sampling academic personnel. Therefore, yielding a statistically powerful sample size despite these occupational constraints validates the adequacy of the 18% response rate.

In this study, demographic comparisons were specifically limited to personal variables: gender, age, and marital status. The selection of these specific variables was driven by two main rationales. Theoretically, the broader environmental literature strongly correlates pro-environmental behaviors with generational differences (age), gender-based environmental socialization (the eco–gender gap), and future-oriented familial responsibilities (marital status). Methodologically, since this research was conducted within a single institution, requesting detailed occupational variables (such as academic title, specific faculty, or years of tenure) could have compromised participant anonymity. To prevent social desirability bias and ensure that faculty members felt completely safe while evaluating their leadership's green climate, occupational demographics were excluded in favor of these broad personal characteristics.

The detailed demographic information regarding the sample is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The distribution of the sample (n = 368).

Demographic Information	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	189	51.4
	Female	179	48.6
Age	Ages 30 and under	10	2.7
	31–40 years	115	31.3
	41–50 years	147	39.9
	51–60 years	86	23.4
	Ages 61 and over	10	2.7
Marital Status	Single	102	27.7
	Married	266	72.3

Of the instructors participating in the study, 189 were male, and 179 were female. Examining the age distribution of the participants, 10 were 30 years old or younger, 115 were between the ages of 31 and 40, 147 were between 41 and 50, 86 were between 51 and 60, and 10 were 61 years old or older. Furthermore, 102 of the participants were single, and 266 were married.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

The first part of the data collection tool used in the research includes a "Personal Information Form" aimed at determining the participants' gender, age and marital status. To determine the instructors' perceptions of green transformational leadership, the single-dimensional, 6-item "Green Transformational Leadership Scale," originally developed by Chen and Chang [36] and adapted into Turkish by Kerse et al. [33], was used. This is a 5-point Likert-type scale with a 0.947 Cronbach's Alpha. As a result of the validity and reliability analyses of the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0.975 in this sample. To determine the instructors' perceptions of green organizational climate, the 5-point Likert-type "Green Organizational Climate Scale," consisting of 4 sub-dimensions and 21 items with a 0.918 Cronbach's Alpha internal

consistency coefficient developed by Erbaşı [16], was preferred. The overall Cronbach's Alpha value for this scale was found to be 0.868 in this sample. To measure the green organizational behaviors of the instructors, the 5-point Likert-type "Green Organizational Behavior Scale," developed by Erbaşı [21], consisting of 5 sub-dimensions and 27 items, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.818, was used, and the overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was determined to be 0.877 in this sample. While the "Green Organizational Climate Scale" has open-access permission, permission to use the other two scales was obtained from the respective authors.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The ethical committee approvals required for the research process were obtained from the Ethics Committee of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in January 2024. Following the relevant approvals, data were collected online via Google Forms (Google LLC, Mountain View, CA, USA). Before the administration of the survey, participants were presented with an informed consent form, explicitly stating that participation was entirely voluntary and the obtained data would only be used for scientific research purposes.

3.5. Data Analysis

Mean weight values (5 − 1 = 4; 4/5 = 0.80) were calculated to convert the numerical arithmetic means obtained from the scale dimensions into descriptive verbal expressions. Based on these determined coefficient intervals, the data analysis was evaluated as follows: 1.00–1.80 "very low", 1.81–2.60 "low", 2.61–3.40 "moderate", 3.41–4.20 "high", and 4.21–5.00 "very high".

Prior to conducting bivariate correlation analyses, the assumption of univariate normality was evaluated for the primary study variables (N = 368). The structural shapes of the distributions were evaluated using skewness and excess kurtosis coefficients along with their respective standard errors (SE). The GTL scores demonstrated a highly symmetrical profile (skewness = −0.237, SE = 0.127; excess kurtosis = −0.471, SE = 0.254). Similarly, the distribution for GOC scores fell well within standard guidelines for normal data (skewness = 0.131, SE = 0.127; excess kurtosis = 0.141, SE = 0.254). Finally, GOB scores exhibited excellent univariate normality (skewness = −0.208, SE = 0.127; excess kurtosis = −0.002, SE = 0.254). Because all calculated skewness and excess kurtosis indices strictly fell within the conservative threshold of ±1.000, the data perfectly satisfied the assumption of univariate normality. Consequently, a parametric Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was determined to be the appropriate statistical method to analyze the direction and strength of the relationships among the green transformational leadership, green organizational climate, and green organizational behavior variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates the degree of the linear relationship between two continuous variables [84]. According to this coefficient (r), which ranges between −1 and +1, a value of 0.00 indicates "no relationship", 0.01–0.29 indicates a "low-level relationship", 0.30–0.70 indicates a "moderate-level relationship", 0.71–0.99 indicates a "high-level relationship", and 1.00 indicates a "perfect relationship" [85].

Prior to conducting parametric comparative analyses, the assumption of data normality was evaluated for GTL, GOC, and GOB scores, split by gender (N = 368). Descriptive indices of symmetry (skewness) and tail-weight (excess kurtosis) were calculated alongside their respective standard errors (SE). For GTL scores, the data demonstrated a highly symmetrical profile for both males (skewness = −0.351, SE = 0.177; kurtosis = −0.533, SE = 0.352) and females (skewness = −0.162, SE = 0.182; kurtosis = −0.457, SE = 0.361). Similarly, the distribution of GOC scores fell well within standard guidelines for normal data across both male (skewness = 0.136, SE = 0.177; kurtosis = 0.266, SE = 0.352)

and female cohorts (skewness = 0.122, SE = 0.182; kurtosis = 0.044, SE = 0.361). Finally, GOB scores exhibited excellent univariate normality for both males (skewness = −0.333, SE = 0.177; kurtosis = −0.074, SE = 0.352) and females (skewness = 0.065, SE = 0.182; kurtosis = −0.159, SE = 0.361). Given that all calculated skewness and excess kurtosis statistics fell within the conservative threshold of ±1.000, the data perfectly satisfied the assumption of normality across all variables. Consequently, parametric tests, namely the *t*-test, were deemed appropriate.

To verify the prerequisite assumption of univariate normality for parametric testing, the distributions of GTL, GOC, and GOB scores were rigorously evaluated across five age categories (−30, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60, and 60+; N = 368). The distributional shapes within each subgroup were quantified utilizing skewness and excess kurtosis coefficients alongside their associated standard errors (SEs). For GTL scores, skewness values across the categories ranged from −0.740 to −0.183, while excess kurtosis coefficients clustered between −1.736 and −0.064. For GOC scores, skewness indices fell within a highly acceptable interval from −0.354 to 0.308, and excess kurtosis statistics ranged from −1.210 to 1.003. Lastly, the distribution metrics for GOB scores revealed skewness statistics between −1.002 and 0.059, with excess kurtosis parameters spanning from −1.996 to 1.269. Because all sub-group skewness and excess kurtosis values fall securely within the standard liberal baseline of ±2.000, the data shapes are considered adequately symmetrical. Supported additionally by the Central Limit Theorem given the robust sample volume, the normality assumption was fully validated across all age sub-segments, confirming that the dataset is highly appropriate for parametric tests, namely ANOVA.

To examine the assumption of normality, distributions of GTL, GOC, and GOB scores were analyzed across marital status subgroups (single vs. married; N = 368). Distribution shapes were evaluated using skewness and excess kurtosis coefficients along with their standard errors (SE). For GTL scores, both single (skewness = −0.252, SE = 0.239; kurtosis = −0.453, SE = 0.474) and married participants (skewness = −0.234, SE = 0.149; kurtosis = −0.483, SE = 0.298) showed highly symmetrical distributions. Regarding GOC scores, single participants exhibited a slight positive tilt (skewness = 0.553, SE = 0.239; kurtosis = 0.486, SE = 0.474), while married individuals displayed near-perfect symmetry (skewness = −0.045, SE = 0.149; kurtosis = 0.023, SE = 0.298). Finally, GOB scores reflected excellent normality for both single (skewness = −0.387, SE = 0.239; kurtosis = −0.071, SE = 0.474) and married cohorts (skewness = −0.104, SE = 0.149; kurtosis = −0.028, SE = 0.298). Because all computed skewness and excess kurtosis indices fell securely within the conservative threshold of ±1.000, it was concluded that the assumption of data normality was fully satisfied, justifying the use of parametric tests, namely the *t*-test. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 21.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA).

4. Findings

The findings obtained from the research are organized according to the sub-problems and presented below.

4.1. Findings Regarding Instructors' Perceptions of Green Transformational Leadership, Green Organizational Climate, and Green Organizational Behaviors

The findings regarding the instructors' perception levels of green transformational leadership and green organizational climate, their levels of green organizational behavior, and the relationships among these variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients of variables (n = 368).

	GTL	GOC	GOB
Green Transformational Leadership (GTL)	1	0.681 **	0.328 **
Green Organizational Climate (GOC)		1	0.331 **
Green Organizational Behavior (GOB)			1
Mean	3.04	3.10	4.02
SD	1.01	0.55	0.47

** $p < 0.001$.

The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between GTL and GOC scores, r = 0.681, $p < 0.001$, indicating that higher levels of GTL are substantially associated with an increase in GOC scores. Furthermore, a statistically significant, moderate positive linear association was documented between GTL and GOB scores, r = 0.328, $p < 0.001$, showing that elevated GTL performance correlates with higher GOB metrics. Finally, a statistically significant, moderate positive relationship was observed between GOC and GOB scores, r = 0.331, $p < 0.001$. In summary, all examined continuous frameworks exhibited mutually supportive, statistically significant positive linear correlations with one another at the $p < 0.001$ operational threshold.

4.2. Findings Regarding Demographic Variables

Under this heading, the instructors' perceptions of green transformational leadership, green organizational climate, and green organizational behaviors were examined according to gender, age, and marital status.

4.2.1. Findings Regarding the Gender Variable

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine whether the instructors' levels of green transformational leadership (GTL), green organizational climate (GOC), and green organizational behavior (GOB) differed significantly according to the gender variable. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings regarding the gender variable.

	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	df	*p*
GTL	Male	189	3.0123	0.96855	−0.606	366	0.545
	Female	179	3.0764	1.05752			
GOC	Male	189	3.0910	0.53142	−0.260	366	0.795
	Female	179	3.1059	0.57137			
GOB	Male	189	4.0039	0.50309	−0.839	366	0.402
	Female	179	4.0447	0.42814			

For GTL scores, Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was fully satisfied, F(1, 366) = 1.175, $p > 0.05$. Under the assumption of equal variances, the analysis revealed no statistically significant difference, t(366) = −0.606, $p > 0.05$, between male participants (M = 3.012, SD = 0.969) and female participants (M = 3.076, SD = 1.058). Regarding GOC scores, Levene's test confirmed the homogeneity of variances across groups, F(1, 366) = 1.240, $p > 0.05$. Consequently, equal variances were assumed. The results demonstrated that the mean scores of male participants (M = 3.091, SD = 0.531) and female participants (M = 3.106, SD = 0.571) did not differ significantly from each other, t(366) = −0.260, $p > 0.05$. Finally, for GOB scores, Levene's test indicated a violation of the homogeneity of variances assumption, F(1, 366) = 4.113, $p < 0.043$. Therefore, degrees of freedom were formally adjusted using the Welch-Satterthwaite method (equal variances

not assumed). The corrected inferential analysis indicated no statistically significant difference between the male cohort (M = 4.004, SD = 0.503) and the female cohort (M = 4.045, SD = 0.428), t(361.928) = −0.839, $p > 0.05$.

4.2.2. Findings Regarding the Age Variable

A series of One-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were executed to determine if GTL, GOC, and GOB scores significantly varied as a function of participants' age categories (–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60, and 60+; N = 368). The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Findings regarding the age variable.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
GTL	Between Groups	1.488	4	0.372	0.361	0.836
	Within Groups	374.316	363	1.031		
	Total	375.804	367			
GOC	Between Groups	0.369	4	0.092	0.302	0.876
	Within Groups	110.854	363	0.305		
	Total	111.223	367			
GOB	Between Groups	1.500	4	0.375	1.726	0.144
	Within Groups	78.863	363	0.217		
	Total	80.363	367			

For GTL scores, the omnibus ANOVA model indicated no statistically significant main effect of age category, F(4, 363) = 0.361, $p > 0.05$. Participant scores remained statistically equivalent across all age brackets, spanning from the lowest descriptive average in the 51–60 bracket (M = 2.973, SD = 1.106) to the peak average in the −30 bracket (M = 3.233, SD = 0.758). For GOC scores, the analysis revealed that the main effect of age was not statistically significant, F(4, 363) = 0.302, $p > 0.05$. Group means remained tightly balanced and stable, ranging between the descriptively lowest tier in the 31–40 block (M = 3.054, SD = 0.523) and matching peaks in both the −30 (M = 3.110, SD = 0.376) and 60+ cohorts (M = 3.109, SD = 0.698). Finally, for GOB scores, the ANOVA demonstrated no statistically significant variance across the distinct age blocks, F(4, 363) = 1.726, $p > 0.05$. Descriptively, metrics followed a minor upward trajectory starting at the lowest score in the −30 block (M = 3.867, SD = 0.502) and culminating at the absolute descriptive peak within the 60+ cohort (M = 4.259, SD = 0.477). Because none of the omnibus F-tests reached statistical significance, no multiple post hoc comparisons were performed.

4.2.3. Findings Regarding the Marital Status Variable

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine whether the instructors' scores on the relevant variables differed significantly according to their marital status. The findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Findings regarding the marital status variable.

	Marital Status	n	Mean	SD	t	df	*p*
GTL	Single	102	3.0588	1.07595	0.180	366	0.857
	Married	266	3.0376	0.98832			
GOC	Single	102	3.0952	0.56590	−0.064	366	0.949
	Married	266	3.0994	0.54557			
GOB	Single	102	3.9742	0.49413	−1.258	366	0.209
	Married	266	4.0427	0.45705			

For GTL scores, Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was fully satisfied, $F(1, 366) = 0.541$, $p > 0.05$. Under the assumption of equal variances, the analysis revealed no statistically significant difference, $t(366) = 0.180$, $p > 0.05$, between single participants ($M = 3.059$, $SD = 1.076$) and married participants ($M = 3.038$, $SD = 0.988$). Regarding GOC scores, Levene's test confirmed the homogeneity of variances across groups, $F(1, 366) = 0.042$, $p > 0.05$. Consequently, equal variances were assumed. The results demonstrated that the mean scores of single participants ($M = 3.095$, $SD = 0.566$) and married participants ($M = 3.099$, $SD = 0.546$) did not differ significantly from each other, $t(366) = -0.064$, $p > 0.05$. Finally, for GOB scores, Levene's test indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption was safely met, $F(1, 366) = 0.772$, $p > 0.05$. Under equal variances assumed, the inferential analysis indicated no statistically significant difference between the single cohort ($M = 3.974$, $SD = 0.494$) and the married cohort ($M = 4.043$, $SD = 0.457$), $t(366) = -1.258$, $p > 0.05$.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to determine instructors' perceptions of green transformational leadership, green organizational climate, and green organizational behavior levels across various demographic variables, as well as to reveal the relationships among these variables. Based on the results of the research conducted with 368 instructors, it was determined that the participants' perceptions of green transformational leadership and green organizational climate were at a moderate level, while their green organizational behavior levels were high. When the relationships between the variables were examined, a moderate, positive, and significant relationship was found between green transformational leadership and both green organizational climate and green organizational behavior. Similarly, a moderate, positive, and significant relationship was concluded between green organizational climate and green organizational behavior. Furthermore, it was determined that the instructors' views did not exhibit significant differences based on gender, age, and marital status variables.

According to the research findings, the instructors' perceptions of green transformational leadership are at a moderate level. When the literature on green transformational leadership is examined, similar moderate-level perception results were obtained in studies conducted by Liu and Yu [56] in the manufacturing sector, and by [34] and Rietze et al. [86] across different sample groups. In a study conducted by Yiğit [87] with teachers in Denizli province, it was also observed that the perceptions regarding the green transformational leadership behaviors of school administrators were at a moderate level. Conversely, there are numerous studies in the literature where this perception emerged at a high level. Cao et al. [88] and Özgül and Zehir [89], along with Velez and Prado [90], who studied academics in higher education institutions, and Bahzar [91], who conducted research at the higher education level in Indonesia, identified this concept at a high level. Looking at the sectoral basis, high levels of green transformational leadership perception were reported in studies conducted by Ali et al. [92] in manufacturing firms in Pakistan, Kerse et al. [33] in the automotive sector, Özkan [93] in the public and private sectors, Coşkun [49] among business employees, Saleem et al. [94] in the pharmaceutical industry, and Jia et al. [95] in medical firms.

In this research, the instructors' perceptions of the green organizational climate were found to be at a moderate level. However, an examination of the relevant literature reveals that this perception is generally high. Indeed, a high green organizational climate perception emerged in various studies conducted by Liu and Yu [56], Coşkun [49], Yeşiltaş and Özer Topaloğlu [50], and Ali et al. [92]. A similar picture exists in studies conducted within specific sectors; research involving hotel employees (Araç [96]; Mert [97]; Özalp and Erbaşı [17]), healthcare sector personnel (Senem [98]), and employees of

10 different enterprises in China (Yue et al. [99]) concluded that the participants' perceptions of green organizational climate were at a high level.

Another significant finding of the study is that the instructors' green organizational behavior levels are high. Many studies in the literature support this finding, demonstrating that participants' green organizational behaviors remain at high levels [17,23–26,33,49,50,100,101]. Specifically in the education sector, studies conducted with teachers by Akyol and Gürsoy [23], Bulut [24], and Yiğit [87], with academics by İrge [26] and Fawehinmi et al. [102], and with school administrators by Sönmez [25] found green organizational behavior to be high, particularly in the environmental awareness sub-dimension. Similar findings exist in other sectors: Ali et al. [92] and Coşkun [49] identified high green behavior levels among general business employees, Özalp and Erbaşı [17] and Mert [97] among hotel staff, Gürsel [101] in the logistics sector, and Akbaba [100] in the tourism field. Furthermore, Akandere [69] in the sports and health fields, Kerse et al. [33] in automotive and textiles, and Özkan [93] in the public and private sectors expressed this level as "very high". Diverging from the general trend in the literature, only the research conducted by Palabıyık [103] with 500 SME employees found the perception of green organizational behavior to be at a low level.

In this study, a moderate, positive, and significant relationship was determined between the instructors' perceptions of green transformational leadership and green organizational climate. When the relevant literature is examined, a study conducted by Liu and Yu [56] with 312 employees in the manufacturing sector in China similarly revealed a moderate relationship, finding that green transformational leadership is positively and significantly associated with the green organizational climate. Coşkun [49], in a study conducted with 244 business employees, identified a strong positive relationship between these two variables, emphasizing that the presence of a leadership approach that encourages eco-friendly behaviors and the existence of green policies in an organization are linked to a higher likelihood of employees exhibiting more green behaviors. While Khan et al. [104] highlighted that a green organizational climate is strongly interconnected with leaders prioritizing sustainable development, Ali et al. [92] stated that these two perceptions are closely related and that green transformational leadership correlates with sustainable behavior both directly and indirectly through its association with the organizational climate [90]. Furthermore, Yıldırım [105] concluded that green management is positively and significantly related to the green organizational climate.

In the current study, a positive and significant relationship emerged between the instructors' perceptions of the green organizational climate and their green organizational behavior levels. The literature widely supports that individuals' perception of a green climate is positively associated with employees' green behaviors [11,46]. Indeed, Yeşiltaş and Özer Topaloğlu [50], Khan et al. [104] in the hospitality sector, Saleem et al. [106] in universities and hospitals in Pakistan, Liang et al. [13] among business employees, and Kayar [107] among healthcare professionals confirmed a positive and significant relationship between these two variables in their research. Studies conducted in various sectors by Zientara and Zamojska [51], Norton et al. [108], and Kurnaz [109] also emphasized that green organizational climate is directly and positively related to green organizational behavior. Similarly, Ng et al. [110], who studied academics; Hicklenton et al. [48], who examined organizations supporting pro-environmental activities; and Özalp and Erbaşı [17] and Araç [96], who focused on hotel employees, revealed that green organizational climate is positively linked to eco-friendly behaviors and perceptions. Norton et al. [111], Xiao et al. [112], and Örücü et al. [113] indicated a significant relationship between green organizational climate and employees' voluntary and task-related pro-environmental behaviors. While Pichel [114] emphasized that green

organizational climate policies are strongly associated with employees' engagement in green initiatives, Coşkun [49] and Yue et al. [99] identified significant relationships between these two factors in their studies on business employees. Additionally, Nathani et al. [115] drew attention to the significant relationship between green transformational leadership, green organizational citizenship behavior, and environmental performance in the education sector.

Finally, according to the research results, a moderate, positive, and significant relationship was also found between the instructors' perceptions of green transformational leadership and their green organizational behaviors. Numerous studies in the literature support this finding. Güvendi and İyigün [31], in their study with public employees, stated that managerial support is significantly associated with exhibiting green organizational behaviors and that clear support is closely linked to encouraging employees. Tuna and Yıldız [40] and Kerse et al. [33] emphasized that transformational leaders acting as role models and their attitudes toward green transformation are positively correlated with higher employees' intrinsic motivation, which is associated with their engagement in eco-friendly behaviors. Furthermore, research conducted across different sample groups and sectors by Sobaih et al. [116], Özkan [93], Robertson and Barling [37], Kura [117], Wang et al. [118], Li et al. [63], Peng et al. [119], Coşkun [49], Cao et al. [88], Lathabhavan and Kaur [120], Cahyadi et al. [121], and Çınar Baltacı [122] conclusively demonstrated that green transformational leadership is positively and significantly related to employees' pro-environmental/green behaviors. Chen and Chang [36] stated that this leadership style is positively associated with green creativity and green product development; Nurwahdah and Muafi [123] noted it is positively linked to voluntary environmental behavior and green organizational citizenship behavior; and Yiğit [87] identified positive, statistically significant relationships between these two variables among teachers.

5.1. Discussion Regarding Gender Variable

According to the research results, it was determined that the levels of green organizational behavior (GOB) among instructors did not differ significantly based on the gender variable. This finding is in parallel with the results obtained by Akyol and Gürsoy [23], Bulut [24] and Yiğit [87] in their research with teachers, Sönmez [25] with school administrators, Tuna and Yıldız [40] and Aslan et al. [124] with healthcare personnel, Yiğit [125] with white-collar employees, and Mert [97] with hotel employees. Furthermore, Kayar [107] regarding healthcare professionals, and Katz et al. [126] in a large-scale meta-analysis, also reported that gender does not create a significant difference in GOB. In contrast, studies conducted by Özalp [62] and Özalp and Erbaşı [17] concluded that female employees exhibited higher levels of green organizational behavior compared to male employees.

The green organizational climate (GOC) perceptions of the instructors also did not exhibit a significant difference according to the gender variable. This result is consistent with the findings reached by Özalp and Erbaşı [17] in the service sector, and Senem and Öztırak [53] and Kayar [107] in the healthcare sector. Similarly, it was observed that green transformational leadership (GTL) perceptions did not differ by gender. This situation is supported by the research results of Tuna and Yıldız [40], Akça [127], Muzika [128], and Yiğit [87]. Diverging from this finding in the literature, only the research conducted by Karakışla [129] on Generation Z individuals identified a significant difference in favor of male participants.

5.2. Discussion Regarding the Variable Marital Status

In terms of the marital status variable, no significant difference was found between the instructors' perceptions of green organizational behavior, green transformational leadership, and green organizational climate. This result regarding GOB is similar to the studies of Akyol and Gürsoy [23], Bulut [24], and Yiğit [125]. However, Mert [97] indicated that married employees, and Aslan et al. [124] indicated that single employees, specifically in the technological sensitivity sub-dimension, had more positive perceptions. Regarding GTL perceptions, the findings of our research align with the "no difference" results reached by Akça [127], Muzika [128], and Karakışla [129].

5.3. Discussion Regarding the Age Variable

The research revealed that the green organizational behavior levels of instructors did not differ significantly based on the age variable. This finding is in harmony with many studies in the literature [17,23–25,40,107]. On the other hand, while Yiğit [125] found that the 26–35 age group exhibited lower levels of behavior, Wiernik et al. [14], Katz et al. [126], and Mert [97] revealed that older employees were more willing and active in exhibiting green behaviors. Aslan et al. [124] determined that the group aged 30 and under had higher scores in sub-dimensions such as economic and technological sensitivity.

The finding that the perception of green transformational leadership does not exhibit a significant difference based on age has been demonstrated in research conducted by Akça [127], Muzika [128], and Karakışla [129]. Likewise, the conclusion that perceptions of green organizational climate do not vary significantly by age is corroborated by the studies of Özalp and Erbaşı [17], Senem and Öztırak [53], and Kayar [107].

6. Conclusions

This research aimed to reveal the relationships between green transformational leadership (GTL), green organizational climate (GOC), and green organizational behavior (GOB), which are the three fundamental components of the green transformation process in higher education institutions. The results demonstrate that while the green organizational behavior levels of academic staff are high, the leadership and climate perceptions that nourish these behaviors remain at a "moderate" level. This suggests that the environmental sensitivities of academics may be shaped by individual values and academic awareness, independent of institutional mechanisms. The finding of moderate GTL and GOC perceptions [56,86] can be interpreted as institutions not yet fully internalizing sustainability policies. Conversely, the high level of GOB is consistent with the general trend in education and management literature [23,24,26,50] and aligns with the social responsibility mission of the education sector.

The relational analyses of the study confirmed moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationships among all three core variables. The findings show that green transformational leadership is positively associated with both green organizational climate and green organizational behavior. The visionary attitudes of leaders are closely aligned with an environmental atmosphere within the institution, which corresponds to higher levels of voluntary green actions of employees. Similarly, a supportive green climate was found to positively correlate with the environmental behaviors of employees. These results align with the theoretical framework suggesting that leaders prioritizing sustainable development is interconnected with the formation of a green climate [92,104], which is accompanied by both voluntary and task-oriented green actions of employees [51,108]. The absence of significant differences in terms of demographic variables suggests that environmental perceptions within the sampled population may be relatively homogeneous across gender, age, or marital status. While these findings may point

toward a shared institutional orientation within the examined context, they should be interpreted cautiously rather than as definitive evidence of a universal phenomenon, which is consistent with similar observations in the broader literature [40,107,127].

7. Research Limitations

Despite providing significant data regarding environmental sustainability in higher education institutions, this study has several limitations. First, the research is limited to a specific sample group of 368 academic staff; therefore, the generalizability of the findings to other educational levels (primary, secondary, etc.), administrative staff, or different industrial sectors is restricted. Secondly, this study has some limitations regarding demographic variables. The comparative analyses were limited to general personal characteristics (gender, age, and marital status) to ensure participant anonymity within a single university ecosystem. Consequently, the potential impacts of occupational variables—such as academic rank, administrative duties, or scientific discipline (e.g., social sciences vs. natural sciences)—on green organizational behaviors could not be observed. Next, the data were collected through relevant scales. This method may lead participants to exhibit a tendency to present their behaviors more positively than they are, particularly on ethically sensitive and socially encouraged issues such as environmental behaviors. Finally, the cross-sectional design of the research reflects the state of the data at a specific point in time. Although the literature supports a theoretical flow from leadership to climate and behavior [11,31], it is difficult to fully determine the exact cause-and-effect relationships between these variables with such a data structure.

8. Recommendations and Future Research Directions

In line with the findings and limitations of the current research, several recommendations for future studies can be made. Future multi-institutional studies with larger sample sizes should incorporate these academic-specific variables to provide a deeper understanding of how professional status influences green organizational climate perceptions. To overcome the constraints of cross-sectional data, longitudinal or experimental designs could be employed in future research to more clearly monitor the long-term effects and causal links of green transformational leadership practices on organizational climate and employee behavior. Using qualitative methods (interviews/observations) in future studies, the reasons why academic staff perceptions of GTL and GOC remain at a moderate level despite exhibiting high green behavior can be examined in depth. Additionally, the role of mediating variables such as green intrinsic motivation or environmental passion could be tested in the model. Furthermore, although no significant difference was found in terms of gender, age, and marital status in this study, the effects of mediating or moderating variables such as environmental awareness, personal values, or institutional support could be examined to explain the discrepancies with reports in the literature that highlight differences based on age [14,97] or gender [17]. The scope of the sample could be expanded to include administrative personnel in universities, or cross-cultural comparisons could be made between higher education institutions in different countries.

Based on the idea that the moderate organizational climate will be strengthened by leaders transforming their green vision into concrete policies, “Sustainable Leadership” training could be organized for management levels in higher education institutions to increase the perception of green transformational leadership. Furthermore, processes that will strengthen green organizational behaviors such as recycling, energy saving, and digitalization in universities should not be left solely to individual initiative; official

rewarding and incentive mechanisms should be established to reinforce the green organizational climate.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

GTL	Green Transformational Leadership
GOC	Green Organizational Climate
GOB	Green Organizational Behavior
SD	Standard Deviation

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