

Exploring the Mediating Role of Green Transformational Leadership in the Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Performance

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Introduction, the statement “*environmental performance has become one of the central indicators through which the strategic maturity, social legitimacy, and long-term competitiveness of firms are evaluated*” is conceptually important; however, the authors should provide a more explicit theoretical definition of environmental performance and distinguish it from related constructs such as sustainability performance, ESG performance, and ecological efficiency. This clarification would improve conceptual precision and avoid construct ambiguity.

The paragraph beginning with “*Corporate social responsibility has emerged as a major strategic framework for responding to these pressures*” presents CSR primarily from a stakeholder perspective. The discussion would be strengthened by addressing alternative theoretical perspectives such as legitimacy theory, resource-based view, and institutional theory, and explaining why stakeholder theory was prioritized as the primary explanatory framework.

In the paragraph stating “*A growing body of literature suggests that CSR can influence environmental performance by shaping organizational priorities*”, the literature review remains largely descriptive. The authors should synthesize prior findings more critically by identifying contradictory results, methodological differences, and unresolved debates concerning the CSR–environmental performance relationship.

The measurement section lacks information regarding translation procedures. Since the questionnaires were administered in Iran, the authors should describe translation, back-translation, cultural adaptation, and pilot-testing processes to establish linguistic and cultural validity.

The manuscript reports reliability and validity statistics but does not discuss common method variance despite all variables being measured through self-report questionnaires completed by the same respondents. The authors should conduct and report tests such as Harman’s single-factor test, full collinearity VIF, or marker-variable procedures.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph introducing green transformational leadership contains the statement “*green transformational leaders act as strategic translators*.” This is an insightful argument; however, the authors should operationalize this concept more clearly and explain the specific behavioral mechanisms through which leaders translate CSR values into environmental outcomes.

The section discussing Iranian capital-market conditions claims that “*there remains a need for integrated empirical models*.” The research gap would be more convincing if the authors provided a systematic comparison table summarizing previous Iranian studies, their variables, methodologies, and unresolved limitations.

The final paragraph of the Introduction states that the study contributes by examining a mediating mechanism. However, the novelty claim remains relatively broad. The authors should explicitly articulate what theoretical, methodological, and contextual contributions distinguish this study from prior research conducted in emerging economies and stock-market environments.

In the Methods section, the sentence “*the population was assumed to be unlimited*” requires further justification. Since listed companies and financial managers represent a finite and identifiable population, the rationale for treating the population as infinite should be explained more carefully and supported by methodological references.

The manuscript indicates that 460 questionnaires were distributed using “*an accessible sampling procedure*” despite previously stating that a stratified random sampling approach was employed in the abstract. This inconsistency raises concerns regarding sampling validity. The authors should clearly explain the actual sampling procedure and ensure consistency throughout the manuscript.

The description of the CSR instrument states that it consists of only four items. Given the multidimensional nature of CSR, the authors should justify the use of such a brief measure and discuss whether it adequately captures economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions of CSR.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.