



Employees' green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior

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Employees' altruistic behavior is a central component of organizational green activities; thus, understanding how to motivate green citizenship behavior in the workplace setting is crucial. This paper explored the effect of green brand love on green brand citizenship behavior, along with the moderating role of organization culture, from the perspective of frontline employees in the restaurant industry. We administered questionnaires to 426 frontline staff from six Taiwanese restaurants at a single time point. The results showed that green brand love was positively associated with green brand citizenship behavior, and that clan culture and adhocracy culture positively moderated this relationship. The findings provide practical recommendations for hotel restaurant managers regarding the types of organizational culture that should be developed.

Keywords

green brand love, green brand citizenship behavior, organizational culture, clan culture, adhocracy culture

Article Highlights

- Green brand love was found to be positively associated with green brand citizenship behavior.
- Clan culture positively moderated the relationship between green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior.
- Adhocracy culture positively moderated the relationship between green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior.

Successful green branding requires both *external branding*, which encompasses how green brands deliver green values to customers, and *internal branding*, which focuses on delivering green values during service encounters (Han & Yang, 2021). Since restaurants are service brands, customers experience green internal branding through restaurant employees who identify with the company's culture (Xiong et al., 2013). In this context it is important for restaurant managers to consider how to motivate employees' green citizenship behaviors (Han et al., 2022; B.-L. Zhang et al., 2022) through formal management systems as well as practices that promote their commitment to environmental performance (Walley & Stubbs, 2000). Green activities rely on employees' altruistic extrarole behaviors, which contribute to organizational effectiveness (Ramus & Killmer, 2007). These behaviors include but are not limited to suggesting ways to reduce waste, delivering the green concept to the public, and collaborating with team members to implement green activities (Thai & Nguyen, 2022).

Social exchange theory (Thibault & Kelly, 1959) has been broadly accepted by researchers as a useful framework for exploring the effect of brand love on organizational citizenship behavior. According to social exchange theory, *social*

behavior involves social exchanges where people are motivated to obtain something of value and are willing to forfeit something else of value in exchange. In this context, social exchange is stabilized and reinforced by the norm of reciprocity, which strengthens individual feelings of obligation, trust, and gratitude (Blau, 1964). Wang et al. (2019) utilized social exchange theory to explore ways that brand love can enhance hotel employees' altruistic behaviors and found that brand love is positively associated with employees' extrarole behaviors, particularly organizational citizenship behavior. In this study we extended this theory into a green setting by investigating whether employees' green brand love motivates their reciprocal green organizational citizenship behavior.

Organizational culture also has a strong impact on employee behavior. Cole et al. (2002) found dissimilarities in efficiency and forms of social exchange between different types of organizational culture, while Wang et al. (2019) found that diversified organizational cultures moderate the relationship between employees' brand love and altruistic behavior. Therefore, we introduced organizational culture as a moderating variable to analyze whether differing types of organizational culture can strengthen the relationship between employees' green brand love and their green brand citizenship behavior.

To date, researchers have primarily studied the green citizenship behavior of customers (Drennan et al., 2015; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Liu et al., 2018). For example, Y. Zhang and Yang (2023) found that green animation advertisements influence customers' voluntary green behavior, while B.-L. Zhang et al. (2022) found that uniqueness, credibility, and innovativeness are positively associated with green brand love, contributing to customers' green citizenship behavior. However, despite the growing role of brand love and increasing attention on green settings in the restaurant industry, to the best of our knowledge, little research has examined the perspective of employees in this area. To fill this gap in the literature we built on the research of Wang et al. (2019) and used social exchange theory to investigate the effect of frontline hotel employees' green brand love on their green brand citizenship behavior, and examined the moderating effect of organizational culture in this relationship.

Green Brand Love

Brand love refers to the degree of an individual's emotional attachment to a particular brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), comprising cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors (Batra et al., 2012). People with strong brand love show great passion and loyalty toward the brand and evaluate it positively (Batra et al., 2012). Extending the notion of brand love to the green context, *green brand love* can be defined as a set of eco-friendly emotions and behaviors associated with a particular brand due to its emphasis on green activities and proactive engagement with environmental issues (Wu & Cheng, 2019).

Green Brand Citizenship Behavior

Brand citizenship behavior refers to the altruistic behavior of employees who can enhance a brand's equity and image through good service behavior both within and outside the organization (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005; Sun et al., 2007). Extending this concept to the green setting, *green brand citizenship behavior* refers to employees' brand altruistic behavior that supports the green activities of the brand.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to a set of shared values, beliefs, assumptions, and symbols shared by employees inside the organization that direct the business (Barney, 1986; Schein, 1985). We used the framework of competing values (Quinn, 1988), which categorizes organizational culture on two axes: the horizontal axis indicates the degree to which an organization focuses inward or outward, and the vertical axis indicates the degree to which it focuses on control or flexibility (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). The four cultures in this framework are *hierarchy culture*, emphasizing internal stability and control; *market culture*, emphasizing external stability and control; *clan culture*, emphasizing internal maintenance with flexibility; and *adhocracy culture*, emphasizing external positioning with a high degree of flexibility (Quinn, 1988).

Relationship Between Green Brand Love and Green Brand Citizenship Behavior

Employees who love a brand tend to perform altruistic behaviors to support its activities (Ahuvia et al., 2009). When applied to the green context, this may include positive and altruistic involvement in the brand's green activities and environmental issues. Hence, we proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Employees' green brand love will be positively associated with their green brand citizenship behavior.

The Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture on Green Brand Love and Green Brand Citizenship Behavior

This study investigated how the four types of organizational culture defined in the framework of competing values—clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, and market—affect employees' green brand citizenship behavior. Managers in a clan culture stress the importance of teamwork, mutual communication, and employee participation (Cameron & Freeman, 1991), which makes employees feel safe and comfortable and also motivates brand lovers to engage in supportive behavior. Extending this concept to organizational green activities, green brand lovers may be more willing to assist with brand green activities in such a culture because they identify with the organization's core values. Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Frontline employees' perception of clan culture will moderate the relationship between their green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior.

Managers in an adhocracy culture tend to be risk-inclined, innovative, and eager to try novel things in a dynamic environment (Cameron & Freeman, 1991). This type of organizational culture prioritizes variety, autonomy, and growth when allocating work tasks (Hartnell et al., 2011). Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Frontline employees' perception of adhocracy culture will moderate the relationship between their green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior.

Leaders in a hierarchy culture stress predictability and conformity (Cameron and Freeman, 1991), instructing employees to follow standard procedures and roles. In a hierarchy culture, brand lovers tend to engage in supportive behavior because they believe there are no opportunities to argue with stable bureaucracy (Bate, 2002). Applying this notion to organizational green activities, green brand lovers may be willing to engage in brand green activities in such a culture because they think they should follow the procedures and regulations inside the organization. Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Frontline employees' perception of hierarchy culture will moderate the relationship between their green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior.

Leaders in a market culture encourage internal competition (Cameron and Freeman, 1991), motivating green brand lovers to exhibit green brand citizenship behavior by offering potential career benefits, such as promotion within the organization. Hence, we proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: Frontline employees' perception of market culture will moderate the relationship between their green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior.

Method

Participants and Procedure

We used snowball sampling to recruit respondents from six Taiwanese restaurants with experience in green activities, which had more than 100 employees each. The restaurants gave us permission to conduct our survey with their staff. Data collection took place between September and December 2022. Prior to conducting the survey, we obtained

approval for the study protocol from an institutional review board and sent 60 questionnaires to restaurant employees for a pretest to ensure that the scales were valid and reliable for use with this population. Next, we used convenience sampling to mail 100 paper surveys to each hotel manager, along with cover letters assuring respondents that their data would be kept confidential. All participants provided informed consent and joined the study on a voluntary basis. After removing incomplete forms, participants returned 426 valid questionnaires out of the 600 we distributed, representing an effective response rate of 71%.

Among the final sample of 426 respondents, 298 (69.95%) were men and 124 (30.05%) were women. About 50% of the participants were aged between 21 and 30 years ($M = 27.00, SD = 1.21$), and 79.00% had a college-level education. The majority of respondents (52.00%) had worked for their company for 5 years or less.

Measures

We used established scales drawn from related research, which were translated into Chinese and then back into English by professional experts for use in this study. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strong disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). This study featured six constructs: green brand love, green brand citizenship behavior, clan culture, adhocracy culture, hierarchy culture, and market culture. We measured green brand love by adapting the items proposed by Bagozzi et al. (2017) to a green setting. A sample item is “I have true intimacy with this green restaurant.” We measured green brand citizenship behavior by modifying the scale items of Chang et al. (2012) to reflect a green setting. A sample item is “I voluntarily participate in green brand-related activities.” To evaluate organizational culture, we applied the 16-item scale developed by Cameron and Freeman (1991). A sample item for clan culture is “Our firm is a humane organization, like a big family, where members can share each other’s experience or ideas.” A sample item for adhocracy culture is “Our firm values adaptability and responsiveness to change.” A sample item for hierarchy culture is “This organization is quite formal and structured, and members generally act in accordance with formal procedures.” A sample item for market culture is “What unites the organization is its emphasis on achievement and achievement of goals.” Cronbach’s alpha for all constructs exceeded the threshold of .60 (Hair et al., 2009), suggesting good internal consistency reliability. Table 1 shows that the average variance extracted (AVE) values for each construct were greater than .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating good convergent validity. In addition, the AVE results for all structural pairs suggested adequate discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Indicator Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Clan culture	4.02	1.21	.59	.72					
2. Adhocracy culture	4.06	0.91	.61	.30**	.83				
3. Hierarchy culture	4.09	1.12	.57	.31**	.28**	.76			
4. Market culture	4.02	0.86	.63	.29**	.31**	.29**	.77		
5. Green brand love	4.11	0.81	.59	.45**	.46**	.38**	.46**	.81	
6. Green brand citizenship behavior	4.05	0.79	.61	.41**	.32**	.42**	.37**	.44**	.79

Note. $N = 512$. AVE = average variance extracted. Square roots of AVE are presented on the diagonal.

** $p < .01$.

Data Analysis

We used SPSS 22.0 for data analysis. In the first model we tested age, gender, level of education, and work experience. In the second model we added green brand love, clan culture, adhocracy culture, hierarchy culture, and market culture. In the third model we checked the four moderating effects between green brand love and clan culture, between green brand love and adhocracy culture, between green brand love and hierarchy culture, and between green brand love and market culture.

Results

Hypothesis Testing

We conducted hierarchical linear regression analyses to test our hypotheses (Aiken & West, 1991). Green brand love was the independent variable, green brand citizenship was the dependent variable, and organizational culture was the moderator (see Figure 1).

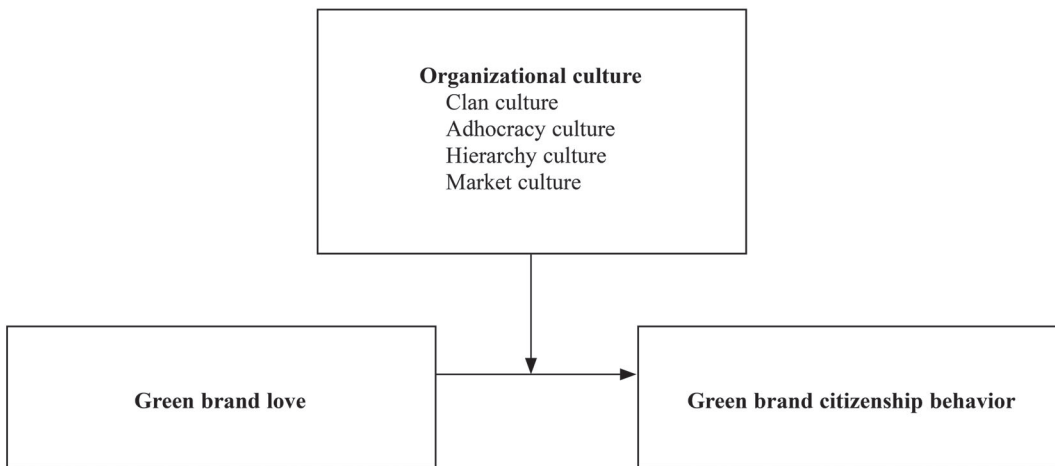


Figure 1. *Conceptual Model*

Table 2 presents the hierarchical linear regression results, which show that the overall model was statistically significant. We controlled for the demographic factors of age, gender, level of education, and work experience.

Table 2. *Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture on the Relationship Between Green Brand Love and Green Brand Citizenship Behavior*

	Green brand citizenship behavior		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	.04	.04	.04
Gender	.04	.02	.02
Level of education	.04	.04	.03
Work experience	.03	.03	.03
Green brand love		.32***	.34***
Clan culture		.27***	.26***
Adhocracy culture		.23***	.25***
Hierarchy culture		.04	.05
Market culture		.04	.04
Green brand love × Clan culture			.18**
Green brand love × Adhocracy culture			.18**
Green brand love × Hierarchy culture			.04
Green brand love × Market culture			.04
R ²	.06	.47	.54
ΔR ²	-.40	.11	
F	7.45***	33.21***	24.12***

Note. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

After controlling for age, gender, work experience, and level of education, the results showed that green brand love had a significant positive relationship with green brand citizenship behavior, supporting Hypothesis 1. However, only two of the four potential moderating effects were significant (see Table 2). We calculated $M \pm 1 SD$ for each type of organizational culture to test their moderating effects on green brand citizenship behavior, and conducted simple slope analysis to assess the interaction effects. The results showed that the interaction term of clan culture and adhocracy culture had a significant positive relationship with green brand citizenship behavior, as shown in Figures 2 and 3, respectively, supporting Hypotheses 2 and 3.

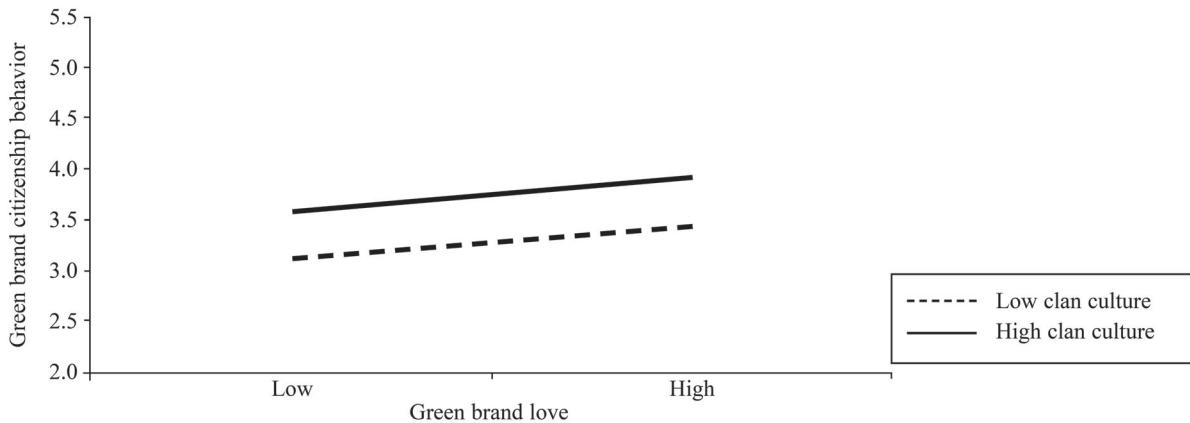


Figure 2. Moderating Effect of Clan Culture on the Relationship Between Green Brand Love and Green Brand Citizenship Behavior

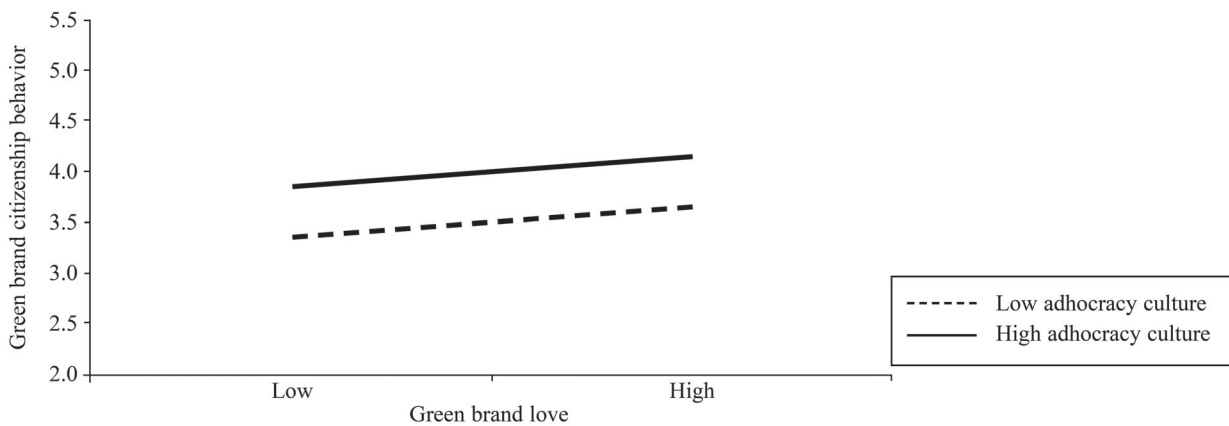


Figure 3. Moderating Effect of Adhocracy Culture on the Relationship Between Green Brand Love and Green Brand Citizenship Behavior

Discussion

Using social exchange theory, this study examined the effect of green brand love on green brand citizenship behavior, along with the moderating effect of diversified organizational culture, from the perspective of frontline employees in



Taiwanese restaurants. The results show that employees' green brand love was positively associated with their green brand citizenship behavior. In addition, we found that organizational culture was a significant moderator that strengthened employees' green behaviors, which is congruent with the findings of Sharoni et al. (2012). Specifically, clan culture and adhocracy culture strengthened the effect of green brand love on green brand citizenship behavior, whereas the moderating effects of hierarchy culture and market culture were nonsignificant. One reason for this outcome may be that hierarchy culture and market culture focus on formal regulations and external control, neither of which develop the human resources, morale, and commitment required to nurture employees' green brand love or green brand citizenship behavior.

Theoretical Contributions

This research enhances the literature in three major ways. First, we explored the relationship between green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior in a new context by focusing on the service industry, and restaurants in particular. While previous studies explored brand love from the perspective of customers (Drennan et al., 2015; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Liu et al., 2018), we extended this understanding to the employee–organization relationship, which is an underdeveloped research area. In addition, we applied social exchange theory and the concept of brand love to organizational green activities, demonstrating the influence of organizational culture on the relationship between employees' green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior internally within the restaurant industry.

Practical Implications

Our research findings have implications for managerial practice. First, this study showed that employees' green brand love is a foundation for their green brand citizenship behavior. Therefore, we recommend that managers, especially in restaurant organizations, focus on internal branding and aim to build emotional bonds with green premises between employees and the brand. This could involve implementing suitable practices and incentives to both enable and strengthen employees' green brand love and green citizenship behavior. In addition, restaurant managers could periodically monitor longitudinal changes in employees' green love behaviors as a part of performance evaluations related to internal branding management. Second, the significant moderating effect of organizational culture types (i.e., clan culture and adhocracy culture) found in this research could be used strategically to strengthen the relationship between green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior. Restaurant management could follow the principles of clan culture, emphasizing collaboration, support, trust, morale, and commitment; alternatively, they could instill an adhocracy culture and prioritize variety, autonomy, and growth inside the organization. Either of these cultures could provide a suitable contextual environment for prompting internal green brand lovers to exhibit green love behavior.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has limitations. Our participants were employees in the restaurant industry in Taiwan; thus, our conclusions and implications have limited application to other industries and cultural settings. Since employees' attitudes and behaviors may differ in more diversified cultures (Y. Zhang & Yang, 2023), researchers could apply the model to other industries and settings in future research to increase the generalizability of the findings. This study also utilized a cross-sectional research design, preventing us from capturing dynamic changes in the relationship between green brand love and green brand citizenship behavior. Longitudinal or experimental designs could be used to address this. Last, researchers could consider incorporating additional intermediary variables (i.e., personality traits) in further research to enrich the findings.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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