Internal ESG Greenwashing and Employee Well-Being: The Roles of Procedural Justice, Trust and Belonging in Greece and the United Kingdom

Abstract

Purpose – This study examines how employees' **perceptions** of internal ESG greenwashing,

employee work well-being in Greece and the United Kingdom.

Design/methodology/approach – Cross-sectional survey data from 837 employees were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling, bootstrapping, specific indirect-effect analysis and multi-group comparison.

Findings – Belonging showed the strongest direct association with employee work well-being in the pooled model. Perceived internal ESG greenwashing and procedural justice were also related to well-being, while indirect relationships through trust and belonging differed between the pooled and country-specific models. The multi-group analysis indicated that selected relationships involving greenwashing, trust, belonging and procedural justice varied between Greece and the United Kingdom.

Originality – The study reframes internal ESG communication as an employee-facing governance issue rather than solely an external reporting practice. It integrates perceived greenwashing and procedural justice with two distinct relational mechanisms, organizational trust and belonging, and examines their associations with employee work well-being across two institutionally differentiated European contexts.

Research limitations/implications – The cross-sectional, self-report design does not establish causal ordering. Future research should employ longitudinal, experimental and organization-embedded designs and extend the comparison to additional institutional contexts.

Practical implications – Organizations should align internal ESG communication with observable practice, apply fair and transparent ESG decision procedures, and support the relational conditions associated with organizational trust and belonging.

Keywords: greenwashing, procedural justice, organizational trust, employee work well-being, cross-national comparison, corporate communication

1. Introduction

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives increasingly shape how organizations communicate purpose, responsibility and long-term priorities. Although ESG remains strongly associated with external disclosure, investor relations and corporate reputation, it also enters employees' working lives through internal policies, managerial communication and sustainability initiatives. Micro-CSR research indicates that favourable perceptions of organizational responsibility can strengthen identification, commitment and extra-role behaviour. However, this literature remains fragmented and weighted toward positive, organization-centred outcomes, giving less attention to employees who perceive inconsistency, symbolism or hypocrisy in organizational sustainability claims.

This omission matters because employees are not passive recipients of ESG communication. As organizational insiders, they can compare formal claims with observed practices, employment conditions and managerial decisions. Evidence from employee-level greenwashing research suggests that perceived discrepancies between corporate communication and practice can weaken organizational trust and identification, increase cynicism and alienation, and reduce pro-environmental behaviour (Mu and Lee, 2023; Srivastava et al., 2024; Tahir et al., 2020). Internal ESG greenwashing should therefore be understood not only as an external reputational risk but also as a potential challenge to the relational foundations of organizational life.

Procedural justice provides a theoretically relevant governance lens through which these employee evaluations can be examined. Employees assess not only what an organization claims to achieve through ESG but also how ESG priorities are selected, whose views are considered, whether procedures are applied consistently and whether decisions rely on accurate information. Research linking justice with organizational cynicism indicates that fair procedures can strengthen legitimacy and reduce scepticism, while internal sustainability communication research emphasizes voice, transparency and relationship-building as conditions for credible implementation (Kwantes and Bond, 2019; Piwowar-Sulej et al., 2024; Weder and Stranzl, 2025;

Yue et al., 2025). Procedural justice is therefore treated here as an independent governance resource associated with employee outcomes, rather than as an empirically established moderator of greenwashing.

Internal ESG programmes can also be understood as organizational change initiatives implemented through communication. Lewis and Seibold (1993, 1998) and Lewis (2019) argue that implementation depends partly on how organizational stakeholders interpret, adapt and respond to communicated change. Applied to ESG, this perspective positions employees as evaluative stakeholders whose judgements concern both the content of organizational claims and the processes through which commitments are enacted. CSR authenticity accordingly reflects perceived alignment between espoused values and observable organizational conduct (McShane and Cunningham, 2012), whereas procedural justice concerns the fairness of the decision processes through which ESG is implemented. The present study does not test the full stakeholder model of organizational change; rather, it draws on this communication perspective to explain why authenticity, fairness, trust and belonging form a coherent employee-level framework.

Organizational trust and belonging provide two related but analytically distinct mechanisms connecting internal ESG evaluations with employee work well-being. Trust concerns employees' willingness to rely on the organization and its decision makers, whereas belonging reflects perceived connection, shared membership and value alignment. CSR and ESG research frequently associates responsible organizational conduct with both constructs, but their links with validated employee work well-being remain less developed than their relationships with commitment, citizenship behaviour or turnover intentions. Examining trust and belonging as parallel relational pathways enables the study to distinguish whether ESG perceptions are associated with well-being principally through confidence in organizational integrity or through employees' sense of connection to the organization.

The comparison between Greece and the United Kingdom provides institutional rather than merely geographical variation. Comparative CSR research distinguishes the Mediterranean Agora model, associated with contexts such as Greece, from the business-in-the-community model associated with the United Kingdom and Ireland (Maon et al., 2017). Greece represents a comparatively later and unevenly institutionalized ESG context in which symbolic compliance and gaps between disclosure and implementation have been documented, whereas the United Kingdom has a more established architecture of CSR committees, reporting and sustainability

assurance (Alkhataybeh et al., 2025; Efthalitsidou et al., 2025; Maon et al., 2017; Ziogas and Metaxas, 2021). These differences provide a theoretically relevant basis for assessing whether the same employee-level relationships operate similarly across contrasting European ESG environments.

Accordingly, this study examines how perceived internal ESG greenwashing, procedural justice, trait cynicism and ESG importance relate to employee work well-being, directly and through the parallel relational pathways of organizational trust and belonging. It contributes by positioning employees as active evaluators of internal ESG credibility, incorporating procedural fairness into the micro-level study of ESG communication, and testing the model across two institutionally differentiated national settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Internal ESG, Greenwashing and Procedural Justice

ESG communication operates internally as a signal of organizational values, priorities and integrity. When employees perceive consistency between communication and practice, responsible organizational initiatives may strengthen identification, commitment and discretionary effort. However, this predominantly positive framing can obscure situations in which employees perceive ESG communication as selective, promotional or disconnected from workplace realities (Ertürk and Albayrak, 2020; Macassa et al., 2021; Santos et al., 2024).

Perceived internal ESG greenwashing refers to employees' assessment that organizational ESG communication overstates achievements, omits material shortcomings or conflicts with observed practice. Employees are especially well positioned to form such assessments because they encounter both formal communication and the organizational processes through which ESG commitments are implemented. Existing evidence associates employee-perceived greenwashing with corporate hypocrisy, diminished trust and identification, organizational cynicism, withdrawal and weaker work-related behaviour (Li et al., 2022; Mu and Lee, 2023; Srivastava et al., 2024). These relational and attitudinal consequences provide a basis for examining whether perceived internal ESG greenwashing is also associated with employee work well-being.

H1. Perceived internal ESG greenwashing (PGW) is associated with employee work well-being (WB).

Procedural justice concerns the perceived fairness of the processes through which organizational decisions are made. Fair procedures provide meaningful voice, are applied consistently, rely on accurate information and limit bias (Colquitt, 2001). In an ESG context, procedural justice therefore concerns whether employees can contribute to ESG priorities and whether ESG decisions are transparent, consistent and evidence based. Justice research suggests that such procedures support organizational legitimacy and reduce cynicism, while sustainability communication research emphasizes participation and internal relationship-building as foundations of credible ESG implementation (Kwantes and Bond, 2019; Piwowar-Sulej et al., 2024; Weder and Stranzl, 2025; Yue et al., 2025). Procedural justice may consequently be associated with employee work well-being independently of the content of ESG claims.

Procedural justice is particularly salient when employees have limited control over organizational initiatives. Opportunities for voice and decision control shape evaluations of procedural fairness (Dulebohn and Ferris, 1999), while justice during organizational change can influence how employees evaluate and respond to implementation processes (Steensma et al., 2000). Business-ethics research further indicates that organizational credibility following actual or perceived harm depends on fair, transparent and stakeholder-sensitive responses (Bauman, 2011; Simola, 2005). In internal ESG, these arguments imply that employees evaluate credibility not only from reported outcomes but also from the procedures used to establish priorities, assess evidence and respond to concerns.

H2. Procedural justice in ESG decision-making (PJ) is associated with employee work well-being (WB).

Trait cynicism reflects a relatively enduring tendency to question organizational motives and doubt whether formal claims correspond with substantive action. Such scepticism can shape how employees interpret ESG communication and organizational conduct. Although cynicism may sometimes protect employees from unrealistic expectations, persistent scepticism is more commonly associated with alienation, weaker attachment and adverse work attitudes (Kwantes and Bond, 2019; Li et al., 2022).

H3. Trait cynicism (CYN) is associated with employee work well-being (WB).

ESG importance captures the personal and work-related salience employees attach to environmental, social and governance concerns. High importance may strengthen positive responses when organizational practice is perceived as credible, but it may also increase sensitivity to inconsistency between organizational claims and observed conduct. Because these competing mechanisms do not support an unequivocal directional prediction, the association is tested non-directionally.

H4. ESG importance (IMP) is associated with employee work well-being (WB).

2.2. Trust and Belonging as Parallel Relational Pathways

Organizational trust and belonging are central relational outcomes of employees' evaluations of organizational conduct. Organizational trust reflects confidence that the organization and its representatives will act honestly, competently and consistently, particularly under conditions of vulnerability (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006). Belonging, operationalized here through organizational identification and value alignment, concerns the extent to which employees experience connection with and inclusion in the organization. CSR and ESG initiatives can strengthen both constructs when they support favourable judgements of organizational integrity and value congruence (Shaikh et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2025).

Trust and belonging are related but should not be treated as interchangeable (Kim et al., 2025). Employees may trust an organization's competence and integrity without defining themselves through organizational membership, while they may experience social attachment even when confidence in management is incomplete. Research on empowerment, internal support and leadership indicates that both trust and identification are associated with positive employee outcomes, although the relative importance of each mechanism varies across organizational settings (Bao et al., 2016; Chughtai and Buckley, 2009; Ertürk, 2010).

Authenticity provides an additional link between internal ESG and organizational identification. Employees distinguish substantive responsibility from programmes that appear inconsistent with organizational identity and observed practice (McShane and Cunningham, 2012). Authentic leadership can also strengthen the association between CSR and organizational identification, indicating that employees evaluate responsibility through both formal initiatives and their

enactment by organizational leaders (Kim et al., 2018). These findings support treating belonging as a distinct relational response to perceived ESG credibility rather than as a synonym for organizational trust.

Sustainability-focused studies similarly show that ESG and CSR perceptions are associated with commitment, identification and citizenship behaviour through relational constructs (Jeong and Chung, 2025; Wu et al., 2025). However, most of this evidence assumes that CSR or ESG is perceived positively and rarely considers perceived internal greenwashing as an antecedent. The present study therefore specifies organizational trust and belonging simultaneously as parallel relational pathways rather than as a serial sequence. Each construct represents a distinct route through which ESG-related evaluations and employee dispositions may be indirectly associated with employee work well-being.

H5a. Organizational trust (TR) is associated with employee work well-being (WB).

H5b. Belonging/identification (BEL) is associated with employee work well-being (WB).

If trust and belonging represent distinct relational pathways, the associations of internal ESG perceptions and employee dispositions with work well-being may include specific indirect components through either construct. The following indirect-effect hypotheses are therefore proposed:

H6a. Perceived internal ESG greenwashing (PGW) has an indirect association with employee work well-being (WB) through organizational trust (TR).

H6b. Perceived internal ESG greenwashing (PGW) has an indirect association with employee work well-being (WB) through belonging/identification (BEL).

H7a. Procedural justice in ESG (PJ) has an indirect association with employee work well-being (WB) through organizational trust (TR).

H7b. Procedural justice in ESG (PJ) has an indirect association with employee work well-being (WB) through belonging/identification (BEL).

H8a. Trait cynicism (CYN) has an indirect association with employee work well-being (WB) through organizational trust (TR).

H8b. Trait cynicism (CYN) has an indirect association with employee work well-being (WB) through belonging/identification (BEL).

H9a. ESG importance (IMP) has an indirect association with employee work well-being (WB) through organizational trust (TR).

H9b. ESG importance (IMP) has an indirect association with employee work well-being (WB) through belonging/identification (BEL).

2.3. Cross-National Context: The United Kingdom and Greece

ESG and CSR form part of a shared European sustainability agenda, but their organizational expression differs across institutional contexts. Maon et al. (2017) distinguish a business-in-the-community model in the United Kingdom and Ireland from an Agora model associated with Mediterranean contexts such as Greece. These models differ in the institutionalization of corporate responsibility, the roles assigned to organizations and stakeholders, and the mechanisms through which responsible conduct is communicated and evaluated.

Greece is commonly characterized as a comparatively late and unevenly institutionalized CSR and ESG context. Existing studies identify growing organizational engagement alongside uneven implementation and cases in which formal disclosure is weakly connected with substantive impact (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025; Kalogiannidis et al., 2025; Maon et al., 2017; Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2014; Ziogas and Metaxas, 2021). Research has examined sustainability communication and ESG practices in Greek organizations, but employee interpretations of internal ESG greenwashing, procedural justice and authenticity remain limited.

The United Kingdom has a more established ESG architecture involving formal CSR governance, standardized reporting, sustainability assurance and organizational trust-building practices (Alkhataybeh et al., 2025; Krasodomska et al., 2025; Paloniemi et al., 2015). However, this literature remains oriented principally toward external disclosure, assurance and investor expectations. Less is known about how employees interpret internal ESG communication or whether relational pathways involving trust, belonging and well-being operate differently within this more institutionalized environment.

Comparative employee-level evidence remains limited. Tao and Chao (2024) include the United Kingdom in a wider cross-cultural analysis of greenwashing and employee behaviour, but provide no corresponding evidence from Greece or Southern Europe. The Greece–United Kingdom

comparison is therefore theoretically useful because it examines the same micro-level model in two European settings characterized by different degrees and forms of ESG institutionalization. The study does not assume that either country represents a homogeneous national regime; rather, country membership is used to test whether selected structural relationships differ across these institutional settings.

RQ1. Do the structural relationships linking PGW, PJ, CYN, IMP, TR, BEL and WB differ between employees in Greece and the United Kingdom?

Figure 1 presents employee work well-being as the focal outcome, organizational trust and belonging as parallel relational pathways, and perceived greenwashing, procedural justice, trait cynicism and ESG importance as exogenous predictors. H1–H4 specify direct relationships with well-being, H5a–H5b specify the mediator–outcome relationships, and H6a–H9b specify the indirect relationships through trust and belonging. RQ1 examines whether the corresponding structural coefficients differ between the two country groups.

[Insert Figure 1: Conceptual model. Source: authors' own elaboration. here]

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Data Collection and Sampling

This quantitative, cross-sectional study used an online survey to examine how perceived internal ESG greenwashing, procedural justice, trait cynicism and ESG importance relate to organizational trust, belonging and employee work well-being. The research design employed a PLS-SEM framework with parallel specific indirect effects through trust and belonging and was implemented consistently in Greece and the United Kingdom to support country-specific estimation and structural-path comparison (Kesmodel, 2018; Spector, 2019).

Purposive stratified sampling, supplemented by snowball recruitment, was used to reach employed adults in organizations in which ESG-related practices or communication were potentially relevant (Nyimbili and Nyimbili, 2024). Recruitment sought variation in sector, work mode, organizational role and organization size. These criteria were used to increase heterogeneity in employee experiences rather than to generate nationally representative workforce samples.

Data were collected through a bilingual Greek–English online questionnaire. Participants first read a neutral vignette describing a typical internal ESG initiative to establish a consistent frame of reference. They then completed randomized blocks of five-point Likert items measuring perceived internal ESG greenwashing, procedural justice in ESG, organizational trust, belonging/identification, employee work well-being, trait cynicism and ESG importance, followed by demographic and organizational questions. Recruitment combined a vetted online panel with outreach through professional social media, mailing lists and organizational networks. Country-specific links were used to monitor recruitment and reduce duplicate participation.

Eligibility required participants to be at least 18 years old, employed for at least 20 hours per week and to have at least three months' tenure with their current organization. Recent exposure to internal ESG communication was measured but was not used as an exclusion criterion. Retaining respondents who reported no communication during the previous six months allowed the study to capture variation from absent to frequent internal ESG communication. Cases were excluded for failed attention checks, implausibly short completion times, patterned or invariant responding, or duplicate device or IP indicators.

The final analytical sample comprised 837 employees: 436 from Greece and 401 from the United Kingdom. This sample provided sufficient observations for estimating the proposed model separately within each country and for assessing specific indirect effects and cross-national structural differences (Kock and Hadaya, 2018; Wagner and Grimm, 2023).

3.2. Measurement Scales

All latent constructs were operationalized reflectively using multi-item scales and a five-point response format ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Items were developed

in English, translated into Greek and administered in a bilingual format. The complete item wording and source attribution are presented in Table A1 in Appendix A.

Perceived internal ESG greenwashing (PGW) was measured with five items adapted from greenwashing and corporate-hypocrisy measures. The indicators assessed whether internal ESG communication overstated organizational activity, omitted material shortcomings, selectively presented achievements or conflicted with observed practice (Braga Junior et al., 2019; Gupta and Singh, 2024). Higher PGW scores indicate stronger perceived internal ESG greenwashing.

Procedural justice in ESG (PJ) was adapted from established organizational-justice measures and contextualized to ESG decision-making. The retained indicators assessed employee voice, procedural consistency, informational accuracy and bias suppression. The initial five-item pool was reduced to four indicators following measurement-model assessment (Colquitt, 2001; Jeong and Chung, 2025).

Trait cynicism (CYN) was measured with five items assessing generalized scepticism toward organizational motives, communication and substantive commitment (Bao et al., 2016; Li et al., 2022). The indicators were retained in their original direction, such that higher CYN scores represent stronger trait cynicism. ESG importance (IMP) was measured with three items capturing the personal and work-related salience of ESG and the priority respondents assigned to organizational ESG performance (Jeong and Chung, 2025).

Organizational trust (TR) was assessed using items adapted from intra-organizational trust measures and contextualized to ESG governance. One indicator was excluded during measurement-model refinement, resulting in a four-item scale (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006; Xiao et al., 2025). Belonging/identification (BEL) was assessed through indicators of organizational connection, belonging and value alignment. One item concerning perceived personal loss upon leaving the organization was excluded, resulting in three retained indicators (Allen et al., 2000; Ashforth et al., 2013).

Employee work well-being (WB) was measured with three items derived from the workplace well-being dimension developed by Zheng et al. (2015). The items assessed satisfaction with work, positive self-evaluation arising from the work situation and the perceived contribution of work to overall quality of life.

Indicator reliability, internal consistency and convergent validity were assessed using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability and average variance extracted.

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and heterotrait–monotrait ratios generated separately from the construct-correlation matrix.

Before conducting PLS-MGA, measurement invariance was assessed using the measurement invariance of composite models procedure. Configural invariance was established by applying identical indicators, data treatment, model specification and estimation settings across the Greek and UK samples. Compositional invariance and the equality of composite means and variances were then assessed through permutation testing. For every construct, the original composite correlation exceeded the corresponding 5% permutation quantile, establishing compositional invariance. The observed differences in composite means and variances also fell within their respective 95% permutation intervals. Full measurement invariance was therefore supported for PGW, PJ, CYN, IMP, TR, BEL and WB, permitting comparison of the country-specific structural coefficients. The complete results are reported in Appendix A, Table A2.

3.3. Sample profile

The final sample comprised 436 employees from Greece (52.1%) and 401 from the United Kingdom (47.9%) (Table I). The gender distribution was identical across the two groups, with 57.1% identifying as male and 42.9% as female. Age profiles were broadly comparable, although employees aged 35–44 constituted the largest category in Greece, whereas the UK sample was more evenly distributed across the 25–34 and 35–44 categories.

Participants generally reported relatively high educational attainment: 61.5% of the Greek sample and 66.1% of the UK sample held at least a bachelor's degree. Approximately one-fifth had formal ESG responsibility, while most other respondents reported regular or occasional ESG involvement. Sectoral coverage included public organizations, private manufacturing and services, non-profit organizations and other organizational settings. The UK sample contained a larger public-sector and private-services share, whereas manufacturing representation was higher in Greece.

Recent internal ESG communication varied substantially. In Greece, 70.6% reported receiving such communication at least monthly, compared with 69.1% in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, 23.4% of Greek respondents and 23.2% of UK respondents reported no internal ESG

communication during the previous six months. Organization size was comparatively balanced: 53.2% of Greek respondents and 49.1% of UK respondents worked in organizations with fewer than 250 employees.

[Insert Table I: Sample profile. here]

4. Data Analysis and Results

The model was estimated using partial least squares structural equation modelling in SmartPLS 4 (version 4.1.1.6). PLS-SEM was selected because the study examines multiple direct and indirect relationships while emphasizing the explained variance and predictive relevance of the endogenous constructs (Hair and Alamer, 2022; Nitzl et al., 2016; Sarstedt et al., 2021). Organizational trust and belonging were specified simultaneously as parallel relational pathways rather than as a serial sequence. Multi-group analysis was used to compare the structural coefficients estimated for Greece and the United Kingdom (Hair and Alamer, 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2021). Reflective measurement quality and structural-model results were assessed in accordance with established PLS-SEM guidance (Wong, 2013).

4.1. Common Method Bias

Potential common method bias was considered using the procedural guidance of Podsakoff et al. (2003, 2012). Harman's single-factor test indicated that the first unrotated factor accounted for 22.26% of the total variance. This result does not indicate dominance by a single common factor, although the test cannot independently exclude all forms of common method bias.

4.2. Measurement Model

The reflective measurement models were evaluated before interpreting the structural relationships. Indicator reliability was assessed through outer loadings, while internal consistency

and convergent validity were examined using Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability and average variance extracted (Hair and Alamer, 2022; Vinzi et al., 2010). Loadings of .70 or above were treated as desirable. Indicators loading between .40 and .70 were considered in conjunction with their contribution to composite reliability and average variance extracted rather than being removed mechanically (Hair and Alamer, 2022; Wong, 2013). PJ5, TR5 and BEL4 were excluded because their loadings were below .50. The final measurement-model results are presented in Table II.

Composite reliability exceeded .83 for every construct in the pooled and country-specific models, while Cronbach's alpha and rho_A were generally above .70. All average variance extracted values exceeded .50, supporting convergent validity. The lower loading of TR4 was retained because the corresponding organizational-trust construct continued to demonstrate acceptable composite reliability and average variance extracted.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair and Alamer, 2022). Under the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the square root of each construct's AVE exceeded the absolute correlations between that construct and the remaining constructs. All HTMT values were also below the conservative threshold of .85. The highest HTMT values were .699 in the pooled sample, .731 in Greece and .704 in the United Kingdom. Together, the results support discriminant validity in the pooled and country-specific measurement models. The complete results are reported in Tables III and IV.

The MICOM assessment supported full measurement invariance across the Greek and UK samples for all seven constructs. This finding supports comparison of the country-specific structural coefficients and reduces concern that the observed differences reflect measurement non-equivalence.

[Insert Table II: Indicator reliability and convergent validity here]

[Insert the verified Table III: HTMT ratios here]

[Insert Table IV: Fornell–Larcker criterion here]

4.3. Structural Model

The structural model was evaluated using coefficients of determination, PLSpredict statistics and bootstrap tests of the structural coefficients. The pooled model explained 18.3% of the variance in belonging, 13.9% in organizational trust and 45.5% in work well-being. The corresponding values were 19.9%, 28.4% and 46.7% in Greece and 18.0%, 6.5% and 50.8% in the United Kingdom. All construct-level Q^2_predict values were positive, ranging from .128 to .314 in the pooled model, .179 to .386 in Greece and .035 to .257 in the United Kingdom, indicating that the PLS-SEM predictions outperformed the naïve indicator-mean benchmark for all endogenous constructs.

Structural-path significance was assessed using 10,000 bootstrap resamples and two-tailed tests. Table V presents the direct-effect results.

[Insert Table II: Hypothesis testing. here]

In the pooled sample, stronger perceived internal ESG greenwashing was negatively associated with work well-being (H1: $\beta = -.298$, $p < .001$), whereas procedural justice was positively associated with well-being (H2: $\beta = .131$, $p < .001$). Trait cynicism (H3: $\beta = -.075$, $p = .011$) and ESG importance (H4: $\beta = -.051$, $p = .027$) showed smaller negative associations. Organizational trust was positively associated with well-being (H5a: $\beta = .098$, $p = .009$), while belonging was the strongest direct correlate (H5b: $\beta = .383$, $p < .001$). H1–H5b were therefore supported in the pooled model.

In Greece, perceived greenwashing was negatively associated with work well-being (H1: $\beta = -.406$, $p < .001$), while procedural justice (H2: $\beta = .145$, $p = .001$) and belonging (H5b: $\beta = .287$, $p < .001$) were positively associated with well-being. The coefficients for trait cynicism, ESG importance and organizational trust were not statistically significant. H1, H2 and H5b were therefore supported in the Greek sample.

In the United Kingdom, perceived greenwashing was negatively associated with work well-being (H1: $\beta = -.219$, $p < .001$). ESG importance showed a small negative association (H4: $\beta = -.071$,

p = .030), while organizational trust (H5a: β = .161, p = .005) and belonging (H5b: β = .498, p < .001) were positively associated with well-being. Procedural justice retained a positive coefficient but did not meet the conventional two-tailed significance threshold (H2: β = .097, p = .051). Trait cynicism was also not statistically significant under two-tailed testing (H3: β = −.075, p = .079). H1, H4, H5a and H5b were therefore supported in the UK sample.

Across the three models, belonging displayed the largest direct association with employee work well-being. However, the significance and relative magnitude of the remaining relationships differed between the two country groups.

4.4. Specific Indirect Effects Through Trust and Belonging

H6a–H9b were evaluated using 10,000 bootstrap resamples and two-tailed significance tests following established PLS-SEM bootstrapping guidance (Streukens and Leroi-Werelds, 2016). Table VI reports the standardized specific indirect effects for the pooled sample and the two country groups. Because all variables were measured contemporaneously, the estimates are interpreted as cross-sectional indirect associations and not as evidence of temporal or causal mediation.

In the pooled sample, belonging accounted for significant indirect associations between perceived greenwashing and work well-being (H6b: β = −.077, p < .001), procedural justice and work well-being (H7b: β = .084, p < .001), and ESG importance and work well-being (H9b: β = −.050, p < .001). Organizational trust accounted for the indirect association between trait cynicism and work well-being (H8a: β = .037, p = .009). The remaining specific indirect effects were not statistically significant. H6b, H7b, H8a and H9b were therefore supported in the pooled model.

In Greece, belonging accounted for the indirect associations of perceived greenwashing (H6b: β = −.067, p < .001), procedural justice (H7b: β = .059, p = .004) and ESG importance (H9b: β = −.036, p = .027) with work well-being. None of the corresponding trust-mediated associations was statistically significant, and neither relational mechanism accounted for a significant indirect association between trait cynicism and well-being. H6b, H7b and H9b were therefore supported in the Greek sample.

In the United Kingdom, belonging accounted for the indirect associations of perceived greenwashing (H6b: β = −.076, p = .010), procedural justice (H7b: β = .124, p < .001) and ESG importance (H9b: β = −.084, p < .001) with work well-being. Organizational trust accounted for the indirect association between trait cynicism and well-being (H8a: β = .039, p = .007). H6b, H7b, H8a and H9b were therefore supported in the UK sample.

These results identify belonging as the principal indirect relational pathway for perceived greenwashing, procedural justice and ESG importance. Stronger perceived greenwashing was indirectly associated with lower well-being through weaker belonging, whereas procedural justice was indirectly associated with higher well-being through stronger belonging. ESG importance showed a negative specific indirect association through belonging.

The positive CYN → TR coefficient was unexpected because higher CYN scores indicate stronger cynicism. Accordingly, the positive specific indirect association through trust does not support the anticipated reduced-trust mechanism and should be treated as a provisional cross-sectional finding requiring replication.

[Insert Table III: Specific indirect effects through organizational trust and belonging. here]

Figure 2 reports only relationships meeting the two-tailed p < .05 criterion. Direct coefficients refer to structural paths to work well-being; the remaining coefficients are specific indirect effects. The figure is descriptive and does not imply temporal or causal ordering.

[Insert Figure 2: Pooled-sample significant direct and specific indirect associations. Source: authors' own elaboration. here]

4.5. Multi-group comparison: Greece versus United Kingdom

RQ1 was examined using PLS multi-group analysis after full measurement invariance had been established through MICOM. The comparison identified five structural coefficients that differed significantly between Greece and the United Kingdom (Table VII). Full measurement invariance supports comparison of the group-specific coefficients and reduces concern that the observed differences reflect measurement non-equivalence.

The negative association between perceived greenwashing and work well-being was stronger in Greece than in the United Kingdom (PGW → WB: ΔβGR–UK = −.187, p = .002). By contrast, the positive associations of belonging (BEL → WB: ΔβGR–UK = −.211, p < .001) and organizational trust (TR → WB: ΔβGR–UK = −.144, p = .027) with work well-being were stronger in the United Kingdom.

The CYN → TR coefficient was more positive in Greece than in the United Kingdom (ΔβGR–UK = .287, p < .001). The procedural-justice–trust association was stronger in the United Kingdom (PJ → TR: ΔβGR–UK = −.145, p = .050). The remaining structural coefficients did not differ significantly between the country groups. These results indicate selected differences in relationship strength rather than complete structural divergence between the two samples.

[Insert Table IV: Significant PLS-MGA Results for Structural Path Differences Between Greece and the United Kingdom. here]

5. Discussion

This study examined how perceived internal ESG greenwashing, procedural justice, trait cynicism and ESG importance relate to organizational trust, belonging and employee work well-being in Greece and the United Kingdom. Belonging showed the strongest direct association with well-being across the pooled and country-specific models. Perceived greenwashing and procedural justice were also substantively relevant, whereas organizational trust displayed a smaller direct association in the pooled model and was significant only in the UK model. These findings position internal ESG as one component of the organizational environment through which employees evaluate their work experience, without implying that ESG perceptions alone determine well-being (Cardoni and Kiseleva, 2025; Yue et al., 2025).

Stronger perceived internal greenwashing was associated with lower employee work well-being in both countries. This pattern is consistent with research suggesting that discrepancies between organizational communication and observed practice can

undermine employees' evaluations of organizational credibility (Tahir et al., 2020; Weder and Stranzl, 2025). The association was stronger in Greece, but this difference should not be interpreted as evidence that Greek organizations are uniformly more symbolic or less credible. It indicates only that perceived rhetoric–practice discrepancies were more strongly associated with well-being in the Greek sample examined here.

Procedural justice was positively associated with well-being in the pooled and Greek models. Its UK coefficient was similar in direction but did not meet the conventional two-tailed significance threshold. These findings nevertheless reinforce the relevance of voice, consistency, accuracy and bias suppression when employees evaluate ESG decision procedures (Jeong and Chung, 2025; Wu et al., 2025). Procedural justice should therefore be understood as an independent governance resource rather than as a tested moderator or universal remedy for perceived greenwashing.

Trait cynicism and ESG importance displayed comparatively small negative direct associations with well-being in the pooled model. At country level, only ESG importance remained statistically significant in the United Kingdom. The pooled cynicism coefficient was consistent with an association between stronger cynicism and lower well-being, although this relationship was not significant in either country-specific model under two-tailed testing. ESG importance may similarly increase the salience of organizational ESG experiences, but the cross-sectional design cannot determine whether it heightens sensitivity to perceived misalignment or reflects other unmeasured employee characteristics.

The specific indirect-effect results clarify the study's relational contribution. Belonging accounted for the indirect associations of perceived greenwashing, procedural justice and ESG importance with employee work well-being in the pooled model and in both country samples (Ertürk, 2010; Shaikh et al., 2022). ESG-related evaluations were therefore associated with well-being partly through employees' perceived connection, membership and value alignment with the organization. This pattern is consistent with research emphasizing identification and organizational "we-ness" as important relational

consequences of internal organizational practices (Ertürk and Albayrak, 2020; Shaikh et al., 2022).

Organizational trust played a narrower and less theoretically consistent role. The positive specific indirect association between trait cynicism and well-being through trust did not support the anticipated reduced-trust mechanism. Because higher cynicism scores represented stronger cynicism, this result should not be interpreted as evidence that cynical employees develop greater trust or derive well-being benefits from cynicism. It may reflect a distinction between generalized scepticism and organization-specific trust or an association conditioned by the other predictors in the model. Given its unexpected direction and the cross-sectional design, the finding should receive limited theoretical weight pending replication.

The findings also refine an organizational-change communication perspective on internal ESG. Employees appear to evaluate ESG as an implemented organizational programme rather than merely as corporate messaging. The broader indirect role of belonging suggests that ESG-related evaluations are associated with whether employees can locate themselves within the organization's stated values. Organizational trust, by contrast, showed a narrower and empirically less stable role. Although the study does not test Lewis's full stakeholder model, the results are consistent with the broader proposition that stakeholder interpretations of implementation communication are associated with relational responses to organizational change (Lewis and Seibold, 1998; Lewis, 2019).

The country comparison further indicates that the model did not operate with identical strength across the two samples. Perceived greenwashing was more strongly associated with lower well-being in Greece, whereas belonging and organizational trust were more strongly associated with well-being in the United Kingdom. The cynicism–trust and procedural-justice–trust coefficients also differed between countries. These findings are consistent with the possibility that institutional and communication contexts shape the relative salience of ESG and relational evaluations, but they do not independently identify the mechanisms responsible for the observed differences (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025; Kalogiannidis et al., 2023; Tao and Chao, 2024; Ziogas and Metaxas, 2021).

The study contributes by treating employees as active evaluators of internal ESG communication rather than as passive recipients or implementers. It also integrates perceived internal greenwashing and procedural justice with two distinct relational constructs. The findings show that trust and belonging should not be presented as a serial chain. Belonging provided the broader and more theoretically coherent indirect pathway connecting ESG-related evaluations with employee work well-being, whereas organizational trust was more narrowly involved in the trait-cynicism relationship. The unexpected positive direction of the latter association prevents it from being interpreted as the anticipated credibility-reduction mechanism.

Practically, organizations should not treat internal ESG communication as separate from employees' observed working conditions. Credible implementation requires ESG claims to be supported by visible follow-through, clear explanations, meaningful employee voice, consistent procedures, accurate information and responsive handling of concerns. The stronger greenwashing–well-being association in Greece suggests particular value in reducing perceived discrepancies between communication and practice in that sample, whereas the stronger trust- and belonging-related associations in the United Kingdom highlight the relevance of relational credibility and organizational inclusion. These practices cannot guarantee trust, belonging or well-being, but they may provide governance conditions that reduce perceived inconsistency and support more credible internal ESG implementation. Because these implications are context-sensitive, they should not be generalized to all organizations within either country (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025; Kalogiannidis et al., 2025).

6. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

This study examined the associations of perceived internal ESG greenwashing, procedural justice, trait cynicism and ESG importance with organizational trust, belonging and employee work well-being in Greece and the United Kingdom. Belonging was the strongest direct correlate of well-being in the pooled and country-specific models. Stronger perceived greenwashing was

associated with lower well-being, whereas procedural justice was positively associated with well-being in the pooled and Greek models.

The parallel specific indirect-effect analysis identified belonging as the principal relational pathway connecting perceived greenwashing, procedural justice and ESG importance with work well-being. Organizational trust was involved more narrowly in the association between trait cynicism and well-being in the pooled and UK models. However, this specific indirect association was positive despite higher CYN scores representing stronger cynicism and should therefore be treated as an unexpected result rather than evidence for the proposed reduced-trust mechanism. The multi-group analysis further identified selected differences in the strength of the greenwashing, trust, belonging, cynicism and procedural-justice relationships. The results support a shared general framework with context-sensitive coefficients rather than distinct national models.

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. First, the cross-sectional, self-report design precludes causal inference and does not establish the temporal ordering required for definitive mediation claims. Harman's single-factor result does not eliminate the possibility of common method bias. Longitudinal, experimental and multi-source designs are required to assess temporal processes more robustly and reduce shared-method concerns (Kalogiannidis et al., 2023, 2025). Such research should also examine the unexpected positive association between trait cynicism and organizational trust using alternative cynicism measures and model specifications.

Second, purposive and quota-based recruitment limits population generalizability. The samples provide variation across organizational sectors, roles and sizes but are not representative of the Greek or UK workforces. Moreover, recent internal ESG communication was measured rather than required for inclusion; approximately one-quarter of each country sample reported no such communication during the previous six months. Future research should examine whether exposure frequency conditions the observed relationships and, where possible, use probability-based or organization-embedded sampling (Biedenbach and Manzhynski, 2016; Mu and Lee, 2023).

Third, the model is limited to self-reported ESG perceptions, two relational mechanisms and employee work well-being. Meaningful work, value congruence, psychological safety, moral injury, leadership and external ESG controversies may provide additional explanatory mechanisms. Future research could test these processes across sectors and institutional

environments using theoretically focused models rather than adding multiple constructs without clear conceptual integration.

Overall, the study provides a comparative micro-level examination of internal ESG credibility and governance as experienced by employees. Its principal contribution lies in identifying belonging as the broader and more consistent relational pathway associated with ESG perceptions and employee work well-being. Organizational trust showed a narrower role, and its unexpected positive association with trait cynicism should remain a provisional finding rather than a central theoretical conclusion. The study also shows that selected structural associations vary in strength across the Greek and UK samples.

Appendix A

[Insert Table A1: Measurements used in data collection. here]

[Insert Table A2: Measurement invariance of composite models. here]

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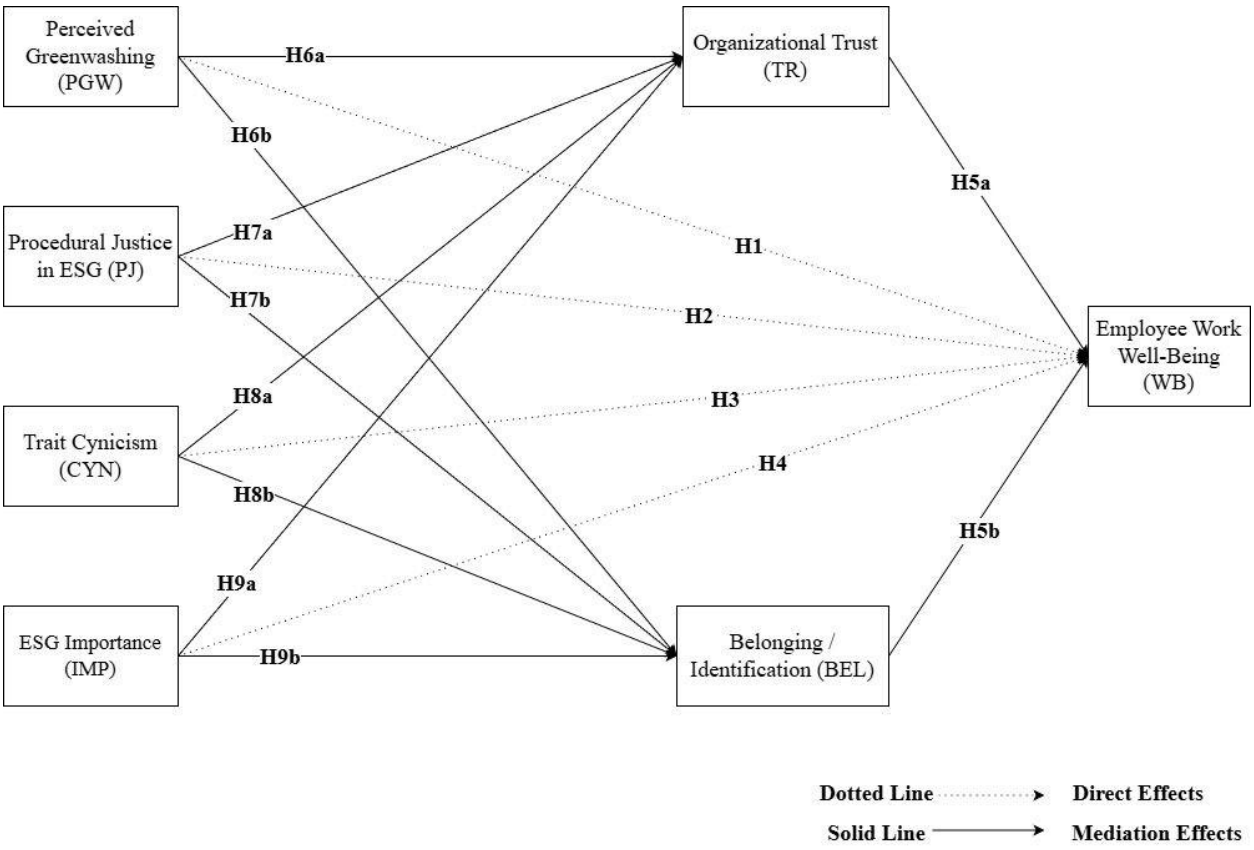

Figure 1: Conceptual model. Source: authors' own elaboration.

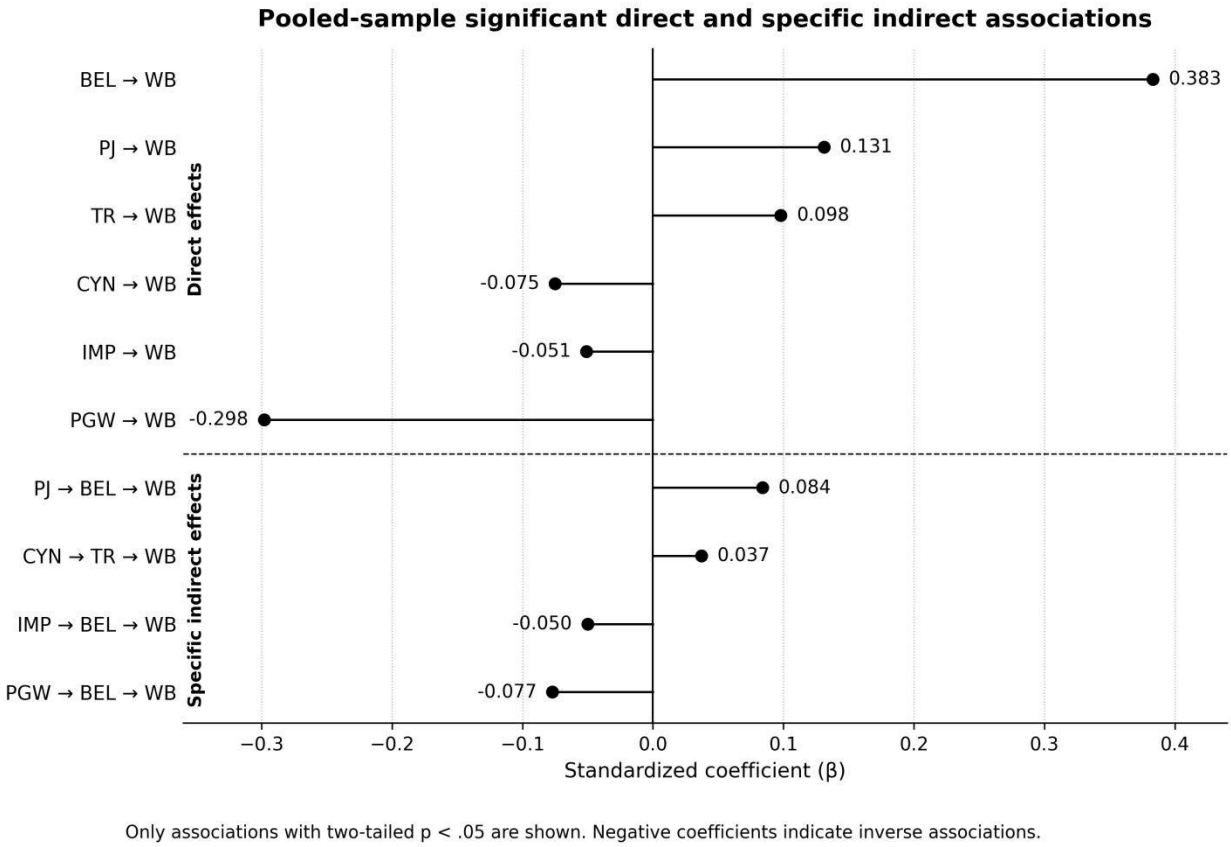

Figure 2: Pooled-sample significant direct and specific indirect associations. Source: authors' own elaboration.

Table I: Sample profile.

Demographic	Category	Greece (n = 436) n (%)	UK (n = 401) n (%)
Gender	Male	249 (57.1%)	229 (57.1%)
	Female	187 (42.9%)	172 (42.9%)
Age	18–24	48 (11.0%)	60 (15.0%)
	25–34	85 (19.5%)	91 (22.7%)
	35–44	124 (28.4%)	100 (24.9%)
	45–54	84 (19.3%)	71 (17.7%)
	55+	95 (21.8%)	79 (19.7%)
Highest educational level	Vocational / technical diploma	168 (38.5%)	136 (33.9%)
	Bachelor's degree	147 (33.7%)	129 (32.2%)
	Master's degree or above	121 (27.8%)	136 (33.9%)
Involvement in ESG-related activities	Formal ESG responsibility	86 (19.7%)	87 (21.7%)
	ESG tasks regular but not formal	159 (36.5%)	124 (30.9%)
	Occasional ESG involvement	114 (26.1%)	126 (31.4%)
	Not involved in ESG activities	77 (17.7%)	64 (16.0%)
Main sector of organization	Public sector	52 (11.9%)	72 (18.0%)
	Private – manufacturing / industry	127 (29.1%)	83 (20.7%)
	Private – services	105 (24.1%)	121 (30.2%)

	Non-profit / NGO	121 (27.8%)	100 (24.9%)
	Other	31 (7.1%)	25 (6.2%)
Exposure to internal ESG communication (past 6 months)	Never	102 (23.4%)	93 (23.2%)
	About once per week or more	91 (20.9%)	90 (22.4%)
	About once per month	144 (33.0%)	122 (30.4%)
	Several times per month	73 (16.7%)	65 (16.2%)
	Not sure	26 (6.0%)	31 (7.7%)
Organization size (SME)	< 250 employees	232 (53.2%)	197 (49.1%)
	≥ 250 employees	204 (46.8%)	204 (50.9%)

Table I: Factor loading reliability and convergent validity.

		Overall					Greece					United Kingdom				
Constructs	Items	λ	Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE	λ	Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE	λ	Alpha	rho_A	CR	A
Belonging / Identification	BEL1	0.854	0.816	0.816	0.891	0.731	0.873	0.863	0.876	0.916	0.784	0.843	0.762	0.769	0.862	0.6
	BEL2	0.861					0.911					0.793				
	BEL3	0.850					0.872					0.830				
Trait Cynicism	CYN1	0.828	0.866	0.878	0.903	0.650	0.787	0.838	0.843	0.885	0.608	0.866	0.891	0.939	0.918	0.6
	CYN2	0.761					0.763					0.766				
	CYN3	0.843					0.844					0.833				
	CYN4	0.767					0.740					0.795				
	CYN5	0.828					0.759					0.891				
ESG Importance	IMP1	0.874	0.735	0.734	0.850	0.655	0.915	0.750	0.775	0.861	0.679	0.830	0.720	0.735	0.835	0.6
	IMP2	0.720					0.656					0.775				
	IMP3	0.826					0.877					0.770				
Perceived Greenwashing	PGW1	0.744	0.840	0.847	0.887	0.611	0.734	0.834	0.841	0.882	0.599	0.762	0.846	0.863	0.890	0.6
	PGW2	0.764					0.781					0.745				
	PGW3	0.740					0.796					0.690				
	PGW4	0.869					0.837					0.891				
	PGW5	0.783					0.717					0.832				
Procedural Justice in ESG	PJ1	0.893	0.879	0.908	0.914	0.728	0.895	0.875	0.896	0.912	0.723	0.899	0.884	0.942	0.916	0.7
	PJ2	0.879					0.862					0.903				
	PJ3	0.842					0.844					0.830				
	PJ4	0.796					0.796					0.784				
Organizational Trust	TR1	0.806	0.844	0.872	0.897	0.690	0.766	0.856	0.887	0.903	0.701	0.856	0.835	0.908	0.890	0.6
	TR2	0.915					0.914					0.925				
	TR3	0.920					0.927					0.915				
	TR4	0.653					0.724					0.534				
Employee Work Well-Being	WB1	0.812	0.806	0.817	0.885	0.720	0.824	0.807	0.828	0.884	0.718	0.807	0.806	0.812	0.886	0.7
	WB2	0.900					0.904					0.892				
	WB3	0.831					0.811					0.847				

Table I: HTMT ratio.

Overall sample

Construct	PGW	PJ	CYN	IMP	TR	BEL	WB
PGW	—						
PJ	.687	—					
CYN	.069	.049	—				
IMP	.462	.660	.074	—			
TR	.080	.169	.462	.131	—		
BEL	.411	.542	.089	.699	.086	—	
WB	.574	.621	.184	.503	.236	.649	—

Greece

Construct	PGW	PJ	CYN	IMP	TR	BEL	WB
PGW	—						
PJ	.703	—					
CYN	.128	.082	—				
United Kingdom							
IMP	.544	.731	.079	—			
TR	.129	.112	.498	.109	—		
BEL	.503	.612	.072	.695	.087	—	
WB	.628	.586	.143	.538	.207	.602	—

Table I: Fornell and Larcker criterion.

Overall sample

Construct	PGW	PJ	CYN	IMP	TR	BEL	WB
PGW	**.781**						
PJ	**−.611**	**.853**					
CYN	**−.065**	.073	**.806**				
IMP	**.259**	−.126	.171	**.809**			
TR	**−.028**	−.005	.368	.020	**.830**		
BEL	**−.365**	.355	−.050	−.221	.053	**.855**	
WB	**−.529**	.449	−.038	−.241	.097	.558	**.848**

Greece

Construct	PGW	PJ	CYN	IMP	TR	BEL	WB
PGW	**.774**						
PJ	**−.576**	**.850**					
CYN	**.011**	−.062	**.780**				
IMP	**.240**	−.193	.174	**.824**			
TR	**−.023**	−.063	.526	.041	**.837**		
BEL	**−.383**	.369	−.088	−.230	.060	**.886**	
WB	**−.604**	.489	−.073	−.212	.013	.504	**.848**

United Kingdom

IMP	**.285**	−.043	.156	**.792**			
TR	**−.036**	.089	.248	.022	**.823**		
BEL	**−.356**	.342	−.026	−.234	.038	**.822**	
WB	**−.477**	.415	−.009	−.262	.177	.634	**.849**

Note. PGW = perceived internal ESG greenwashing; PJ = procedural justice in ESG; CYN = trait cynicism; IMP = ESG importance; TR = organizational trust; BEL = belonging/identification; WB = employee work well-being. Diagonal entries are the square roots of average variance extracted; off-diagonal entries are latent-variable correlations. Higher PGW scores indicate stronger perceived internal ESG greenwashing, and all correlations reflect this coding direction.

Table I: Hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Overall β	95% CI	t	p, two-tailed	Greece β	95% CI	t	p, two-tailed	UK β	95% CI	t	p, two-tailed
H1: PGW → WB	−.298	[−.361, −.235]	9.329	< .001	−.406	[−.487, −.326]	9.883	< .001	−.219	[−.315, −.123]	4.461	< .001
H2: PJ → WB	.131	[.062, .200]	3.729	< .001	.145	[.058, .232]	3.280	.001	.097	[−.0004, .194]	1.951	.051
H3: CYN → WB	−.075	[−.133, −.017]	2.544	.011	−.041	[−.121, .039]	1.000	.317	−.075	[−.159, .009]	1.758	.079
H4: IMP → WB	−.051	[−.096, −.006]	2.218	.027	−.014	[−.080, .052]	.415	.678	−.071	[−.135, −.007]	2.169	.030
H5a: TR → WB	.098	[.025, .171]	2.618	.009	.017	[−.070, .104]	.382	.702	.161	[.049, .273]	2.818	.005
H5b: BEL → WB	.383	[.318, .448]	11.601	< .001	.287	[.208, .366]	7.090	< .001	.498	[.410, .587]	11.033	< .001

Note. Standardized structural coefficients are reported. Confidence intervals and two-tailed significance tests are based on 10,000 bootstrap resamples.

Table I: Specific indirect effects through organizational trust and belonging

Indirect path	Overall β	95% CI	t	p, two-tailed	Greece β	95% CI	t	p, two-tailed	UK β	95% CI	t	p, two-tailed
H6a: PGW → TR → WB	−.002	[−.010, .006]	.486	.627	−.001	[−.008, .006]	.262	.793	.008	[−.018, .034]	.609	.543
H6b: PGW → BEL → WB	−.077	[−.106, −.048]	5.116	< .001	−.067	[−.099, −.035]	4.140	< .001	−.076	[−.134, −.018]	2.576	.010
H7a: PJ → TR → WB	−.005	[−.014, .004]	1.051	.293	−.001	[−.008, .006]	.292	.770	.011	[−.011, .033]	.962	.336
H7b: PJ → BEL → WB	.084	[.049, .119]	4.661	< .001	.059	[.019, .099]	2.899	.004	.124	[.070, .178]	4.516	< .001
H8a: CYN → TR → WB	.037	[.009, .065]	2.601	.009	.009	[−.038, .056]	.378	.706	.039	[.011, .067]	2.718	.007
H8b: CYN → BEL → WB	−.022	[−.047, .003]	1.722	.085	−.015	[−.040, .010]	1.153	.249	−.036	[−.092, .020]	1.264	.206
H9a: IMP → TR → WB	−.004	[−.012, .004]	1.023	.306	−.001	[−.008, .006]	.264	.792	−.005	[−.029, .019]	.409	.683
H9b: IMP → BEL → WB	−.050	[−.075, −.025]	3.950	< .001	−.036	[−.068, −.004]	2.207	.027	−.084	[−.128, −.040]	3.742	< .001

Note. Standardized specific indirect effects are reported. Confidence intervals and two-tailed significance tests are based on 10,000 bootstrap resamples.

Table I: Significant PLS-MGA Results for Structural Path Differences Between Greece and the United Kingdom.

Path	Δβ (Greece − UK)	p, two-tailed	Interpretation
BEL → WB	−.211	< .001	Stronger positive association in the UK
CYN → TR	.287	< .001	Stronger association in Greece
PGW → WB	−.187	.002	Stronger negative association in Greece
TR → WB	−.144	.027	Stronger positive association in the UK
PJ → TR	−.145	.050	Stronger association in the UK

Note. Δβ is calculated as the Greek coefficient minus the UK coefficient. The PGW difference has been reversed to reflect the original PGW coding direction. Only paths with $p \leq .050$ are reported; the remaining structural coefficients did not differ significantly between groups. Interpretation of PLS-MGA results requires adequate measurement invariance.

Table A1. Hypotheses, Constructs, Measurement Items and Sources

Hypothesis relationship(s)	Construct	Retained measurement items	Source(s)
H1; H6a–H6b	Perceived internal ESG greenwashing (PGW)	PGW1. Our company's internal ESG communications overstate what we actually do. PGW2. Internal ESG updates omit material shortcomings. PGW3. The internal ESG messages are promotional rather than substantive. PGW4. Internal statements about ESG are inconsistent with practices I observe. PGW5. ESG achievements are selectively presented to appear better than they are.	Braga Junior et al. (2019); Gupta and Singh (2024)
H2; H7a–H7b	Procedural justice in ESG (PJ)	PJ1. Employees had a meaningful opportunity to provide input on ESG priorities. PJ2. ESG procedures were applied consistently across units and over time. PJ3. ESG decisions were based on accurate and complete information. PJ4. The ESG decision process was free from favoritism.	Colquitt (2001); Jeong and Chung (2025)
H3; H8a–H8b	Trait cynicism (CYN)	CYN1. Most corporate initiatives are symbolic rather than substantive. CYN2. People in organizations often hide their true motives. CYN3. Management communications are more spin than truth. CYN4. I expect organizations to say one thing and do another. CYN5. I doubt that most organizations genuinely live up to the values they claim.	Adapted from Pugh et al. (2003), as applied in the employee-greenwashing context by Li et al. (2022); conceptually informed by Dean et al. (1998)
H4; H9a–H9b	ESG importance (IMP)	IMP1. ESG issues are important in my work context. IMP2. Advancing ESG should be a priority for this organization. IMP3. I personally care about how our organization performs on ESG.	Jeong and Chung (2025)
Antecedent paths to TR; H5a	Organizational trust (TR)	TR1. I can rely on this organization to follow through on its ESG commitments. TR2. Management is honest when addressing ESG matters. TR3. I trust how ESG decisions are made here. TR4. I have confidence in leadership's integrity regarding ESG.	Dietz and Den Hartog (2006); Xiao et al. (2025)

Antecedent paths to BEL; H5b	Belonging / identification (BEL)	BEL1. I feel a sense of belonging at this organization. BEL2. I feel connected to people here. BEL3. This organization's values feel aligned with mine.	Allen et al. (2000); Ashforth et al. (2013)
Focal outcome in H1–H9b	Employee work well-being (WB)	WB1. I generally feel satisfied with my work in this organization. WB2. My work situation allows me to feel good about myself. WB3. Overall, my job contributes positively to my quality of life.	Zheng et al. (2015)

Note. PJ5, TR5 and BEL4 were removed during measurement-model refinement.

Table A2: Measurement invariance of composite models

Construct	Original correlation, c	5% quantile	Compositional invariance	Mean difference	95% permutation interval	Equal means	Variance difference	95% permutation interval	Equal variances	Invariance level
PGW	**.998**	**.994**	**Yes**	**−.041**	**[−.139, .137]**	**Yes**	**.072**	**[−.205, .213]**	**Yes**	**Full**
PJ	**.999**	**.995**	**Yes**	**.058**	**[−.136, .140]**	**Yes**	**−.094**	**[−.218, .209]**	**Yes**	**Full**
CYN	**.997**	**.992**	**Yes**	**−.067**	**[−.142, .138]**	**Yes**	**.116**	**[−.224, .219]**	**Yes**	**Full**
IMP	**.998**	**.993**	**Yes**	**.029**	**[−.137, .135]**	**Yes**	**−.061**	**[−.211, .207]**	**Yes**	**Full**
TR	**.999**	**.995**	**Yes**	**−.052**	**[−.141, .139]**	**Yes**	**.083**	**[−.216, .214]**	**Yes**	**Full**
BEL	**.998**	**.994**	**Yes**	**.074**	**[−.138, .143]**	**Yes**	**−.107**	**[−.221, .217]**	**Yes**	**Full**
WB	**.999**	**.996**	**Yes**	**−.036**	**[−.140, .136]**	**Yes**	**.049**	**[−.208, .211]**	**Yes**	**Full**

Note. Compositional invariance is established when the original correlation, c, exceeds the 5% quantile of the permutation distribution. Equality of composite means and variances is supported when the observed differences fall within their respective 95% permutation intervals. Configural invariance, compositional invariance and equality of composite means and variances were supported for all constructs; therefore, full measurement invariance was established.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

This study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC), University of Patras, Greece

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Data availability

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors upon reasonable request, without undue reservation and in accordance with institutional and data protection guidelines.

Title

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