

Beyond the Social Mission: how Social Responsibility in Nonprofit Organizations may stimulate Positive Employee Outcomes.

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Building on social exchange theory and self-determination theory, this paper studies how commitment to social responsibility in nonprofit organizations (NPOs) affects their employees. Social responsibility concerns NPOs' voluntary engagement into ethical behaviour extending beyond the narrow mandate of their social mission and legal responsibilities. Given the prosocial motivation of nonprofit employees, it is argued that contributing to the well-being of stakeholders beyond the social mission by engaging in social responsibility, may result in favourable employee outcomes. The results of our study, using a sample of 1335 employees of healthcare NPOs in Flanders, confirm that social responsibility positively relates to employees' organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) as commitment to social responsibility enhances perceptions of organizational support and social impact potential among nonprofit employees. The results further indicate that the consistent display of integrity and moral values by leaders by demonstrating leadership integrity positively influences the relationship between social responsibility and OCB.

Keywords: social responsibility, organizational citizenship behaviour, leadership integrity, perceived organizational support, societal impact potential.

INTRODUCTION

Different types of organizations are increasingly expected to contribute to addressing environmental and social challenges in society (Zeimers et al., 2019). Organizations in the for-profit, nonprofit, and public sectors are responding to these expectations by implementing environmental and social initiatives (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). In the for-profit context, with the primary focus on achieving financial results, with shareholders as the primary stakeholder, this falls under corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Costa et al., 2011). CSR implies that for-profit organizations consider stakeholders' expectations and take responsibility with regard to their social and environmental impact, beyond their economic and legal responsibilities (Acar et al., 2001; Waters & Ott, 2014). In contrast, nonprofit organizations (NPOs) innately address social and/or environmental issues because of their social mission (Lin-Hi et al., 2015). Thus, NPOs inherently pay attention to CSR concepts, like stakeholder management and social performance (Pope et al., 2018). Indeed, NPOs are considered to be multi-stakeholder organizations that must address multiple, potentially conflicting, stakeholder expectations, while creating social value consistent with their social mission (Balser & McClusky, 2005; Costa et al., 2011). The non-distribution constraint, limiting how NPOs can distribute profits (Hansmann, 1980), is expected to encourage NPOs to prioritize the needs of their stakeholders (Andreini et al., 2014). However, it is argued that individual NPO social missions are often very specific, often targeting the well-being of a specific stakeholder group (Bouckaert & Vandenhove, 1998). Thus an NPO might be successful at creating social value by pursuing its social mission, but simultaneously neglect its potentially negative impact on other stakeholders and society. This could lead to socially irresponsible behaviour by NPOs (Cho et al., 2021; Gibelman & Gelman, 2004), failing to respect core nonprofit sector values, such as altruism (Gassler, 1998). However, there is a growing consensus that NPOs are responsible for their environmental and social impact beyond their social mission (Costa et al., 2011; Misener et al., 2020). Although several authors refer to CSR when describing this responsibility of NPOs

(Andreini et al., 2014; Puentes et al., 2012; Waters & Ott, 2014), others argue that the term CSR is inappropriate because NPOs are not corporations and, instead, use the term (organizational) social responsibility (Acar et al., 2001; Costa et al., 2011; Misener et al., 2020). We follow this approach and define social responsibility as the NPO's voluntary engagement into ethical behaviour that extends beyond the narrow mandate of its social mission and legal responsibilities (Costa et al., 2011; Misener et al., 2020). Harnessing social responsibility in NPOs calls for incorporating practices that do not just aid the well-being and development of their employees and help in operating more transparently, but also promote social change and protection of the natural environment alongside involvement in social campaigns and projects that aid disadvantaged groups (Kagan, 2023; Păceșilă & Colesca, 2020).

Aligned with the growing attention for social responsibility in NPOs, this study answers calls to investigate how social responsibility may give rise to favourable employee outcomes in NPOs (Cabrera-Luján et al., 2023; Pope et al., 2018). Compared to counterparts in for-profit organisations, nonprofit employees innately have a higher degree of prosocial motivation (Bassous, 2015; Jeworrek & Mertins, 2022). With this desire to help others, nonprofit employees are motivated by the social mission of their NPO (De Cooman et al., 2011), resulting in positive employee outcomes ranging from job satisfaction (Lee, 2016) to higher employee performance (Smith, 2016). However, beyond contributing to the well-being of a specific stakeholder group by pursuing the social mission, there are indications that contributing to the well-being of other stakeholders and society may also motivate nonprofit employees (Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Wang, 2022; Winter & Thaler, 2016). As the latter refers to the social responsibility of NPOs, this study aims to study the relationship between NPOs' social responsibility and employee outcomes.

Specifically, we examine the relationship between the social responsibility of NPOs and their employees' organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). OCB refers to the employee's discretionary behaviour beyond formal work obligations, including voluntary

cooperation and assistance to the work need of others within the organization (Ocampo et al., 2018). OCB within NPOs is especially relevant because NPOs are involved in work that is collectively oriented, relying greatly on individuals' voluntary cooperation and assistance to the working needs of colleagues in order to reach their goals (Zhang et al., 2020). Additionally, OCB is inherently related to the connection of the employee to the mission and values of NPOs, because of its conceptualization that emphasizes reciprocity between employees in cooperating and providing assistance among employees (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019). Moreover, it is an important source for improving the quality of work (Aboramadan et al., 2022).

We adopt a multi-theory perspective to uncover mechanisms through which social responsibility relates to OCB. (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). Specifically, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which is expected to be highly relevant in a nonprofit context (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019), explains how social responsibility may entail OCB in NPOs. Furthermore, notions of psychological needs within self-determination theory (SDT) are thought to justify the inclusion of mediating mechanisms of perceived organizational support and societal impact potential (Deci et al., 2017). Perceived organizational support refers to the NPO valuing its employees contribution and caring about their well-being (Rhoades et al., 2001), while social impact potential refers to the extent to which employees perceive their actions to make a meaningful contribution to society (Van Loon et al., 2018). Finally, we adopt principles of the cue consistency theory (Anderson, 1981) to provide rationale for the inclusion of leadership integrity as a boundary condition. Leadership integrity refers to the extent to which a leader has moral integrity and consistently acts on moral values across situations (Moorman et al., 2012). Specifically such that, when the NPO pays attention to social responsibility and employees identify that their leader exhibits integrity, employees perceive alignment regarding the moral behaviour of both the leader and the organization in showing social responsibility behaviour. Therefore, we expect that, in this case, the relationship between social responsibility

and OCB is strengthened. The developed conceptual model is tested using data from 1335 employees from healthcare NPOs in Flanders, Belgium.

This study contributes to the nonprofit literature by answering the calls to study the effect of social responsibility in a nonprofit context, providing both scholars and practitioners a better understanding of the benefits outside the context of for-profit organizations (Costa et al., 2011; Lin-Hi et al., 2015; Waters & Ott, 2014). Extensive research demonstrates how contributing to the NPO's social mission may positively affect its employees, as this fits with their prosocial motivation (Jeworrek & Mertins, 2022; Lee, 2016; Smith, 2016). Although it is expected that, given the prosocial motivation of nonprofit employees, socially responsible behaviour by NPOs beyond their social mission may also result in positive employees outcomes (Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Winter & Thaler, 2016), research on this topic is still limited. This study fills this research gap by analysing how and when NPO social responsibility may lead to OCB among their employees.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

In this section, we examine how social responsibility in NPOs relates to OCB of their employees and how leadership integrity affects this relationship. Additionally, the roles of perceived organizational support and societal impact potential are explored. Figure 1 summarizes the conceptual model and serves as a guide throughout the following sections.

< FIGURE 1 >

The relationship between social responsibility and OCB

OCB refers to the discretionary behaviour of employees beyond their formal work obligations (Ong et al., 2018) and is linked to various beneficial employee outcomes (Afridi et al., 2020). Social exchange theory predicts that, in reaction to positive initiating actions, kind and engaging behaviour is shown as form of normative response (Aboramadan et al., 2022).

Specifically, in nonprofit contexts, social exchange theory is argued to be relevant. If NPOs demonstrate behaviour consistent with their employees' prosocial motivation, it is expected that employees will develop a reciprocal obligation, like demonstrating OCB (Akingbola, 2013). Given that nonprofit employees, with their prosocial motivation, value actions that benefit society and stakeholder groups other than the beneficiaries of the NPO (Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Wang, 2022; Winter & Thaler, 2016), we expect that if an NPO goes beyond achieving its social mission and legal minima by engaging in socially responsible activities (for instance to protect the natural environment or support disadvantaged groups in society), employees will reciprocate by willingly going above and beyond their primary job requirements, engaging in extra-role and discretionary behaviours (Afridi et al., 2020). As this notion is further underlined by Aboramadan et al. (2022) and Akingbola and van den Berg (2019), who argue that nonprofit employees reciprocate such ethical principles and actions by displaying OCB, we propose:

Hypothesis 1: Social responsibility is positively related to OCB.

Social responsibility and OCB: the role of perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support reflects the degree to which employees feel valued for their organizational contributions and feel cared for (Gillet et al., 2013). Relying on self-determination theory (SDT), this study argues for social responsibility to indirectly affect OCB through perceived organizational support. SDT suggests that employees' behaviours and attitudes are affected by the motivation they have for their job activities, where fulfilment of psychological needs is key to harnessing employee motivation (Deci et al., 2017). Basic psychological needs can be summarised under autonomy ("acting with a sense of volition and choice"), competence ("feeling effective in one's interactions with the social environment"),

relatedness (a sense of “connection and belongingness to groups, communities, or organizations”) (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 7), and beneficence (having a subjective sense of making a positive contribution to others) (Martela & Ryan, 2016).

Because social responsibility implies that NPOs take into account the impact of their actions on various stakeholder groups (Pope et al., 2018), in which employees are generally considered an important stakeholder group (Fu et al., 2023; Wellens & Jegers, 2014), it can be considered a managerial approach to the organization’s human resources (Gould-Williams, 2016). Accordingly, organizations foster the well-being of employees when considering social responsibility (Lin-Hi et al., 2015; Waters & Ott, 2014). NPOs can, for instance, do so by offering developmental opportunities, thereby satisfying employees’ basic need for competence (Bidee et al., 2013; Wellens & Jegers, 2014), as employees are found to feel more effective within their work environment when offered the opportunity to develop their skills (Battaglio et al., 2022). Furthermore, social responsibility in NPOs can also satisfy the need for autonomy through employee participation regarding, for instance, empowerment at the workplace to take a broader and more independent perspective on performing the organizational tasks (Fu et al., 2023; Wellens & Jegers, 2014). According to SDT, fulfilment of these basic psychological needs fosters an organizational climate that is perceived supportive (Pak et al., 2019).

Thus, when employees perceive their organization to exhibit social responsibility, employees’ psychological needs of competence and autonomy are fostered. Consequently, cherishing social responsibility grants nonprofit employees the perception of a supportive organizational climate, in which the organization actively provides the employee with requirements to thrive (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019). In turn, organizational support is found to be an important predictor of favourable employee outcomes in NPOs (Knapp et al., 2017). Consistent with this notion, a strong positive relationship between perceived organizational support and OCB is found in previous studies (Gupta et al., 2016). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Social responsibility is positively related to OCB, through perceived organizational support.

Social responsibility and OCB: the role of societal impact potential

Like employees as stakeholders, social responsibility in NPOs also takes into account the impact of the organizational processes on stakeholder groups outside the organization, such as local communities and the natural environment. Consequently, social responsibility allows NPOs to potentially provide a meaningful contribution to society that extends beyond their social mission (Lin-Hi et al., 2015). Again, integrating notions of SDT, the argument can be made that the societal impact potential (i.e., the extent to which the job provides opportunities to contribute to society) (Leisink & Steijn, 2009) may act as proxy for the extent to which NPOs succeed in satisfying their employees' need for relatedness and beneficence (Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Winter & Thaler, 2016), where perceived failure to impact society is even considered as detrimental for employee outcomes (Van Loon et al., 2018). Indeed, NPOs' social responsibility may connect their employees to external groups, communities, and organizations (i.e., relatedness) (Deci & Ryan, 2002), as well as provide them with opportunities to make positive contributions to others in need (i.e., beneficence) (Martela & Ryan, 2016). Experiencing the potential to impact the broader society is postulated to increase OCB among nonprofit employees (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019). Thus, through means of relatedness and beneficence, social responsibility makes nonprofit employees aware of the impact they can exercise on others. This form of self-persuasion forms the means through which social responsibility may stimulate them to go the extra mile by demonstrating OCB (Ong et al., 2018; Van Schie et al., 2015). Therefore we propose this hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Social responsibility is positively related to OCB, through societal impact potential.

The moderating role of leadership integrity in the relationship between social responsibility and OCB

Certain leadership styles are found to be relevant when fostering OCB (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Ehrhart, 2004) and are also associated with studies linking social responsibility and OCB (Ebener & O'Connell, 2010; Tourigny et al., 2019). However, it largely remains in the dark what role specific leadership traits play (Al-Shammari et al., 2019; Tourigny et al., 2019). In particular, this study examines the conditional influence of perceived leadership integrity, where leadership integrity reflects the extent to which a leader has moral integrity and consistently acts on moral values across situations (Moorman et al., 2012). The consistent display of integrity and moral values will reduce employees' uncertainty about the NPO, thus perceiving the NPO as accountable and reliable (Balser & McClusky, 2005). Therefore, based on cue consistency theory (Anderson, 1981), leadership integrity is expected to moderate the relationship between social responsibility and OCB in NPOs. Namely, when multiple sources or cues of information about a social actor or entity are consistent, individuals will linearly integrate these, where the values of cues are added and averaged together to form desirable outcomes (Anderson, 1981). However, when an organization is considered as just in its rationale, but acts in ways that are not aligned with such principles (i.e., perceiving contrasting cues), employees' reactions to cues can be affected negatively (Balser & McClusky, 2005; Ilsev et al., 2023) as word-deed alignment is crucial (Simons, 2002). Thus, because of consistent integration of moral values of leadership integrity and social responsibility in NPOs, we expect leadership integrity to positively moderate the relationship between social responsibility and OCB. Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between social responsibility and OCB is positively moderated by leadership integrity.

METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

To test our conceptual model, we collected data from employees of healthcare NPOs in Flanders (Belgium). We consider healthcare NPOs as a suitable research context because of the mission-driven identity of these organizations and their potential for involvement in socially responsible behaviour (Jamali et al., 2010; Russo, 2016). Social responsibility in healthcare NPOs includes, among others, paying attention to the environmental impact, the needs of the local community and the broader society, as well as the well-being and developmental needs of healthcare employees (Russo, 2016). Specifically, the congruence between the social responsibility initiatives of the healthcare NPOs and the prosocial motivation of their employees may positively affect the employees (Lee, 2016), who have to deal with a stressful work environment and increasing work pressure (Tomaselli et al., 2018).

A structured survey was developed in Qualtrics. Nine research assistants were engaged in collecting the data. As feedback collected during the development of the survey demonstrated that it was not completely clear which organizations comprise the healthcare nonprofit sector, we decided to target employees of nonprofit hospitals (including general, revalidation and psychiatric hospitals) and nonprofit elderly care organizations. In Flanders, these organizations employ approximately 190,000 employees in 2020 (Malfait, 2020). A priori power analysis (with a significance criterion of $\alpha = 0.05$ and power = 0.80) indicates that a sample of 240 employees would suffice to analyse our conceptual model (Cohen et al., 2013),

whereas a post hoc power analysis demonstrates that we obtained power greater than 99.99% to reject a wrong model (Moshagen & Erdfelder, 2016). The research assistants collected data by distributing a cover letter including the link to the survey through social media and through contacts in hospitals and elderly care organizations. The cover letter contained information on the purpose of the study and on who exactly could complete the survey (i.e. employees of the above mentioned type of organizations).

Between November 2019 and February 2020, the online survey was completed by 1335 respondents. Respondents averaged 41 years old ($SD = 12.217$, range 17-68) with an average tenure of 13 years ($SD = 11.308$, range 0-52). The sample comprised 88% women, which is in line with the majority (79%) of employees in this sector being female (Statbel, 2020). About 75% of the participants reported having a higher vocational education or attained a university degree.

Measures

All constructs in this study are derived from previous research and are measured using a 7-point Likert type scale (ranging from 1: strongly disagree to 7: strongly agree). Factor loadings lower than 0.5 were removed to ensure scales' validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2010). Table A in the supplementary materials provides an overview of the study's constructs, items, and item factor loadings.

Dependent variable

OCB was measured using the scale of Zhao et al. (2014). Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent employees perceived themselves as voluntarily committed to their organization and to carry out beneficial behaviour that is not required of employees.

Independent variables

Social responsibility was measured using the scale of Farooq et al. (2014), measuring the perception of the organization's social responsibility on four dimensions, namely targeting

employees, the natural environment, the local community, and clients/patients. CFA confirmed the higher-order structure of this scale. Perceived organizational support was measured using the scale of Rhoades et al. (2001), asking respondents how their organization values their contributions and cares for their well-being. Societal impact potential was measured using the scale developed by Van Loon et al. (2015). Their scale measures the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to society. Leadership integrity was measured using the leadership integrity scale of Moorman et al. (2012), enquiring respondents' perception of their supervisor's integrity. CFA confirmed the higher-order structure of this scale.

Control variables

Four demographic variables were included in the research model as control variables based on their relevance in prior studies examining OCB and social responsibility (Ong et al., 2018). Age was measured in years and was included because older people are found to be more likely to exhibit OCB (Ocampo et al., 2018). Gender was measured using a man/woman construct (man = 0, woman = 1). Nevertheless, no consensus exists on whom exhibits more OCB (Ocampo et al., 2018). Tenure was also measured in years, where job longevity establishes a sense of belonging within the organization that sparks a willingness to exercise OCB (Ng & Feldman, 2011). Lastly, education was measured using two categories: 'primary education and high school' (coded as 0), and 'higher education: higher vocational education or higher education: university' (coded as 1). Higher levels of education were previously found to increase positive attitudinal and behavioural consequences of social responsibility (Rosati et al., 2018).

Common method bias

To minimize the risk of common method bias (CMB), we followed the recommendations of Podsakoff et al. (2012). We encouraged respondents to provide accurate and honest responses, the survey was pretested, anonymity guaranteed, and used a detailed cover letter. Furthermore,

items were highlighted to improve clarity and response options were labelled. Items related to the mediators, moderator, and dependent variables were separated in the questionnaire (i.e., through other items, buffer items, and a cover story) to create both psychological and proximal separation. A common latent factor model was estimated that indicated no problematic values (> 0.200) when calculating the difference between standardized regression weights of the common latent factor model and the measurement model (Cohen, 1988).

RESULTS

Data analysis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to investigate the relations between the study's variables, since SEM allows to test multiple hypothesized pathways simultaneously between latent variables. Specifically, the package Lavaan (Rosseel, 2012) was used.

Univariate and bivariate analyses

Table 1 provides insights into the variable's descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's alpha values. No problematic correlations (> 0.8) are observed between the listed variables (Field, 2009) and Cronbach's alpha values are deemed sufficient (> 0.7) (Hair et al., 2010).

< TABLE 1 >

Multivariate analyses

Conducting SEM involves two consecutive steps. First, we assess the fit of the measurement model to the data by using a CFA. Second, we estimate the relationships between the constructs through a structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Both models are analysed using

maximum likelihood estimation (MLM) with robust standard errors and a Satorra-Bentler scaled test statistic (Bentler, 1983; Rosseel, 2012). Bootstrapping (5000 bootstrapped covariance matrices) is used to determine the significance of the mediation effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). If the 95% confidence interval does not contain zero, the indirect effect is regarded as significant (Hayes, 2012).

Step 1. The Measurement Model.

The validity of the different constructs is assessed simultaneously in one CFA. The fit indices (thresholds are listed between brackets) indicate that the developed model captures the pattern of relationships found in the data adequately (Hair et al., 2010): $\chi^2=3658.985$, $p < 0.001$, $df=1017$, $\chi^2/df= 3.598 (<5)$, with $TLI = 0.908 (\geq 0.90)$, $CFI = 0.911 (\geq 0.90)$, $RMSEA = 0.059 (< 0.07)$, and $SRMR = 0.058 (< 0.08)$. The loading of each remaining factor is significantly different from zero and nontrivial (absolute standardized loadings [0.500, 0.978]), while the average factor loading has a significant size (Average $\lambda = 0.784$) (Hair et al., 2010).

Step 2. The Structural Model.

Next , we estimate the relationships between the constructs by means of a structural model, depicting the significance and strength of each of the hypothesized relationships. The developed model has an appropriate fit (Hair et al., 2010): $\chi^2=3940.571$, $p < 0.001$, $df =1195$, $\chi^2/df = 3.298 (<5)$, with $TLI = 0.907 (\geq 0.90)$, $CFI = 0.912 (\geq 0.90)$, $RMSEA = 0.054 (< 0.07)$, and $SRMR = 0.075 (< 0.08)$.

Table 2 displays the unstandardized coefficients and the significance of the relationships within the estimated model.

< TABLE 2 >

The results in Model 1 indicate a significant positive relationship between social responsibility and OCB ($B = 0.221$, $p < 0.001$), therefore we can accept hypothesis 1. Next, in Model 2, social responsibility is found to positively relate to perceived organizational support ($B = 1.270$, $p = < 0.001$), whereas, in Model 4, perceived organizational support is positively

related to OCB ($B = 0.156, p = 0.024$). Taken together, the indirect relationship between social responsibility and OCB, via perceived organizational support is significant ($B = 0.198, 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.025 ; 0.370]$), providing support for hypothesis 2. Likewise, findings in Model 3 indicate that social responsibility is positively related to societal impact potential ($B = 0.453, p = < 0.001$), which in turn is positively related to OCB ($B = 0.243, p = < 0.001$), as demonstrated in Model 4. The indirect relationship between social responsibility and OCB, via societal impact potential, is significant ($B = 0.110, 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.071 ; 0.149]$), supporting hypothesis 3. Finally, the moderating effect of leadership integrity on the relationship between social responsibility and OCB is tested. As the moderation coefficient is found to be positive and significant ($B = 0.058, p < 0.001$), hypothesis 4 is supported.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Contrary to the for-profit context, NPOs address social and/or environmental concerns by default through their primary social mission (Lin-Hi et al., 2015). However, the social mission often targets a specific beneficiary stakeholder. Thus, achieving the social mission, by definition, does not consider the NPO's impact on other stakeholders, which may even lead to socially irresponsible behaviour (Bouckaert & Vandenhove, 1998). Therefore, it is argued that nonprofit organizations are responsible for their social and environmental impact beyond their social mission (Costa et al., 2011). In line with this, social responsibility reflects the extent to which NPOs voluntarily engage in ethical behaviour that extends beyond the narrow mandate of their social mission and legal responsibilities (Misener et al., 2020). Social responsibility in NPOs concerns, among others, the well-being and development of their employees, protection of the natural environment and involvement in social campaigns and projects that aid disadvantaged groups (Waters & Ott, 2014).

However, research on the impact of social responsibility in NPOs is scarce. By portraying that social responsibility can foster desirable attitudinal and behavioural outcomes among employees in NPOs, this study demonstrates that NPOs may benefit from committing to social responsibility (Pope et al., 2018). Specifically, the results reveal that, in NPOs committed to social responsibility, employees may feel the desire to reciprocate (Aboramadan et al., 2022) and pay it forward (Helliwell et al., 2018) by carrying out OCB as a mutually beneficial outcome (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019). Furthermore, our findings indicate that the positive relationship between social responsibility and OCB can be explained by two mediating mechanisms. First, when nonprofit employees perceive their organization to exhibit social responsibility, it may cater to their interest, by satisfying the basic psychological needs for autonomy and competence (Deci et al., 2017). Doing so fosters a supportive organizational climate, which signals employees that they are valued (Knapp et al., 2017). In turn, employees may experience some form of moral responsibility to reciprocate such signals to their organization by demonstrating OCB as favourable behaviour. Second, when NPOs pay attention to social responsibility, their employees feel enabled in contributing to society by means of having a societal impact. Being able to provide a meaningful contribution to society encourages employees to care about their jobs and to become aware of their significance to those who require their service (Vandenabeele, 2014), thus improving their motivation and efforts (Leisink & Steijn, 2009). Consequently, employees may foster OCB as a reciprocal response, in which employees are willing to go the extra mile. Finally, the study results demonstrate that alignment between NPOs' social responsibility and leadership integrity is important to achieve desirable outcomes among their employees. Specifically, it is found that leadership integrity positively moderates the relationship between social responsibility and OCB.

Our study results contribute to the nonprofit literature and have also implications for practice. Existing research extensively demonstrates that nonprofit employees are

characterized by high levels of prosocial motivation, which motivates them to contribute to the social mission of the NPO (Jeworrek & Mertins, 2022). If NPOs demonstrate socially responsible behaviour beyond their social mission, this may also be valued by employees as social responsibility fits with their prosocial motivation (Smith, 2016; Winter & Thaler, 2016), but research on this topic is scarce. Our study contributes by revealing that nonprofit employees reciprocate social responsibility by demonstrating OCB. For practice this implies that when NPOs take social responsibility initiatives, it is important that they inform their employees about these initiatives and act accordingly as awareness of and positive perceptions about the NPO's social responsibility among employees are crucial to achieve positive employee outcomes.

This research also has implications for stakeholder management within the nonprofit context. Nonprofits are considered to be multi-stakeholder organisations that face the challenge of gaining legitimacy by meeting the possibly conflicting stakeholders expectations (Balser & McClusky, 2005). The increasing expectation that different types of organisations must contribute to addressing environmental and social challenges (Zeimers et al., 2019) may change the expectations of important nonprofit stakeholder groups, such as governments, private donors, beneficiaries, and volunteers (Wellens & Jegers, 2014). Therefore, it might be interesting to study how various stakeholders evaluate the attention for social responsibility in NPOs. Specifically, it might be interesting to gain insights into the effects of social responsibility on stakeholders other than employees. For instance, does attention for social responsibility in NPOs attract and motivate volunteers? May social responsibility positively influence funding decisions by governments or private funders? In the same vein, it might be interesting to study how lack of social responsibility or social irresponsibility by NPOs may affect stakeholders. For NPOs this might be highly relevant as this may violate expectations toward NPOs with potential negative outcomes (Cho et al., 2021; Ilsev et al., 2023).

Although our study demonstrates that social responsibility positively affects employees and although there are indications that social responsibility may also positively affect other stakeholders (Misener et al., 2020; Puentes et al., 2012), for NPOs social responsibility implies that it expands the group of stakeholders that nonprofits are expected to take into account. Indeed, the natural environment and wider society, for example, are usually not considered as key stakeholders (Wellens & Jegers, 2014). Thus, it might be challenging to address expectations in terms of social responsibility in addition to the existing challenges related to meeting stakeholder expectations.

Finally, despite measures to reduce constraints, our study has a number of limitations that should be mentioned and offer opportunities for future research. First, all NPOs and their employees were situated in nonprofit healthcare in Flanders, Belgium, and results may therefore differ to those in other nonprofit sectors or other regions or countries. To an extent, the cross-sectional nature of this study precludes strong claims of causality. However, the aim of this study is not to express causality of social responsibility in NPOs, but to provide new grounds of research and practical implications as to why social responsibility is important within the nonprofit context. Additionally, even though it is justified as measurement method when the independent and dependent variables capture the employees' perceptions, beliefs and feelings, single source data must be used and interpreted with caution (Podsakoff et al., 2012). To tackle some of these methodological limitations, future research could use multi-source data (for instance, involving the supervisor to evaluate an employee's behaviour) or could include more objective outcome(s), rather than perceptions and attitudes. Thereby, future research endeavours could integrate contextual variables and take on a multi-level approach, by including variables at the team and/or organizational levels, such as the embeddedness of social responsibility in the mission of NPOs (Zeemering, 2018).

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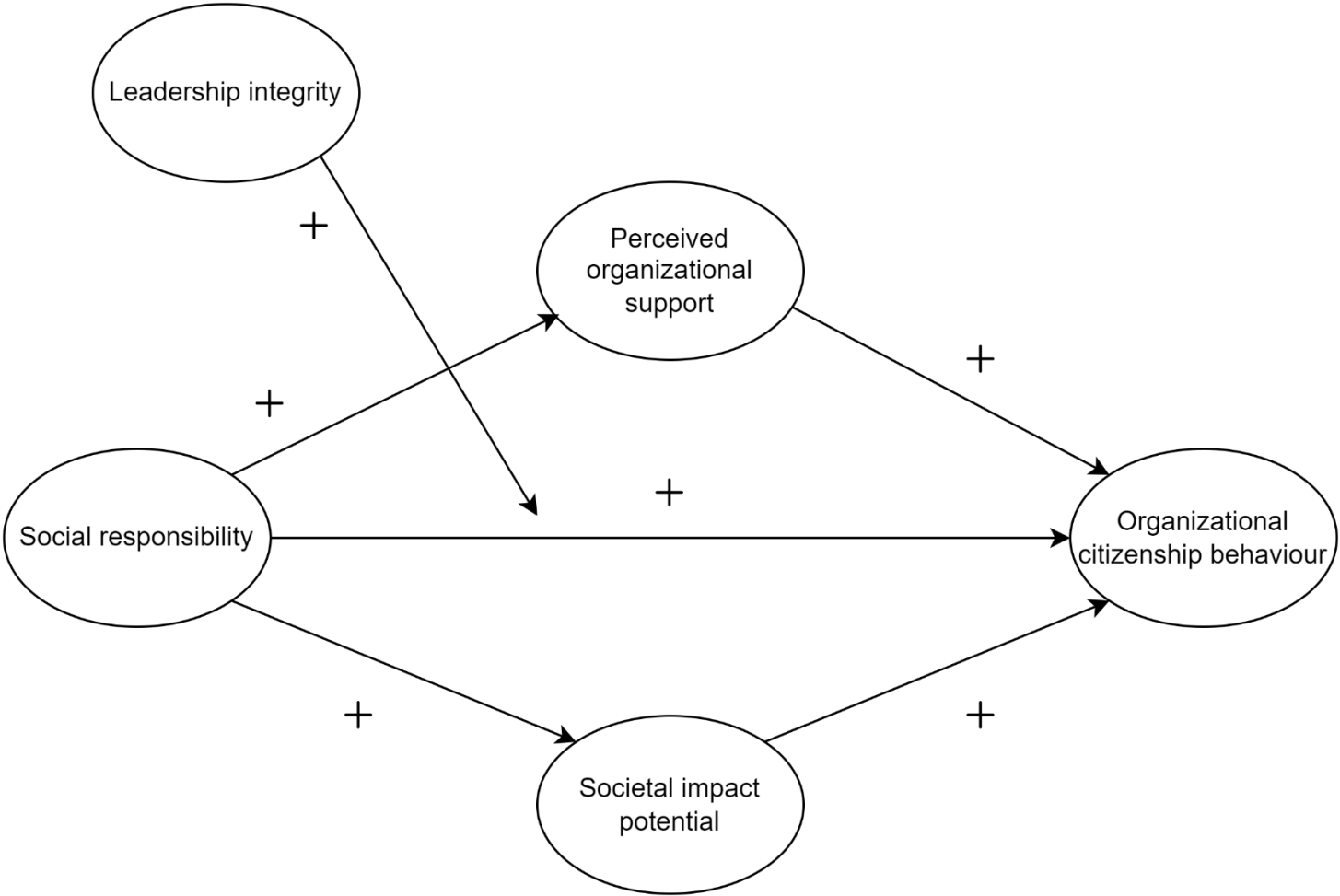
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Figure 1: Conceptual model



Control variables: Age, gender, tenure and educational level.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Cronbach's alphas.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. OCB	5.707	0.778	(0.839)								
2. Social responsibility	4.780	0.936	0.243***	(0.913)							
3. Perceived org. support	4.754	1.175	0.283***	0.743***	(0.914)						
4. Societal impact potential	5.291	1.072	0.396***	0.343***	0.325***	(0.822)					
5. Leadership integrity	5.113	1.284	0.429***	0.525***	0.640***	0.407***	(0.973)				
6. Gender†	-	-	0.046	-0.056*	-0.045	0.013	0.034	-			
7. Age	40.546	12.217	0.060*	-0.052	-0.096***	-0.049	-0.027	-0.019	-		
8. Tenure	12.779	11.308	0.085**	-0.007	-0.050	0.002	0.048	-0.007	0.713***	-	
9. Level of education‡	-	-	0.120***	0.061*	0.030	0.089***	0.116***	-0.054*	-0.111***	-0.038	-

If applicable, Cronbach's alphas are reported on the diagonal in parentheses.

M = mean, SD = standard deviation.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

†Gender is dummy coded as 0 = man, 1 = woman

‡level of education is dummy coded as 0 = no higher education, 1 = higher vocational education or university.

Table 2: Unstandardized coefficients

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	OCB		Perceived organizational support		Societal impact potential		OCB	
	B	<i>p</i>	B	<i>p</i>	B	<i>p</i>	B	<i>p</i>
	(SE)		(SE)		(SE)		(SE)	
Gender†	0.102 (0.069)	0.140	-0.056 (0.067)	0.403	0.090 (0.107)	0.400	0.082 (0.063)	0.193
Age	0.003 (0.003)	0.261	-0.007 (0.003)	0.027	-0.004 (0.004)	0.375	0.004 (0.002)	0.056
Tenure	0.005 (0.003)	0.094	-0.001 (0.003)	0.810	0.005 (0.004)	0.203	0.003 (0.002)	0.197
Level of education‡	0.079 (0.035)	0.023	-0.026 (0.038)	0.494	0.121 (0.066)	0.029	0.052 (0.044)	0.091
Social responsibility (X)	0.221 (0.028)	< 0.001	1.270 (0.070)	< 0.001	0.453 (0.049)	< 0.001	-0.088 (0.097)	0.360
Perceived organizational support (M ¹)							0.156 (0.069)	0.024
Societal impact potential (M ²)							0.243 (0.034)	< 0.001
R ²	0.119		0.842		0.158		0.256	
Indirect effect	X → M ¹ → Y		B = 0.198, SE = 0.088, 95% CI = [0.025 ; 0.370]					
	X → M ² → Y		B = 0.110, SE = .020, 95% CI = [0.071 ; 0.149]					
Interaction effect	Leadership integrity * Social responsibility		0.058 (p < 0.001)					

B = unstandardized coefficient, SE = standard error.

†Gender is dummy coded as 0 = man, 1 = woman.

‡Level of education is dummy coded as 0 = no higher education, 1 = higher vocational education or university education.

95% CI = 95% bias-corrected bootstrap interval (5000 samples).