

# To do is to be: workplace design to support employee prosocial motivation at the organizational frontline

European Journal  
of Marketing

175

Steven W. Rayburn

*Department of Marketing, Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas, USA*

Luis García-Tello

*Department of Marketing and Service, Universidad de Piura, Lima, Peru*

Sidney Anderson

*Department of Marketing, Texas State University,  
San Marcos, Texas, USA*

Alejandro Fontana

*Department of Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics,  
PAD Escuela de Direccion, Universidad de Piura, Lima, Peru, and*

Jeremy J. Sierra

*Department of Marketing, Texas State University,  
San Marcos, Texas, USA*

Received 27 February 2025

Revised 8 September 2025

29 December 2025

Accepted 2 February 2026

## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study is to explore specific job design elements and internal branding initiatives that promote prosocial motivation.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Self-report data were collected for three studies across three disparate contexts: a cooler manufacturer in a southern US state, a hotel chain in Latin America and a business-to-business construction services company in Latin America. Replication with extension is used to evaluate the theoretical and organizational-model derived hypotheses.

**Findings** – This research uncovers a path to increased prosocial motivation for frontline employees through work design that promotes activities that reflect individual prosociality and establishes internal connections among the workforce. This finding supports the approach to influencing the internalization of relevant attitudes and motivations proposed in self-perception theory and the importance of social connection according to social identity theory.

**Research limitations/implications** – This research rests on the anthropological model approach to work design; yet it is not possible to consider all work design levers in one model. Although psychometrically sound, a two-item measure of feedback was used, which may have limited identification of specific prosocial or ethical climate-based feedback.



© Steven W. Rayburn, Luis García-Tello, Sidney Anderson, Alejandro Fontana and Jeremy J. Sierra. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/>

European Journal of Marketing  
Vol. 60 No. 13, 2026  
pp. 175-201  
Emerald Publishing Limited  
0309-0566  
DOI 10.1108/EJM-02-2025-0166

**Practical implications** – Organizations should be designed to facilitate individuals serving and helping others. This internal branding initiative fulfills employees' transcendence motives.

**Social implications** – Prosocial motivation within organizations is showcased in coworker or customer helping behaviors. By training employees accordingly, firms can make this motivation instinctive and, thus, create an environment where employees put others' needs in front of their own.

**Originality/value** – Rooted in the anthropological model and leaning on self-perception and social identity theories to explain internal processes, a work design model is proposed and tested across three studies that reveals specific levers managers can manipulate to facilitate employees' prosocial motivation.

**Keywords** Internal branding, Prosocial motivation, Organizational frontline research, Anthropological model, Work design, Work climate

**Paper type** Research paper

### **To do is to be: workplace design to support employee prosocial motivation at the organizational frontline**

*Excellence is an art won by training and habituation....we are what we repeatedly do*

– Will Durant.

Service organizations have a need to develop their employees holistically in and through their work. This is especially relevant as services increasingly dominate the global economy, requiring more employees to work at the organizational frontline. In this position, they have an outsized role in making sure customers are satisfied and that the organization's brand is depicted in a positive light. Accordingly, the importance of the experiences and behaviors of employees at the organizational frontline is driving more contemporary research streams (Singh *et al.*, 2017). However, many service organizations neglect key components of what workers need supported, their ethical and even spiritual motivations, as well as their well-being (Guillén *et al.*, 2015). One specific facet of this disregard according to the anthropological model, applied in this research, is individuals' need for transcendence, a core motive to serve and fulfill other's needs and to help others grow and learn (Pérez López, 1974, 2014). In this vein, serving others is a predominant worthwhile quest; therefore, organizations should be designed to facilitate individuals serving and helping others, thereby boosting employees' transcendence motives (Ferreiro and Alcázar, 2013).

Germane to co-branding initiatives (Ilicic *et al.*, 2019) and customers' brand experiences (Xiong and King, 2015), transcendence motives are readily discussed in organizational literature as general prosociality. Prosociality is a deep-level internal drive to help others, which enables large-scale collaboration across communities and cultures (Henrich, 2004). Prosocial motivation, for the individual, is a context dependent desire to help others within that context (Grant, 2007), such that firms whose social norms or culture is grounded in helping others are more likely to bolster their employee's prosocial motivation, than firms whose "helping hand" initiatives are paltry (Labroo *et al.*, 2023). In this research, we explore how employee prosocial motivation manifests across differing organizational contexts (i.e. manufacturing, hospitality and construction) and cultures (i.e. the USA and Latin America).

Influenced by context (Grant, 2008a), prosocial motivation within organizations is showcased in coworker or customer helping behaviors. By effectively training employees, firms can make this motivation instinctive, creating an environment where employees routinely put others' needs in front of their own. As a result of this internal branding component, the brand profits and employees become its ambassadors (Asha and Jyothi, 2013) or champions (Xiong and King, 2015). Thoughtful work design intent on creating an ethical and purposeful culture can foster transcendent- and moral-driven motives, ultimately boosting employee engagement and satisfaction (Guillén *et al.*, 2015; Meenakshi *et al.*, 2023). Commonsensically, organizations

must create work design conditions that stimulate or develop prosocial motivation within the frontline employee (Bolino and Grant, 2016). Such a design blueprint is not ready-made; a universal approach is thwarted via the diverse nature of cultural, organizational and technological contexts. Further, individual differences like career stage, cultural or ethnic background and personality traits may impact how work design influences employees.

Indeed, inquiry about work design factors' effect on prosocial motivation is rich in insight. For example, research indicates work/organizational characteristics such as ambiguity, accountability, job complexity, routinization, ideologies, job scope, teamwork, autonomy, task significance and beneficiary contact, to name a few, as factors contributing to prosocial motivation (Grant, 2007; Grant and Parker, 2009). To add to this list and heed calls for more research on how job design elements promote prosocial motivation (Grant, 2007; Liao *et al.*, 2022), the current research concomitantly examines empowerment, feedback and ethical climate as job design determinants of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and relatedness, which, in turn, are modeled as correlates of prosocial motivation. This investigation helps to answer: How can prosociality, specifically individual prosocial motivation, be instigated or stimulated, within organizations?

It is uncontroversial that work design impacts employee attitudes, motivations, behaviors and mental and social well-being (Parker, 2014). Work design in general, relational work design specifically, and supervisor actions all, individually and in combination impact employee responses (Kanfer *et al.*, 2017; Parker *et al.*, 2017). However, knowledge remains limited in general, and more research is needed across work design approaches, especially cross-cultural endeavors (Carter *et al.*, 2024), which this research uses, to develop nuanced understanding of specific elements of work design on employees. For example, research exploring how social aspects of work design come together to impact workers' internal responses, their personality, attitudes and motivations is lacking (Oldham and Fried, 2016; Parker *et al.*, 2017). As such, there remains a need for practical, actionable work design research on motivation to inform practice. Research with practitioners will be particularly important to further develop this field (Fried *et al.*, 2008; Kanfer, 2008; Kanfer *et al.*, 2017; Oldham and Fried, 2016; Parker *et al.*, 2017; Vough and Parker, 2008). Research is needed to inform specific levers managers can pull to facilitate employees' motivation toward appropriate action (Fried *et al.*, 2008; Kanfer *et al.*, 2017; Morgeson and Humphrey, 2008; Oldham and Fried, 2016).

Like other internal psychological needs, drives and motivation (Rayburn, 2014; Rayburn and Ochieng, 2022), we propose that prosociality, in the form of prosocial motivation, can be influenced through organizational work design and norms. This research leans on the anthropological model to illuminate specific elements of work design that can influence individuals to fulfill internal motives causing individuals to work with and for others in context (Pérez López, 1974, 2014). Self-perception and social identity theories are used to expose the processes internal to the individual that make the paths from work design to employee prosocial motivation possible (Bem, 1967; Tajfel, 1982). Based on these approaches to organizational design and individual motivation, we build and test a model of work design to employee well-being, operationalized as prosocial motivation across three organizational contexts, including manufacturing (Study 1), hotels (Study 2) and B-to-B construction (Study 3). Together, these studies reveal that context managed to promote others focused behaviors and relationships can result in prosocial motivation activation, benefiting the brand in question. With this research, we extend the prosociality conversation by exploring how work design/leadership influences relationships with and behaviors toward others and through these leads to fulfillment of individual prosocial motivation in context, realizing a positive contribution to the wellbeing of others.

## Literature review

### *Motivation through work design*

The impact of work design on employee motivation has fueled research for decades ([Hackman and Oldham, 1976](#)). Work motivation is a dynamic, goal-directed, resource allocation process that unfolds over time, experience and place. It influences not only what people allocate resources toward but also the intensity of such effort ([Kanfer et al., 2017](#)). Work can be designed to promote desirable attitudes, as well as mental and social well-being ([Parker, 2014](#)). Further, work design can impact the manifestation of individual personality and motivation variables on the job ([Li et al., 2014](#); [Wu, 2016](#)), an effect that is particularly salient over time.

Work design research exploring the influence on motivation started with work enrichment, specifically by creating a score with task significance, skill variety and task identity as one element, combined with autonomy and feedback, as two additional factors to create a potential motivation score ([Hackman and Oldham, 1976](#)). In most cases, proposed relationships between work design and motivation have been supported. Since the beginning of research into the impact of work design, the positive influence of work design has been modeled as occurring through three mechanisms: meaningfulness, responsibility and knowledge of results ([Hackman and Oldham, 1976](#); [Oldham and Fried, 2016](#)). Based in this tradition, it is now understood that work characteristics flow from three sources: task, social and contextual elements of the work environment ([Morgeson and Humphrey, 2008](#)). Recent research has exposed that work design impact on individual personality and motivation is effective, dependent on salient connections between design elements and the focal trait, state, attitude or motivation ([Wu, 2016](#)). Work design can affect employees' internal work motivation through their influences on experienced meaningfulness and felt responsibility ([Hackman and Oldham, 1976](#); [Kanfer et al., 2017](#)). Work design must highlight what matters to the organization and thereby what should matter to employees.

Continuing research is imperative to expose social aspects and person-situation dynamics of work design to enhance understanding of the impact on specific facets of individual motivation ([Kanfer, 2008](#); [Kanfer et al., 2017](#); [Oldham and Fried, 2016](#); [Parker et al., 2017](#)). There remains a need to understand work design elements that can facilitate need fulfillment; psychological, emotional and social needs ([Parker, 2014](#); [Oldham and Fried, 2016](#)). Work design studies focused on outcomes, such as identity, mental health and morality, are particularly relevant ([Parker et al., 2017](#)). Specifically, the impact of work design on prosocial motivation needs understanding because of its many positive outcomes, for the individual, coworkers, customers and organizations ([Vough and Parker, 2008](#)). Such research is particularly relevant to organizational frontline and branding research streams ([Asha and Jyothi, 2013](#); [Ilicic et al., 2019](#); [Singh et al., 2017](#); [Xiong and King, 2015](#)).

As work motivation exists at the nexus of theory and practice ([Kanfer, 2008](#)), robust application of theory to work design research is important to understand underlying mechanisms at work in the process ([Kanfer et al., 2017](#)). Further, work design research within practice is important to validate testing of proposed relationships ([Vough and Parker, 2008](#)). Grounded in the approach that combines task, social and contextual elements to work design to explore the influence on outcomes ([Morgeson and Humphrey, 2008](#)) per the anthropological model of organization ([Pérez López, 1974, 2014](#)), we explore a model that includes the influence of empowerment, feedback and ethical climate on employee work responses and through these to employees' prosocial motivation.

### *Prosocial motivation*

Prosocial motivation is a contextual, positional, discretionary manifestation of prosociality that encompasses desire to serve others ([Liao et al., 2022](#)). Prosociality is an internal,

inherent motivation to provide a positive contribution to the well-being of others, an aspect of human behavior that has evolved over centuries (Chudeck *et al.*, 2013; Francois *et al.*, 2018; Henrich, 2004). Within organizations, such motivation is driven by elements of “doing good” and “looking good,” both of which contribute to employee morality and good citizenship (Grant and Mayer, 2009). Intriguingly, cultural evolution research suggests that prosocial people are socially successful long-term (Henrich, 2004). Moreover, prosocial groups are more successful and sustain longer than less prosocial groups (Chudeck *et al.*, 2013). Prosociality is good for individuals, collectives and, in the marketplace, the brands they represent.

Prosociality at work is separated into three aspects: prosocial motivation (the desire to help others), prosocial behaviors (commonly referenced in this research as OCBs) (the actions that help others) and prosocial impact (the feeling of being able to help others) (Bolino and Grant, 2016). The former and latter have received little investigative attention, while the bulk of research focus has centered on understanding antecedents and consequences of prosocial behavior (Kwon *et al.*, 2023; Liao *et al.*, 2022). The posited model helps fill this research fissure by examining theoretically grounded factors that impact employees’ prosocial motivation. Thus far, research exploring such relationships has focused largely on experiments in relatively small populations (Grant *et al.*, 2007), with perceptual measures of contact (Grant, 2008a) and in contexts with workers in assumed inherently prosocial jobs such as firefighting and social work (Grant, 2008b; van der Voet and Steijn, 2021). From these research streams, it is suggested that prosocial motivation is positively impacted by two factors: perceived impact on beneficiary and affective commitment to beneficiary (Grant, 2008a, 2008b). Though limited in scope and considering that prosocial motivation is multifaceted and is also influenced by various contextual (Grant, 2007; Liao *et al.*, 2022) and individual factors (Francois *et al.*, 2018; Henrich, 2004), these studies are informative and provide a sturdy foundation to move forward with research in more common populations and with practical, generalizable work design elements and outcomes. To develop relationships among employees, work design can increase prosocial motivation because it connects individuals with beneficiaries of their prosociality and they can witness the impact they have through their behaviors (Grant, 2007). In this quest, moral identity is germane, as it mediates the relationship between prosocial motivation and moral action (Aquino and Reed, 2002).

Existing research reinforces that both people and context matter in prosociality (Grant and Sumanth, 2009; Ma *et al.*, 2017). However, research is warranted to expose nuance in the path from work design to prosocial motivation and to reveal actionable facets of work design for practitioners to use to enhance employee well-being. The anthropological model reveals potential work design elements that can be used to promote individual level prosocial motivation. Self-perception and social identity theories reveal the internal paths by which this occurs.

#### *Anthropological model*

The anthropological model states that to be moral is to consider how one’s actions impact others and to take actions that contribute to the well-being of others, to be ethical is to seek good for others and for oneself simultaneously (Argandoña, 2008). Moral and ethical actions are foundational to relationships and organizations. Fittingly, the anthropological model considers organizations as vital not only to the creation of economic value but also for the creation of individual psycho-social and transcendent value (Guillén *et al.*, 2015; Pérez López, 1974, 2014). People are “proactive organisms whose natural or intrinsic functioning can either be facilitated or impeded by the social context” (Deci *et al.*, 1994, p. 120).

According to the anthropological model, organizations do three things: provide service to people; provide a place for people to work in tasks appropriate to their abilities, to use those abilities appropriately and to realize their potential; and help people find meaning in what they do and to provide opportunity to use their abilities to serve and be useful to others (Argandoña, 2008). For organizations to be successful, they must consider not only financial metrics for success but also incorporate their perspective in how they impact people, internally and externally (Pérez López, 1974, 2014). This means that organizations, in their design and through their actions, are responsible for the impact they make on people.

There are three basic human motives according to the anthropological model – extrinsic, intrinsic and transcendent. Extrinsic motives move people to solving external, explicit, tangible results, intrinsic to the individual's own learning and growth and transcendent to positively impact others' learning, growth and need-satisfaction (Argandoña, 2008; Ferreiro and Alcázar, 2013; Guillén *et al.*, 2015; Pérez López, 2014; Rosanas, 2008; Rosanas and Velilla, 2003). Transcendence, as mentioned above, is internalized prosociality drive.

Motives or drives are internal experiences from which individuals derive satisfaction or value (Ferreiro and Alcázar, 2013). It is important to differentiate motive from motivation. Specifically, motives are desirable internal states that motivate people to take action to fulfill one or more of these internal values (Ferreiro and Alcázar, 2013). Motivation is the force that attracts an actor to a particular action based on the attractiveness of the consequences of the action (Pérez López, 1974). According to the anthropological model, the consequence of every action relates back to one of the three key motives. All people are driven by combinations of the above motives. The quality or focus of the individual's motivation will depend on the weight assigned to each type of motive (Ferreiro and Alcázar, 2013). Further, individuals are influenced in their future behaviors based on learning from prior similar behaviors (Argandoña, 2008). Individuals will continue action, increase action or decrease action based on consequences, feedback and learning associated with prior action. Strength of motivation is based on these aspects of the action context (Pérez López, 1974).

Within this framework, individuals must understand (and care) how their actions impact others and to what extent (Argandoña, 2008). Organizations must educate their employees about this trickle effect. In this regard, prosociality drives their behaviors to serve others with their well-being in mind. Specifically, "after every action, and irrespective of whether the results that were pursued have been achieved or not, the two people involved learn, in the sense that they modify their beliefs, attitudes, and therefore their decision rules with respect to similar problems" (Rosanas and Velilla, 2003, p. 54). Individual learning is a change in "knowledge, abilities, attitudes, desires, motives, and moral habits" which reflect both operational and evaluative learning process (Rosanas and Velilla, 2003, p. 54). Operational learning relates to change in effectiveness, ability or growth in these; evaluative learning relates to change in individual satisfaction with results and did the action improve individual or other actors (Argandoña, 2008). Organizations must understand that individuals are evaluating every action, learning in the process and deciding whether to continue current actions or to discontinue current efforts. If an action meets with positive consequences for the individual and important others in context, then the organization can expect positive learning and enhanced motivation toward that action. For this research, if prosocial behavior or OCB is positively experienced by the actor (e.g. being shown concern in a time of need) and important others to which the individual is connected, then prosocial motivation for the individual should increase.

This holistic focus, on all human motives, is more robust, as most organizational theory ignores transcendent motives, an important aspect of the impact of work design on employees (Guillén *et al.*, 2015; Rosanas, 2008). This oversight is unfortunate, as it has long

been accepted that individuals have needs for growth and connection to others and that these needs are intertwined in organizational settings (Alderfer, 1969). Accordingly, understanding all motives or drives of individuals allows organizations to acknowledge the whole person (Guillén *et al.*, 2015). Most important, understanding intrinsic and transcendent motives allows for a long-run perspective on human action within collectives and organizations (Rosanas, 2008). Companies can help individuals consider their impact on others (Argandoña, 2008), where serving others is the only truly worthwhile quest. Thus, organizations should be designed to facilitate individuals serving and helping others grow (Ferreiro and Alcázar, 2013). Organizations that understand this and design work accordingly will be at an advantage to promote desired OCBs and prosocial motivation, profiting the brand these workers represent. Here, the anthropological model is of service.

Consistent with other approaches to work design (Rayburn, 2014), this approach to organizational structure argues that context can be designed to facilitate internal psychological needs and motives. To promote transcendent motives, organizations must focus employees at this higher level, through teaching, promoting transcendence and setting examples. They must expose how employee actions impact others, deploy work design that facilitates prosocial expression and provide examples of proper action (Ferreiro and Alcázar, 2013). Specifically, to experience transcendence, to develop prosocial motivations, individuals need three features from their employment context: they must know the consequences of actions; work within facilitating conditions; and be provided with examples of prosociality in action by leaders and trusted others (Pérez López, 1974, 2014). Self-perception and social identity theories illuminate the internal processes by which these work design elements can heighten individual experience of prosocial motivation.

#### *Self-perception theory*

As foreshadowed in our opening quote (Durant, 1933), self-perception theory explains how enacting behavior can lead to fulfillment of associated motives or needs and adoption of relevant traits (Bem, 1967). Durant was paraphrasing Aristotle, since the philosopher's time and possibly before it had been thought that people are what they do. This axiom is gaining acceptance in management thought. To change the culture in an organization, it has been proposed that it is better to start with what people do rather than what they think (Bem, 1967). This is effective because people internalize based on their behaviors how they perceive themselves, through change in their attitudes, values and motivations, particularly, if these views of doing business are supported with sufficient reasoning and rewards (Pérez López, 1974, 2014). This is the root of self-perception theory.

Self-perception theory was proposed as an alternative to popular cognitive dissonance theories. It was thought that people changed their attitudes to remove the negative strain of dissonance (Patton, 2003). This was countered with the argument that the positive change in attitude was associated with self-observed behaviors that reinforced the positive attitude (Bem, 1967; Patton, 2003). Bem (1967, p. 184) argued that self-perception is one way in which an individual "knows" itself. Since then, research has shown that people reflect on their own behaviors and realign their attitudes and values to match what they do (Brown and Peterson, 1994; Patton, 2003), to be in line with their self-perception (Gneezy *et al.*, 2012). As people are, or become, what they do, getting employees to perform certain tasks (e.g. engaging in prosocial behaviors) will positively influence their work values (e.g. prosocial motivations) related to such activities.

As awareness of impact and connection with beneficiaries influences individual prosocial motivation through work design (Grant, 2007), we focus on OCBs, which are prosocial behaviors that are proximal to the individual and salient in the workplace. OCBs are regarded as

discretionary behaviors, which surpass expectations associated with the job role (Organ, 1988). Viewed as interpersonally and organizationally directed (Williams and Anderson, 1991), the target of such “going the extra mile” behaviors are relevant to others with whom employees have extensive contact and to whom they feel some connection. This is reflective of work in prosocial motivation that identifies that knowing the impact of one’s work and contact with beneficiaries can increase feelings of prosociality (Grant, 2007). OCBs exhibit positive influence of organizational (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1993; Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994) and individual outcomes (Donavan *et al.*, 2004). Specifically, when employees perform OCBs, they will experience heightened prosocial motivation. Therefore, we hypothesize:

- H1.* Organizational citizenship behavior will positively predict prosocial motivation in employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors.

#### *Social identity theory*

While self-perception theory explains the behavior to a motivation path, social identity theory explains how experiencing relatedness, feeling connected to and accepted in the referent group, can enhance motivation. Social identity theory states that social identity is a perception of oneness with the group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1982). This form of identification stems from categorization of the group and its constituent members and salient outgroups; members know who is and who is not part of the group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1982). Individuals favor others within their own social group (Tajfel, 1982). According to social identity theory, the self-concept is formed of two facets, the individual self and the social self (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Social identification is distinct from organizational identification, in that the latter is identification with the whole, while the former is identification with the people that make up the whole (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

Social identification, which can be influenced by moral identity (Aquino and Reed, 2002), leads to activities that are congruent with group identity and reinforces antecedents of identification (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Individuals conform to the norms and values of organizations with which they identify (Homburg *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, if an organization is defined by a climate for prosociality and its members have prosocial motivations driven by intrinsic factors such as empathy (Penner *et al.*, 1995) and altruism (Costa *et al.*, 1991), then their level of connectedness to this firm heightens. As a result, group formation organically produces prosociality.

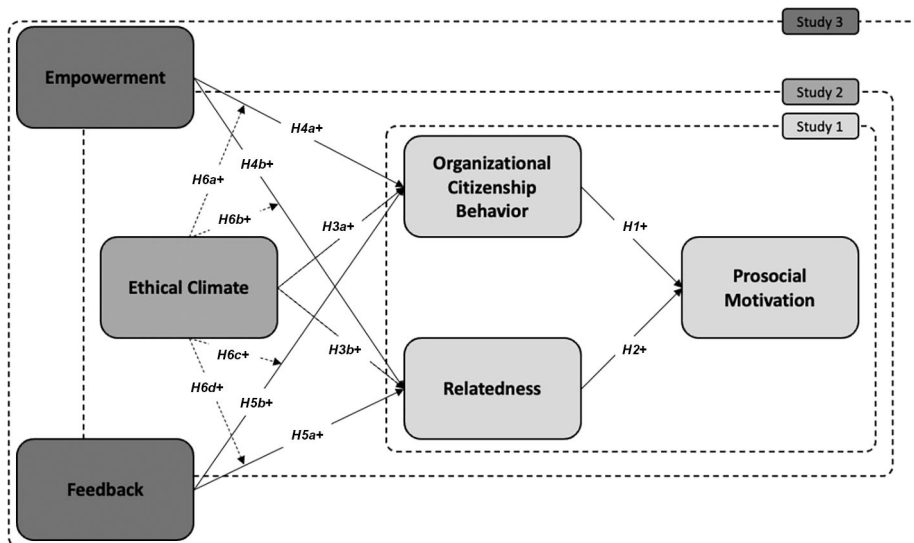
Work design elements that allow employees to connect with one another, to feel relatedness and that expose employees to the impact of the actions may stimulate prosocial motivation (Vough and Parker, 2008). This is also aligned to the anthropological model in that the presumed reference for organizational relationships begins with coworkers. Moreover, interpersonal relationships enhance work motivation that impact others in the relationship (Grant, 2007), and according to social identity theory, prosociality will be stronger among individuals who are connected to one another (Homburg *et al.*, 2009; Ma *et al.*, 2017), especially when individuals champion other-oriented empathy (i.e. an intrinsic concern for others’ well-being) (Penner *et al.*, 1995). Further, ingroup identification leads individuals to adopt norms and values of the group and to be motivated to help others in the group (Homburg *et al.*, 2009). Specifically, we propose when individuals experience relatedness, connection and acceptance in relevant groups, within their workplace, they will also experience heightened prosocial motivation. Therefore, we hypothesize:

- H2.* Relatedness will positively predict prosocial motivation in employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors.

*Employee responses to others-focused work design and climate*

Understanding what can lead to increased levels of internalized prosocial motivation, we now walk back in our tested model (Figure 1) to explore the work design elements that instigate relevant behaviors and relatedness among co-workers. First, based on the anthropological model, employees need three elements to develop transcendence motives: knowledge of the consequences of actions, facilitating conditions and examples (Pérez López, 1974, 2014). In practice, we identify feedback (e.g. when interpersonal interactions between managers and employees highlight the consequences of failed actions when prosociality is not pursued), empowerment (e.g. when employees are given freedom to make decisions and show initiative in facilitating workplace conditions that pursue prosociality) and ethical climate (e.g. when organizations provide a multitude of case study examples to edify employees' perspective about the importance of prosocial motivation) as fulfilling these conditions from a work design perspective. Incorporating these elements into the employee experience will result in connection with the group and OCBs targeting relevant others. For example, research shows that autonomy is related to team cohesiveness, cohesiveness defined as group togetherness, working toward same goal and feeling bonded together. This is also accompanied by feelings of solidarity, harmony and commitment with and to one another (Man and Lam, 2003; Rayburn, 2014). Research also exhibits that knowing what to do, examples of proper action and freedom to do what is needed can lead to deeper connection with others in context (Rayburn, 2014) and appropriate prosocial behaviors (Rayburn and Gilliam, 2016).

To maintain employee loyalty and trust, the organization must act in transcendent fashion toward its employees. In doing so, an ethical climate is produced, often spearheaded by CEO leadership (Shin, 2012). The probability of ethical or prosocial behaviors among employees is bolstered, as a result (Rosanas and Velilla, 2003). Further, moral and ethical action are foundational to the relationship (Argandoña, 2008). Meaningful work (i.e. work that has high and visible task significance) can lead to individual helping actions, OCBs, targeting significant



**Figure 1.** Theoretical model with hypotheses and studies

others in the workspace (Allan *et al.*, 2019). Finally, the managerial orientation to how they work with employees sends a direct message to employees and how they should work with one another (Deci *et al.*, 1989). Therefore, prosocial modeling in context positively influences individual prosocial behaviors (Grant and Patil, 2012; Jung *et al.*, 2020). People learn how to act in context based on the actions of contextually relevant others (Grant and Patil, 2012; Henrich, 2004), and they act based on prevailing social- and group-relevant norms (Francois *et al.*, 2018; Grant and Patil, 2012).

Moreover, prosocial organizational norms lead to individual level prosocial behaviors (Wang, 2009), while leadership actions built on community and trust lead to prosocial behaviors (Zhu and Akhtar, 2014). Within organizations, high performance work systems signal concern for employees which can lead to increased connection and prosocial behaviors among employees (Sun *et al.*, 2007). As prosocial leadership modeling, organizational norms and work systems are reflected in overall ethical climate, we hypothesize:

- H3. Ethical climate will positively predict a) organizational citizenship behaviors and b) relatedness in employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors.

As natural inclinations, such as prosociality as described above, can be impeded or facilitated by context coupled with the fact that people generally need to feel autonomous (Gagné *et al.*, 2000), it is natural that they need to be empowered in the workplace to enact behaviors associated with such inclination, such as OCBs. To be empowered is a basic need of humans (Gagné *et al.*, 2000; Rayburn, 2014) and empowerment matters to employees across work contexts (Parker, Morgeson, and Johns 2017). Autonomy in the workplace is associated with increased in OCBs (Oldham and Fried, 2016; Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006). Accompanied by feelings of solidarity, harmony and commitment with one another (Man and Lam, 2003), empowerment, defined as, “employees’ perceptions of their supervisors’ confidence in their ability to make decisions and use their initiative,” (Coote *et al.*, 2004, p. 551) is grounded in autonomy (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996) and is related to team cohesiveness, defined as team togetherness, working toward same goal and feeling bonded together, all of which contribute to a sense of collective OCB (Shin, 2012). Based on existing research, we hypothesize the presence of empowerment will heighten expressions of OCBs and experiences of relatedness. Thus:

- H4. Employee empowerment will positively predict a) organizational citizenship behaviors and b) relatedness in employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors.

It has been long established that when employees know what to do and for whom, they will perform requisite behaviors and form appropriate bonds (Jaworski and Kohli, 1991). Therefore, team- and interactive-focused cultures that emphasize communication, transparency, accountability and support, build the foundation by which OCBs can spread across all firm levels (Shin, 2012; Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2004). Hence, task feedback as a portion of the work role is related to an increase in OCBs (Oldham and Fried, 2016; Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006). Also, prosocial behaviors can be stimulated and modeled through goal contagion by significant others in context (Jung *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, the feedback process, through development of interpersonal interactions, liking, proximity and shared goals can lead to increased group cohesion (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Specifically, we hypothesize that positive feedback will be associated with increases in OCBs and relatedness. Therefore:

- H5. Feedback will positively predict a) organizational citizenship behaviors and b) relatedness in employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors.

Ethical climate, empowerment and feedback provide the structural elements that give employees the knowledge of the consequences of actions, facilitating conditions and examples they need. Additionally, based on the hierarchical nature of work design (Guillén *et al.*, 2015; Pérez López, 2014; Rosanas, 2008), importance of ethical climate evaluation as per the anthropological model (Pérez López, 1974) and understanding based on social identity theory (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Homburg *et al.*, 2009), we anticipate that an ethical organizational climate will moderate the latter two relationships positively through reinforcement of accepted norms and values. Organizational ideology, such as the anthropological model (Argandoña, 2008), influences individual's views on and actions toward others; it can support or hinder other aspects of work design and their effect on the actions individuals take in context (Grant, 2007), such that an empowered employee feels supported and valued and, thus, will go beyond their job requirements and engage in OCBs. In this view, as supported by social exchange theory, organizations that foster leader and employee interaction are likely to generate employee OCBs (Lee *et al.*, 2019). Through these interactions and OCBs, relatedness is strengthened, which, as self-determination theory signifies, helps employees attain psychological well-being (Rayburn, 2014). Therefore, we expect that within an ethical climate the relationship between empowerment and OCBs and relatedness, as well as between feedback and OCBs and relatedness will be strengthened. Specifically, we hypothesize:

- H6a.* For employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors, evaluations of ethical climate will moderate the effect of empowerment on organizational citizenship behaviors to the extent that the effect of empowerment on organizational citizenship behaviors will be stronger when evaluations of ethical climate are higher.
- H6b.* For employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors, evaluations of ethical climate will moderate the effect of empowerment on relatedness to the extent that the effect of empowerment on relatedness will be stronger when evaluations of ethical climate are higher.
- H6c.* For employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors, evaluations of ethical climate will moderate the effect of feedback on organizational citizenship behaviors to the extent that the effect of feedback on organizational citizenship behaviors will be stronger when evaluations of ethical climate are higher.
- H6d.* For employees across manufacturing, hospitality and construction sectors, evaluations of ethical climate will moderate the effect of feedback on relatedness to the extent that the effect of feedback on relatedness will be stronger when evaluations of ethical climate are higher.

## Methods

Using replication with extension (Toncar and Munch, 2010), three studies were conducted to evaluate the theoretically derived hypotheses (Figure 1). This cross-cultural (Trafimow, 2022) and cross-organizational (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1995; Steers, 1977) data collection play helps bolster the external validity of the findings. Data for all studies were collected in accordance with international standards for ethical research with human subjects. In Study 1, *H1* and *H2* are evaluated in a manufacturing context (i.e. an industry-leading cooler manufacturer in a southern US state). This setting allowed for an

individualized performance rating system with limited interpersonal contact, rather than a team-based, highly interactive environment. This method provided a conservative context in which to conduct a benchmark exploration of the impact of OCBs and relatedness on prosocial motivation. In Study 2, we turned to a hospitality context (i.e. a Latin American-based hotel chain) to retest *H1* and *H2*, while evaluating *H3*. This study permitted a second exploration of the influence OCBs and relatedness on prosocial motivation and incorporated ethical climate as a key organizational variable. Importantly, a hotel setting requires team-based work in which frontline employees have frequent and necessary interpersonal interactions with guests and fellow employees, possibly fortifying associated relationships and relatedness. Finally, using a B-to-B service context with a Latin-American construction services company, Study 3 is used to assess our entire model (*H1–H6d*). Like with Study 2, Study 3 employees are frontline agents who work on site, have extensive interpersonal feedback with customers and are engaged in team-based work. By duplicating most study characteristics, while amending one or more characteristics (i.e. replication with extension) (Toncar and Munch, 2010), this cross-cultural and cross-organizational three-study methodology provides a robust test of the proposed theoretical model's generalizability.

#### *Measures and measurement analysis*

Across studies, the same multi-item scales were used to measure each of the six constructs included in the model (Table 1). All scales were adapted from prior research. Shortened scales were used in all studies, as data were collected during work hours to contextualize the data and support recall. Measures for feedback were adapted from Podsakoff *et al.* (1990), empowerment from Coote *et al.* (2004) and Rayburn (2014), relatedness from Baard *et al.* (2004), OCBs from Donovan *et al.* (2004), ethical climate from Arnaud (2010) and prosocial motivation from Grant (2008b). All surveys were developed in English first, then translated and back translated into Spanish for Studies 2 and 3.

To analyze the psychometric properties of the scales, we performed several tests to ensure convergent and discriminant validity and internal consistency (Table 2). First, the average variance extracted for each construct is greater than 0.50, thus demonstrating convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Second, internal consistency was demonstrated as the composite reliability measures for each construct exceed the acceptable level of 0.60 (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Finally, evidence of discriminant validity was found as the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations for each construct pair is below the HTMT threshold of 0.85 (Henseler *et al.*, 2015).

To eliminate any concerns associated with self-reported data, we used several procedural remedies and statistical techniques (Kock, 2015; Lindell and Whitney, 2001; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) to mitigate the impact of common method variance or the “variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent” (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003, p. 1). First, we ensured respondent anonymity, used existing scales to reduce item ambiguity and separated scales measuring the IVs and DVs (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Next, as the “occurrence of a VIF greater than 3.30 is an indication that a model may be contaminated by common method bias” (Kock, 2015, p. 7), we performed Kock's (2015) marker variable test. The results indicate that no factor-level VIFs exceed the 3.30 cutoff. Therefore, these statistical analyses suggest that common method variance is not a threat to the proposed relationships in our model (Sattler *et al.*, 2010).

Across the three studies, we tested our hypotheses using partial least squares structural equation modeling with SmartPLS 4.0.8 (Table 3). We leveraged partial least squares structural equation modeling, as it is an analytical technique that is being increasingly used relative to CB-SEM (Hair *et al.*, 2017), enables the estimation of complex models that

**Table 1.** Scale measurement properties

| Construct item                                                | Mean | SD   | Factor loading | t-value |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|----------------|---------|
| <i>Employee empowerment</i>                                   |      |      |                |         |
| In this organization, my supervisor                           |      |      |                |         |
| Trusts me to make decisions                                   | 5.65 | 0.01 | 0.923          | 127.12  |
| Assigns tasks then lets me handle them                        | 5.45 | 0.01 | 0.921          | 100.07  |
| Trusts me to exercise good judgment                           | 5.63 | 0.01 | 0.936          | 123.04  |
| <i>Relatedness</i>                                            |      |      |                |         |
| In this organization                                          |      |      |                |         |
| I really like the people I work with                          | 5.96 | 0.01 | 0.914          | 118.49  |
| I get along with people at work                               | 6.24 | 0.01 | 0.936          | 126.20  |
| I socialize with fellow employees                             | 6.22 | 0.02 | 0.879          | 60.37   |
| <i>OCBs</i>                                                   |      |      |                |         |
| In this organization                                          |      |      |                |         |
| I help orient new employees even though it is not required    | 6.16 | 0.02 | 0.877          | 56.86   |
| I always lend a helping hand to others on the job             | 6.31 | 0.01 | 0.915          | 97.12   |
| I willingly give time to help other employees                 | 6.12 | 0.01 | 0.907          | 108.19  |
| <i>Ethical climate</i>                                        |      |      |                |         |
| In my job                                                     |      |      |                |         |
| I am expected to do what is right for others                  | 5.47 | 0.01 | 0.900          | 100.42  |
| People have a strong sense of responsibility to others        | 5.97 | 0.01 | 0.913          | 122.94  |
| we are expected to do what is right for everyone in the store | 5.77 | 0.01 | 0.904          | 92.58   |
| <i>Feedback</i>                                               |      |      |                |         |
| Our supervisors                                               |      |      |                |         |
| Give positive feedback when we perform well                   | 4.90 | 0.01 | 0.938          | 137.52  |
| Give recognition when our work is good                        | 5.24 | 0.00 | 0.952          | 244.26  |
| <i>Prosocial motivation</i>                                   |      |      |                |         |
| In this organization                                          |      |      |                |         |
| I can benefit others through my work                          | 6.18 | 0.01 | 0.921          | 87.15   |
| I help others through my work                                 | 6.26 | 0.01 | 0.938          | 92.61   |
| I have positive impact on others through my work              | 6.17 | 0.01 | 0.924          | 105.64  |

**Note(s):** CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis Index; RMSEA = root mean error of approximation; Model goodness-of-fit indexes:  $\chi^2 = 2,132.28$ , NFI = 0.874 and SRMR = 0.048

contain many constructs, items and relational paths (Chin, 1998) and is a “causal-predictive approach to SEM that emphasizes prediction in estimating statistical models” (Hair *et al.*, 2019, p. 3), facilitating researchers’ ability to develop managerial implications.

#### *Data collection: Study 1 (H1 and H2)*

In Study 1, our goal was to investigate the impact of OCBs and relatedness on prosocial motivation. Therefore, data were collected from an industry-leading cooler manufacturer in a southern US state ( $n = 133$ ,  $M_{\text{tenure}} = 3.3$ ;  $M_{\text{age}} = 38.6$ ; 63.4% male) in 2022; the plant employed approximately 200 employees. As shown in Figure 1, the multi-item scales used in Study 1 were relatedness, OCBs and prosocial motivation.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to factory workers over a three-day period during working hours. The survey was designed to examine work design and leadership styles in manufacturing and service environments. The questionnaire

**Table 2.** Convergent and discriminate validity and composite reliability

| Construct                         | 1     | 2     | 3     | CR    |       |       |       |   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|-------|
| Study 1                           |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |   |       |
| (1) OCBs                          | 0.660 |       |       | 0.853 |       |       |       |   |       |
| (2) Prosocial motivation          | 0.722 | 0.800 |       | 0.924 |       |       |       |   |       |
| (3) Relatedness                   | 0.628 | 0.607 | 0.680 | 0.865 |       |       |       |   |       |
| Study 2                           |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |   |       |
| Construct                         | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | CR    |       |       |   |       |
| (1) Ethical climate               | 0.650 |       |       |       | 0.845 |       |       |   |       |
| (2) OCBs                          | 0.473 | 0.770 |       |       | 0.910 |       |       |   |       |
| (3) Prosocial motivation          | 0.538 | 0.537 | 0.850 |       | 0.945 |       |       |   |       |
| (4) Relatedness                   | 0.436 | 0.525 | 0.439 | 0.720 | 0.886 |       |       |   |       |
| Study 3                           |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |   |       |
| Construct                         | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8 | CR    |
| (1) Empowerment                   | 0.860 |       |       |       |       |       |       |   | 0.948 |
| (2) Ethical climate               | 0.717 | 0.820 |       |       |       |       |       |   | 0.932 |
| (3) Feedback                      | 0.806 | 0.661 | 0.890 |       |       |       |       |   | 0.943 |
| (4) OCBs                          | 0.418 | 0.514 | 0.330 | 0.810 |       |       |       |   | 0.927 |
| (5) Prosocial motivation          | 0.474 | 0.558 | 0.386 | 0.791 | 0.860 |       |       |   | 0.949 |
| (6) Relatedness                   | 0.641 | 0.719 | 0.557 | 0.658 | 0.754 | 0.830 |       |   | 0.935 |
| (7) Ethical climate × Empowerment | 0.471 | 0.525 | 0.312 | 0.231 | 0.267 | 0.407 | —     |   | —     |
| (8) Ethical climate × Feedback    | 0.355 | 0.471 | 0.272 | 0.127 | 0.175 | 0.298 | 0.823 | — | —     |

**Note(s):** CR (composite reliability), AVE (average variance extracted) and HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait); AVEs are shown in italics on the main diagonal. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations are shown in the lower triangle

**Table 3.** Path model results

| Study         | Path                                        | Hypothesis  | Path load (t) | Significance |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1 (n = 133)   | OCBs → prosocial motivation                 | <i>H1+</i>  | 0.45 (5.41)   | ***          |
|               | Relatedness → prosocial motivation          | <i>H2+</i>  | 0.29 (3.26)   | **           |
| 2 (n = 169)   | OCBs → prosocial motivation                 | <i>H1+</i>  | 0.38 (3.96)   | ***          |
|               | Relatedness → prosocial motivation          | <i>H2+</i>  | 0.21 (2.73)   | ***          |
|               | Ethical climate → OCBs                      | <i>H3a+</i> | 0.40 (5.15)   | ***          |
|               | Ethical climate → relatedness               | <i>H3b+</i> | 0.37 (5.62)   | ***          |
| 3 (n = 1,169) | OCBs → prosocial motivation                 | <i>H1+</i>  | 0.47 (11.74)  | ***          |
|               | Relatedness → prosocial motivation          | <i>H2+</i>  | 0.41 (10.00)  | ***          |
|               | Ethical climate → OCBs                      | <i>H3a+</i> | 0.41 (7.75)   | ***          |
|               | Ethical climate → relatedness               | <i>H3b+</i> | 0.44 (9.15)   | ***          |
|               | Empowerment → OCBs                          | <i>H4a+</i> | 0.16 (3.48)   | **           |
|               | Empowerment → relatedness                   | <i>H4b+</i> | 0.23 (5.37)   | ***          |
|               | Feedback → OCBs                             | <i>H5a+</i> | −0.05 (1.14)  | n/s          |
|               | Feedback → relatedness                      | <i>H5b+</i> | 0.07 (1.77)   | n/s          |
|               | Ethical climate × empowerment → OCBs        | <i>H6a+</i> | −0.09 (1.75)  | n/s          |
|               | Ethical climate × empowerment → relatedness | <i>H6b+</i> | −0.11 (2.18)  | **           |
|               | Ethical climate × feedback → OCBs           | <i>H6c+</i> | 0.18 (3.05)   | **           |
|               | Ethical climate × feedback → relatedness    | <i>H6d+</i> | 0.11 (1.98)   | **           |

**Note(s):** \*\**p* < 0.05; \*\*\**p* < 0.01

required approximately 15–20 min to complete and was administered on a voluntary basis with anonymity guaranteed. Participants provided informed consent and confirmed they were at least 18 years of age before proceeding with the survey.

The instrument assessed multiple dimensions of the work experience, including employee demographics, supervisor–employee relationships, organizational socialization processes, job autonomy, workplace relationships, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, job satisfaction, role clarity, ethical climate, emotional exhaustion and perceptions of organizational support. Responses were captured using seven-point Likert scales ranging from complete disagreement to complete agreement, with some items using frequency-based or satisfaction-based anchors.

#### *Data analysis and results: Study 1 (H1 and H2)*

Study 1's results support the fulfillment of prosocial motivation through OCBs and relatedness. The analyses show that the paths are significant and in the hypothesized direction (Table 3). Both *H1* and *H2* are supported as OCBs ( $\gamma = 0.447$  and  $p = 0.000$ ) and relatedness ( $\gamma = 0.290$  and  $p = 0.001$ ) significantly impact prosocial motivation ( $R^2 = 0.41$ ).

#### *Data collection – Study 2 (H1–H3b)*

Our goal in Study 2 was to investigate the impact of ethical climate on OCBs and relatedness. To accomplish this goal, ethical climate was added to the model and data were collected in 2022 from frontline employees ( $n = 169$ ;  $M_{\text{tenure}} = 6.7$ ;  $M_{\text{age}} = 27.6$ ; 68.6% female) who work at a Latin American-based hotel chain, with almost 3,000 employees across its 64-hotel portfolio. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to service workers in the hospitality sector. The survey was developed as part of a collaborative research initiative between academic institutions in Peru and the USA.

The survey instrument was originally constructed in English and subsequently translated into Spanish to accommodate the target population. Following translation, the instrument underwent back-translation from Spanish to English to ensure conceptual equivalence and content validity, a practice common in organizational research (Klotz *et al.*, 2023). Back-translation is a critical methodological step that helps identify potential semantic discrepancies, cultural nuances and meaning distortions that may occur during the initial translation process. This procedure enhances the reliability of cross-cultural research by ensuring that translated items retain their original conceptual meaning and measurement properties. The questionnaire required approximately 15–20 min to complete and was administered on a voluntary basis with anonymity guaranteed. Participants provided informed consent and confirmed they were at least 18 years of age before proceeding with the survey.

#### *Data analysis and results: Study 2 (H1–H3b)*

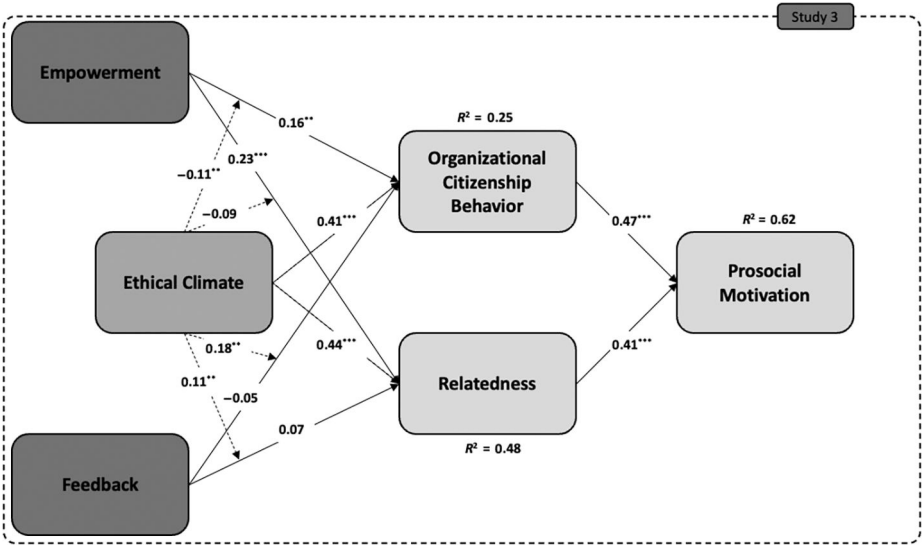
First, continued support was found for both *H1* and *H2* as OCBs ( $\beta = 0.382$  and  $p = 0.000$ ) and Relatedness ( $\beta = 0.214$  and  $p = 0.006$ ) significantly impact prosocial motivation ( $R^2 = 0.26$ ). Next, exploring our others-focused work design hypotheses, ethical climate has a significant impact on OCBs ( $\gamma = 0.396$  and  $p = 0.000$ ), supporting *H3a*, while support for *H3b* is evidenced by the impact of ethical climate on relatedness ( $\gamma = 0.367$  and  $p = 0.000$ ). The  $R^2$ s for OCBs and relatedness are 0.16 and 0.14, respectively (Table 3).

*Data collection: Study 3 (H1–H6)*

Finally, our goal in Study 3 was to investigate the interplay between the anthropological model and self-perception and social identity theories. Specifically, we test the direct effects of ethical climate, empowerment and feedback on OCBs and relatedness, as well as how ethical climate moderates the relationships among empowerment and feedback, OCBs and relatedness and their combined impact on prosocial motivation. To accomplish this goal, data were collected in 2022 from frontline employees ( $n = 1,162$ ;  $M_{\text{tenure}} = 7.1$ ;  $M_{\text{age}} = 33.5$ ; 84.2% male) who work at a Latin American-based construction services company that employs nearly 4,000 employees. The data collection procedure mirrors that of Study 2.

*Data analysis and results: Study 3 (H1–H6)*

Our results offer support for the role of the anthropological model and self-perception theory in explaining firms' adoption of work design elements that facilitate OCBs and interpersonal relationships, resulting in heightened prosocial motivation for employees. The analyses show that most of the paths are significant and in the hypothesized direction (Figure 2). First, both  $H1$  and  $H2$  are again supported as OCBs ( $\beta = 0.478$  and  $p = 0.000$ ) and relatedness ( $\beta = 0.404$  and  $p = 0.000$ ) significantly impact prosocial motivation ( $R^2 = 0.62$ ). Exploring our work design hypotheses, ethical climate is significantly related to OCBs ( $\gamma = 0.412$  and  $p = 0.000$ ), supporting  $H3a$ , while support for  $H3b$  is evidenced by the impact of ethical climate on relatedness ( $\gamma = 0.439$  and  $p = 0.000$ ). Next, empowerment is significantly related to OCBs ( $\gamma = 0.157$  and  $p = 0.001$ ), supporting  $H4a$ , while support for  $H4b$  is evidenced by the impact of empowerment on relatedness ( $\gamma = 0.227$  and  $p = 0.000$ ). Contrary to expectation, support for  $H5a$  and  $H5b$  is not found as feedback has a non-significant and negative impact on OCBs ( $\gamma = -0.047$  and  $p = 0.254$ ) and a non-significant impact on relatedness ( $\gamma = 0.071$  and  $p = 0.077$ ). First, lack of support for  $H5a$  may have resulted from an assumption of “positive feedback,” while the measurement may have captured various



**Figure 2.** Empirical model (full model results: Study 3)

types of feedback (e.g. positive, negative and corrective). In these practical, results-oriented sectors, feedback is often corrective or critical in nature, focusing on safety violations, quality issues or efficiency problems. Such feedback, while necessary, may not foster the psychological safety and intrinsic motivation needed for OCBs. Additionally, employees might attribute feedback to external monitoring rather than genuine developmental interest, weakening the social exchange mechanism that typically drives OCBs.

Next, failure to find support for *H5b* could stem from the following. Relatedness may be more strongly influenced by shared physical challenges, safety interdependence and peer support rather than a formal feedback process. The demanding, often dangerous nature of work in manufacturing and construction, or the fast-paced customer service environment in hospitality, may mean that relatedness develops through informal mutual assistance and shared experiences rather than through feedback mechanisms. The  $R^2$ s for OCBs and relatedness are 0.25 and 0.48, respectively (Figure 2 and Table 3).

Regarding the results for *H6a–H6d*, first, we fail to provide support for *H6a* as the moderation effect of ethical climate on the employee empowerment  $\rightarrow$  OCBs relationship ( $\gamma = -0.093$  and  $p = 0.080$ ) is both non-significant and opposite the hypothesized direction. Given the study's disparate contexts (i.e. manufacturing, hospitality and construction), lack of support for *H6a* may be explained by the conceptualization and operationalization of "ethical climate," which may vary significantly across these industries. What constitutes ethical behavior and climate in manufacturing (safety and environmental responsibility) differs markedly from hospitality (customer service and honesty) or construction (safety and quality). This heterogeneity could obscure the true moderation effect or create measurement artifacts that produce the unexpected negative coefficient.

Second, *H6b* is not supported as although ethical climate significantly moderates the employee empowerment  $\rightarrow$  relatedness relationship ( $\gamma = -0.110$  and  $p = 0.029$ ), its direction is opposite as hypothesized. Third, *H6c* and *H6d* are supported as ethical climate moderates the relationships between feedback and OCBs ( $\gamma = 0.175$  and  $p = 0.002$ ) and feedback and relatedness ( $\gamma = 0.110$  and  $p = 0.048$ ).

## Discussion and implications

Our research exposes a path to increased prosocial motivation for frontline employees through work design that promotes activities that reflect individual prosociality and establishes internal connections among the workforce. This directly supports the approach to influencing the internalization of relevant attitudes and motivations proposed in self-perception theory and the importance of social connection according to social identity theory. Moreover, we move beyond the general impact and exposure effects expected in prior work (Grant, 2007), to identify OCBs and experiences of relatedness as the process underpinning the beneficial impact of work design on employees internalized prosocial motivation. This is an important extension of prior work as these elements of the work experience are broader and more applicable across different contexts, including goods- and services-based companies. Moreover, these effects are exhibited in both mundane (not inherently prosocial) individualistic and team-based working environments, specifically in manufacturing, consumer services and business services. As such, these are elements of organizational work design that managers can consider as they seek to improve employee well-being, while also ensuring their brand is depicted in a favorable light. Our research also supports the approach illuminated by the anthropological model to include three specific elements to promote internalization of prosocial motivation for employees. We identify feedback as an element that represents consequences of actions, empowerment as a facilitating condition and organizational ethical climate as the example employees will witness in the workplace. All

elements were important to promoting OCBs and relatedness directly or interactionally. As anticipated in the anthropological model, all are requisite for increasing employees' experiences of prosocial motivation.

### *Theoretical implications*

This research provides some of the first empirical evidence of how to promote employee prosocial motivation over three distinct studies, with diverse samples. Building on foundational research of prosociality at work (Grant, 2007) and prior work design research (Parker, 2014), this research fills a gap in understanding how to promote prosocial motivation for individuals. Combining self-perception and social identity theories, we expose two paths to individual prosocial motivation (Bem, 1967; Tajfel, 1982). In differing environments – manufacturing (mundane and mostly individualistic), hospitality (high customer contact) and construction (lower customer contact) – enacting OCBs and experiencing relatedness in the workplace are positively related to how employees perceive and exhibit prosocial motivation. As predicated by self-perception theory, employees in all three working contexts experience higher levels of prosocial motivation when enacting behaviors congruent with such motivation. Moreover, in line with social identity theory, when feeling part of and connected to a relevant in-group, in this case coworkers, employees, especially those who espouse altruism and empathy, express higher prosocial motivation. All three studies support these paths as viable to the activation of individual-level prosociality at work.

To further identify specific controls that lead to prosocial motivation, we turn next to the anthropological model approach to work design (Pérez López, 1974). The anthropological model considers the organization as responsible for more than the simple creation of economic value and places responsibility for employee well-being squarely in the hands of organization leaders and managers. From this perspective, the anthropological model informs how to impact prosociality as an aspect of well-being, for the individual and relevant others to whom such prosocial motivations will be targeted. This research is one of the first to empirically explore the veracity of the anthropological model, and the first to do so considering its ability to predict levers managers can manipulate to activate the manifestation of transcendence in employees, specifically prosocial motivation, to the best of the authors' knowledge. The model suggests that individual transcendence is one of three key drivers of internalized motivations. Therefore, activating transcendence, a prosociality drive, should lead to enhanced prosocial motivation. In Studies 1 and 2, we show this occurs through instigation of OCBs and relatedness. In Study 3, we not only expose this path but also identify three specific facets of the organization and work design that activate these processes.

According to the anthropological model, three work design aspects lead to employees knowing what to do, or how to act, for and within the organization. These elements are examples of appropriate behaviors, working within facilitating conditions for desired action and knowledge of the consequence of these actions. If the objective is transcendence fulfillment, then aligned work design elements are vital. In our research, these three components of the organizational structure are ethical climate, empowerment and feedback. Each should relate directly to the desired end, and each should be replicable to other organizations. We anticipated that these work design elements would not only directly impact desired behaviors and connection among the workforce but would also interact to influence these intermediate outcomes. However, the data did not support each of these forecasts. For example, feedback was unrelated to OCBs and relatedness, suggesting that of the three transcendence motives as denoted in the anthropological model, consequences of

actions, often communicated with manager/employee feedback, may be sidestepped for facilitating conditions (such as when employees are empowered to create an ethical environment). This finding highlights the importance of managers giving their employees “some” freedom to do what is right and engage in OCBs, further stamping the importance of the anthropological model to work design planning.

Additionally, the empowerment  $\times$  ethical climate interaction quashed the direct effect of empowerment on relatedness and bolstered the positive effect of empowerment on OCBs. This finding highlights the importance of establishing a robust ethical climate, more so than empowering employees. The anthropological model contends that to be moral is to seek good for others and for oneself concurrently; this is realized by pursuing extrinsic, intrinsic and transcendent motives. Managers who want to empower employees must first “sell” them on the importance of developing a morally-sound organizational culture. As grounded in the anthropological model, when employees uphold prosociality in dealing with fellow employees and customers, this type of culture is created. Overall, our findings support both the explanatory power of the anthropological model and its usefulness as a framework for organizations concerned with the well-being of their employees.

#### *Practical implications*

This research helps shed light on work design factors that impact prosocial motivation. Beyond striving for fiscal-based organizational objectives, like reaching profitability goals, these work design elements can be used by organizations as a form of internal branding (Xiong and King, 2015) (i.e. strategy focused on generating employee brand ambassadors or champions who portray their company positively to internal and external constituents), which has shown to positively influence OCBs (Asha and Jyothi, 2013). For example, through their prosociality, frontline employees can convert a company’s brand promise to a brand reality (Xiong and King, 2015) and, in doing so, create a work environment that is driven by transcendent motives. Thus, our research helps provide actionable insight for organizations seeking to ameliorate their employee’s well-being through work design.

The three studies point to two paths that increase prosocial motivation for employees. These paths initiate with specific climate, work design and leadership elements. Organizations can endorse an ethical climate, provide empowerment and managers can offer specific feedback to employees related to prosociality in the workplace. Combined, these managerial levers can be pulled to increase OCBs and relatedness that lead to prosocial motivation. Our findings suggest such frontline behavior engenders a multitude of beneficial individual, team and organizational outcomes.

To help ensure employee prosociality, the organization’s mission must be adapted (Lee and Suh, 2023) to capture ethical climate, empowerment focus, prosociality emphasis and feedback importance. Without the mission highlighting these organizational factors, employee prosocial “buy-in” will be haphazard, while the likelihood of engendering altruistic and empathetic employees will be low at best. From here, an emphasis on training employees about the importance of being transcendent while on the “front line” will create a workplace receptive of such behavior, benefiting both employees and customers. For example, organizations can use ethics-based case studies as part of hiring packets and on-going training, to create an idealistic (compared to a relativistic) ethical work climate (Forsyth, 1980). To boost transcendent motives (e.g. other-oriented empathy and selflessness) (Costa *et al.*, 1991; Penner *et al.*, 1995), elements of moral intensity (e.g. magnitude of consequences, social consensus and concentration of effect) (Jones, 1991)

could be accentuated. Additionally, organizations can mimic (or apply) the Ritz-Carlton empowerment model to their work design, which has shown to boost operational efficiency, customer focus and employee trust. Further, organizations can stress in-person and virtual daily, weekly and/or quarterly feedback sessions, aka “daily lineup” in the hospitality industry. This continuous communication will help “sell” employees on the importance of their prosociality when interacting with customers. Strategies such as these will help goods- and services-based organizations design a transcendent work environment.

Of intrigue, we identify an unexpected effect, the interaction among empowerment and ethical climate does not positively influence the intermediary outcomes. Although both empowerment and ethical climate are directly and positively related to OCBs and relatedness, the empowerment  $\times$  ethical climate interaction eliminates the direct effect of empowerment on relatedness and attenuates the positive effect of empowerment on OCBs. Overall expression of OCBs by employees is higher in the presence of the combined effect of ethical climate and empowerment, albeit with a decreased impact. For managers, this implies that though it remains important, the ability of empowerment to induce OCBs is lower in the presence of an ethical climate. A reason for this is that employees who work in an ethical climate may already perceive a sense of empowerment to do what is right. According to the data, an ethical climate or empowerment alone are enough to instigate the desired helping behaviors; although in practice, they are often exhibited simultaneously by organizations.

#### *Limitations and future research*

Our research is not without limitations. First, it is not possible to consider all work design levers in one model. However, our research rests on the anthropological model approach to work design and we identify representative constructs for each of the three paths identified in the model as effective ways to influence employees. Also, we did not find a direct effect of feedback on OCBs or relatedness. This could be because of our approach to measurement. Although psychometrically sound, we used a two-item measure of feedback which may have limited identification of specific prosocial or ethical climate-based feedback. In our efforts to use more general measurement of this facet of leadership, we may have been unable to identify a potentially viable path to increased OCBs and relatedness perceptions.

As this research is one of the first to more broadly explore the influence of work design on prosocial motivation and the first empirical exploration of the anthropological model related to transcendence, prosociality drive, fulfillment, more research is warranted. Specifically, research is needed to classify the numerous additional managerial controls and work design elements that will promote individual prosocial motivation. Research is also needed to identify additional process variables that intermediate the path from work design to prosocial motivation. Within the theoretical framework proposed, examining how cultural dimensions influence work design is a fruitful avenue to consider (Carter *et al.*, 2024). For example, to what extent are elements of empowerment, OCB, relatedness and prosocial motivation impacted or explained by prominent cultural dimensions such as power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity or long/short term orientation (Hofstede, 2011)? Additionally, research is needed to identify the entirety of the process, from work design to internal states, to prosocial motivation and on to relevant outcomes, such as brand performance factors (e.g. development of brand champions and brand enthusiasts) (Xiong and King, 2015) and workplace dynamics (e.g. psychological well-being and social synergies) (Organ, 1988).

Considering the anthropological model, considerable opportunity for additional work design research abounds. As this research stream remains in its infancy, empirical inspection is needed to further understand the explanatory power of this framework and how it can be used to benefit organizations as they seek to consider the entirety of the employee, their motives, their subsequent motivations and their ultimate well-being. The anthropological model is unique in its consideration of the responsibility of organizations to serve the whole person and to create brand value. Understanding the efficacy of this approach has a high likelihood of yielding valuable information.

Beyond the anthropological model, additional theories are apropos to testing factors that impact OCB, relatedness and prosocial motivation. For example, as emphasized in positive organizational scholarship (Caza and Caza, 2008), examining positive processes (e.g. compassion and purpose) and value transparency as determinants of the noted model constructs would be enlightening. Meaningful insight would also be provided by exploring how perceptions of purpose-driven work (within the “work as a calling” viewpoint) influence prosocial motivation (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997). Finally, as grounded in transformational leadership (Seltzer and Bass, 1990), the role of the organizational leader, who inspires through ethical principles and shared purpose, in activating OCBs is worth investigating.

## References

- Alderfer, C.P. (1969), “An empirical test of a new theory of human needs”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 142-175, doi: [10.1016/0030-5073\(69\)90004-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(69)90004-X).
- Allan, B.A., Batz-Barbarich, C., Sterling, H.M. and Tay, L. (2019), “Outcomes of meaningful work: a meta-analysis”, *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 56 No. 3, pp. 500-528, doi: [10.1111/joms.12406](https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12406).
- Aquino, K. and Reed, A.I.I. (2002), “The self-importance of moral identity”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 83 No. 6, pp. 1423-1440, doi: [10.1037/0022-3514.83.6.1423](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.83.6.1423).
- Argandoña, A. (2008), “Integrating ethics into action theory and organizational theory”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 78 No. 3, pp. 435-466, doi: [10.1007/s10551-006-9340-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9340-x).
- Arnaud, A. (2010), “Conceptualizing and measuring ethical work climate: development and validation of the ethical climate index”, *Business and Society*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 345-358, doi: [10.1177/0007650310362865](https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650310362865).
- Asha, C.S. and Jyothi, P. (2013), “Internal branding: a determining element of organizational citizenship behaviour”, *Journal of Contemporary Management Research*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 37-57.
- Ashforth, B.E. and Mael, F. (1989), “Social identity theory and the organization”, *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 20-39, doi: [10.5465/amr.1989.4278999](https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4278999).
- Baard, P.P., Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2004), “Intrinsic need satisfaction: a motivational basis of performance and well-being two work settings”, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 34 No. 10, pp. 2045-2068, doi: [10.1111/j.1559-1816.2004.tb02690](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2004.tb02690).
- Bem, D.J. (1967), “Self-perception: an alternative interpretation of cognitive dissonance phenomena”, *Psychological Review*, Vol. 74 No. 3, pp. 183-200, doi: [10.1037/h0024835](https://doi.org/10.1037/h0024835).
- Bolino, M.C. and Grant, A.M. (2016), “The bright side of being prosocial at work, and the dark side, too: a review and agenda for research on other-oriented motives, behavior, and impact on organizations”, *Academy of Management Annals*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 599-670, doi: [10.5465/19416520.2016.1153260](https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2016.1153260).
- Brown, S.P. and Peterson, R.A. (1994), “The effect of effort on sales performance and job satisfaction”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 70-80, doi: [10.1177/002224299405800206](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299405800206).
- Carter, K.M., Hetrick, A.L., Chen, M., Humphrey, S.E., Morgeson, F.P. and Hoffman, B.J. (2024), “How culture shapes the influence of work design characteristics: a narrative and meta-analytic

- review", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 122-157, doi: [10.1177/01492063231179405](https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063231179405).
- Caza, B.B. and Caza, A. (2008), "Positive organizational scholarship: a critical theory perspective", *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 21-33, doi: [10.1177/1056492607305907](https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492607305907).
- Chin, W.W. (1998), "The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling", *Modern Methods for Business Research*, Vol. 295 No. 2, pp. 295-336, doi: [10.4324/9781410604385-10](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410604385-10).
- Chudeck, M., Zhao, W. and Henrich, J. (2013), "Culture-gene coevolution, large-scale cooperation, and the shaping of human social psychology", in Sterelny, K., Joyce, R., Calcott B. and Fraser, B. (Eds), *Cooperation and Its Evolution*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 425-457.
- Coote, L.V., Price, E. and Ackfeldt, A.-L. (2004), "An investigation into the antecedents of goal congruence in retail-service settings", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 7, pp. 547-559, doi: [10.1108/08876040410561875](https://doi.org/10.1108/08876040410561875).
- Costa, P.T. Jr, McCrae, R.R. and Dye, D.A. (1991), "Facet scales for agreeableness and conscientiousness: a revision of the NEO personality inventory", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 12 No. 9, pp. 887-898, doi: [10.1016/0191-8869\(91\)90177-D](https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(91)90177-D).
- Deci, E.L., Connell, J.P. and Ryan, R.M. (1989), "Self-determination in a work organization", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 74 No. 4, pp. 580-590.
- Deci, E.L., Eghrari, H., Patrick, B.C. and Leone, D.R. (1994), "Facilitating internalization: the self-determination theory perspective", *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 62 No. 1, pp. 119-142, doi: [10.1111/j.1467-6494.1994.tb00797.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1994.tb00797.x).
- Donavan, D.T., Brown, T.J. and Mowen, J.C. (2004), "Internal benefits of service-worker customer orientation: job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 68 No. 1, pp. 128-146, doi: [10.1509/jmkg.68.1.128.24034](https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.1.128.24034).
- Durant, W. (1933), *The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Greater Philosophers*, Simon and Schuster, New York, NY.
- Ferreiro, P. and Alcázar, M. (2013), *Managing People*, PAD – Escuela de Dirección, Universidad de Piura, Lima, Peru.
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D.F. (1981), "Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 39-50, doi: [10.1177/002224378101800104](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104).
- Forsyth, D.R. (1980), "A taxonomy of ethical ideologies", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 175-184, doi: [10.1037/0022-3514.39.1.175](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.39.1.175).
- Francois, P., Fujiwara, T. and Ypersele, T.V. (2018), "The origins of human prosociality: cultural group selection in the workplace and the laboratory", *Science Advances*, Vol. 4 No. 9, p. aat2201, doi: [10.1126/sciadv.aat2201](https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aat2201).
- Fried, Y., Levi, A.S. and Laurence, G. (2008), "Motivation and job design in the new world of work", in Cooper, C. and Cartwright, C. (Eds), in *The Oxford Handbook of Personnel Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford England, pp. 586-611, doi: [10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199234738.003.0025](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199234738.003.0025).
- Gagné, M., Koestner, R. and Zuckerman, M. (2000), "Facilitating acceptance of organizational change: the importance of self-determination", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 30 No. 9, pp. 1843-1852, doi: [10.1111/j.1559-1816.2000.tb02471.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2000.tb02471.x).
- Gneezy, A., Imas, A., Brown, A., Nelson, L.D. and Norton, M.I. (2012), "Paying to be nice: consistency and costly prosocial behavior", *Management Science*, Vol. 58 No. 1, pp. 179-187, doi: [10.1287/mnsc.1110.1437](https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1110.1437).
- Grant, A.M. (2007), "Relational job design and the motivation to make a prosocial difference", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 393-417, doi: [10.5465/amr.2007.24351328](https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.24351328).

- Grant, A.M. (2008a), "Designing jobs to do good: dimensions and psychological consequences of prosocial job characteristics", *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 19-39, doi: [10.1080/17439760701751012](https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760701751012).
- Grant, A.M. (2008b), "Does intrinsic motivation fuel the prosocial fire? Motivational synergy in predicting persistence, performance, and productivity", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 93 No. 1, pp. 48-58, doi: [10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.48](https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.48).
- Grant, A.M. and Mayer, D.M. (2009), "Good soldiers and good actors: prosocial and impression management motives as interactive predictors of affiliative citizenship behaviors", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 94 No. 4, pp. 900-912, doi: [10.1037/a0013770](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013770).
- Grant, A.M. and Parker, S.K. (2009), "Redesigning work design theories: the rise of relational and proactive perspectives", *Academy of Management Annals*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 317-375, doi: [10.5465/19416520903047327](https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520903047327).
- Grant, A.M. and Patil, S.V. (2012), "Challenging the norm of self-interest: minority influence and transitions to helping norms in work units", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 547-568, doi: [10.5465/amr.2010.0437](https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2010.0437).
- Grant, A.M. and Sumanth, J.J. (2009), "Mission possible? The performance of prosocially motivated employees depends on manager trustworthiness", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 94 No. 4, pp. 927-944, doi: [10.1037/a0014391](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014391).
- Grant, A.M., Campbell, E.M., Chen, G., Cottone, K., Lapedis, D. and Lee, K. (2007), "Impact and the art of motivation maintenance: the effects of contact with beneficiaries on persistence behavior", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 103 No. 1, pp. 53-67, doi: [10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.05.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.05.004).
- Guillén, M., Ferrero, I. and Hoffman, W.M. (2015), "The neglected ethical and spiritual motivations in the workplace", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 128 No. 4, pp. 803-816, doi: [10.1007/s10551-013-1985-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1985-7).
- Hackman, J.R. and Oldham, G.R. (1976), "Motivation through the design of work: test of a theory", *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 250-279, doi: [10.1016/0030-5073\(76\)90016-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(76)90016-7).
- Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J., Anderson, R.E. and Tatham, R.L. (2006), *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 6th ed, Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Hair, J.F., Hult, G.T., Ringle, C.M., Sarstedt, M. and Thiele, K.O. (2017), "Mirror, mirror on the wall: a comparative evaluation of composite-based structural equation modeling methods", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 45 No. 5, pp. 616-632, doi: [10.1007/s11747-017-0517-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-017-0517-x).
- Hair, J.F., Risher, J.J., Sarstedt, M. and Ringle, C.M. (2019), "When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM", *European Business Review*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 2-24, doi: [10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203](https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203).
- Hartline, M.D. and Ferrell, O.C. (1996), "The management of customer-contact service employees: an empirical investigation", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 60 No. 4, pp. 52-70, doi: [10.1177/002224299606000406](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299606000406).
- Henrich, J. (2004), "Cultural group selection, coevolutionary processes and large-scale cooperation", *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, Vol. 53 No. 1, pp. 3-35, doi: [10.1016/S0167-2681\(03\)00094-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-2681(03)00094-5).
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C.M. and Sarstedt, M. (2015), "A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 115-135, doi: [10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8).
- Hofstede, G. (2011), "Dimensionalizing cultures: the Hofstede model in context", *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 1-26, doi: [10.9707/2307-0919.1014](https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014).
- Homburg, C., Wieseke, J. and Hoyer, W.D. (2009), "Social identity and the service-profit chain", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73 No. 2, pp. 38-54, doi: [10.1509/jmkg.73.2.38](https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.73.2.38).

- Ilicic, J., Baxter, S.M. and Kulczynski, A. (2019), "Keeping it real: examining the influence of co-branding authenticity in cause-related marketing", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 49-59, doi: [10.1057/s41262-018-0109-1](https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-018-0109-1).
- Jaworski, B.J. and Kohli, A.K. (1991), "Supervisory feedback: alternative types and their impact on salespeople's performance and satisfaction", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 190-201, doi: [10.1177/002224379102800206](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224379102800206).
- Jones, T.M. (1991), "Ethical decision making by individuals in organizations: an issue-contingent model", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 366-395, doi: [10.5465/amr.1991.4278958](https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1991.4278958).
- Jung, H., Seo, E., Han, E., Henderson, M.D. and Patall, E.A. (2020), "Prosocial modeling: a meta-analytic review and synthesis", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 146 No. 8, pp. 635-663, doi: [10.1037/bul0000235](https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000235).
- Kanfer, R. (2008), "Work motivation: advancing theory and impact", *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 118-127, doi: [10.1111/j.1754-9434.2008.01120.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2008.01120.x).
- Kanfer, R., Frese, M. and Johnson, R.E. (2017), "Motivation related to work: a century of progress", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 102 No. 3, pp. 338-355, doi: [10.1037/apl0000133](https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000133).
- Klotz, A.C., Swider, B.W. and Kwon, S.H. (2023), "Back-translation practices in organizational research: avoiding loss in translation", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 108 No. 5, pp. 699-727, doi: [10.1037/apl0001050](https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001050).
- Kock, N. (2015), "Common method bias in PLS-SEM: a full collinearity assessment approach", *International Journal of e-Collaboration*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 1-10, doi: [10.4018/ijec.2015100101](https://doi.org/10.4018/ijec.2015100101).
- Kwon, M., Cunningham, J.L. and Jachimowicz, J.M. (2023), "Discerning saints: moralization of intrinsic motivation and selective prosociality at work", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 66 No. 6, pp. 1625-1650, doi: [10.5465/amj.2020.1761](https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2020.1761).
- Labroo, A.A., Khan, U. and Su, S.J. (2023), "Reconsidering prosocial behavior as intersocial: a literature review and a new perspective", *Consumer Psychology Review*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 92-108, doi: [10.1002/arcp.1088](https://doi.org/10.1002/arcp.1088).
- Lee, A., Thomas, G., Martin, R., Guillaume, Y. and Marstand, A.F. (2019), "Beyond relationship quality: the role of leader-member exchange importance in leader-follower dyads", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 92 No. 4, pp. 736-763, doi: [10.1111/joop.12262](https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12262).
- Lee, S.B. and Suh, T. (2023), "Internal audience watches the boss walking the talk: the mechanism of management's mission alignment for internal branding", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 472-487, doi: [10.1108/JPBm-12-2021-3786](https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBm-12-2021-3786).
- Li, W.D., Fay, D., Frese, M., Harms, P.D. and Gao, X.Y. (2014), "Reciprocal relationship between proactive personality and work characteristics: a latent change score approach", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 99 No. 5, pp. 948-965, doi: [10.1037/a0036169](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036169).
- Liao, H., Su, R., Ptashnik, T. and Nielsen, J. (2022), "Feeling good, doing good, and getting ahead: a meta-analytic investigation of the outcomes of prosocial motivation at work", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 148 Nos 3-4, pp. 158-198, doi: [10.1037/bul0000362](https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000362).
- Lindell, M.K. and Whitney, D.J. (2001), "Accounting for common method variance in cross-sectional research designs", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 86 No. 1, pp. 114-121, doi: [10.1037/0021-9010.86.1.114](https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.1.114).
- Ma, L.K., Tunney, R.J. and Ferguson, E. (2017), "Does gratitude enhance prosociality?: A meta-analytic review", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 143 No. 6, pp. 601-635, doi: [10.1037/bul0000103](https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000103).
- MacKenzie, S.B., Podsakoff, P.M. and Fetter, R. (1993), "The impact of organizational citizenship behavior on evaluations of salesperson performance", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57 No. 1, pp. 70-80, doi: [10.1177/002224299305700105](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700105).

- Man, D.C. and Lam, S.S.K. (2003), "The effects of job complexity and autonomy on cohesiveness in collectivistic and individualistic work groups: a cross-cultural analysis", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 24 No. 8, pp. 979-1001, doi: [10.1002/job.227](https://doi.org/10.1002/job.227).
- Meenakshi, A.H., Sharma, Y. and Sijariya, R. (2023), "Building a transcendental attitude: integrating ancient wisdom for ethical conduct in the modern workplace", *Decision*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 461-471, doi: [10.1007/s40622-023-00366-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40622-023-00366-9).
- Morgeson, F.P. and Humphrey, S.E. (2008), "Job and team design: toward a more integrative conceptualization of work design", *Personnel and Human Resource Management*, Vol. 27, pp. 39-91, doi: [10.1016/S0742-7301\(08\)27002-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-7301(08)27002-7).
- Oldham, G.G. and Fried, Y. (2016), "Job design research and theory: past, present and future", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 136, pp. 20-35, doi: [10.1016/j.obhdp.2016.05.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2016.05.002).
- Organ, D.W. (1988), *Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Good Soldier Syndrome*, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD.
- Parker, S.K. (2014), "Beyond motivation: Job and work design for development, health, and more", *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 65 No. 1, pp. 661-691, doi: [10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115208](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115208).
- Parker, S.K., Morgeson, F.P. and Johns, G. (2017), "One hundred years of work design research: looking back and looking forward", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 102 No. 3, pp. 403-420, doi: [10.1037/apl0000106](https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000106).
- Patton, D. (2003), "How do we deceive ourselves", *Philosophical Psychology*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 229-246, doi: [10.1080/09515080307767](https://doi.org/10.1080/09515080307767).
- Penner, L.A., Craiger, J.P., Fritzsche, B.A., and Freifeld, T.S. (1995), "Measuring the prosocial personality", in Butcher, J.N. and Spielberger, C.D. (Eds), *Advances in Personality Assessment*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ, pp. 147-163.
- Pérez López, J.A. (1974), "Organizational theory: a cybernetic approach", available at: [www.iiese.edu/research/pdfs/DI-0005-E.pdf](http://www.iiese.edu/research/pdfs/DI-0005-E.pdf) (accessed 8 April 2025).
- Pérez López, J.A. (2014), *Foundations of Management*, Rialp, Madrid, Spain.
- Piccolo, R.F. and Colquitt, J.A. (2006), "Transformational leadership and job behaviors: the mediating role of core job characteristics", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 327-340, doi: [10.5465/amj.2006.20786079](https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2006.20786079).
- Podsakoff, P.M. and MacKenzie, S.B. (1994), "Organizational citizenship behavior and sales unit effectiveness", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 351-363, doi: [10.1177/002224379403100303](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224379403100303).
- Podsakoff, P.M. and MacKenzie, S.B. (1995), "An examination of substitutes for leadership within a levels-of-analysis framework", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 289-328, doi: [10.1016/1048-9843\(95\)90011-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90011-X).
- Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Lee, J.-Y. and Podsakoff, N.P. (2003), "Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 5, pp. 879-903, doi: [10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879](https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879).
- Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Moorman, R.H. and Fetter, R. (1990), "Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors", *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 107-143, doi: [10.1016/1048-9843\(90\)90009-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(90)90009-7).
- Rayburn, S.W. (2014), "Improving service employee affect: the transformative potential of work design", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 71-81, doi: [10.1108/JSM-02-2012-0042](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-02-2012-0042).
- Rayburn, S.W. and Gilliam, D.A. (2016), "Using work design to motivate FLE customer oriented behaviors", *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 30 Nos 7-8, pp. 339-355, doi: [10.1080/02642069.2016.1219723](https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2016.1219723).

- Rayburn, S.W. and Ochieng, G. (2022), "Instigating transformative entrepreneurship in subsistence communities: supporting leaders' transcendence and self-determination", *Africa Journal of Management*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 271-297, doi: [10.1080/23322373.2022.2071574](https://doi.org/10.1080/23322373.2022.2071574).
- Rosanas, J.M. (2008), "Beyond economic criteria: a humanistic approach to organizational survival", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 78 No. 3, pp. 447-462, doi: [10.1007/s10551-006-9341-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9341-9).
- Rosanas, J.M. and Velilla, M. (2003), "Loyalty and trust as ethical bases of organizations", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 49-59, doi: [10.1023/A:1023238525433](https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023238525433).
- Sattler, H., Völckner, F. and Riediger, C. (2010), "The impact of brand extension success drivers on brand extension price premiums", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 319-328, doi: [10.1016/j.ijresmar.2010.08.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2010.08.005).
- Seltzer, J. and Bass, B.M. (1990), "Transformational leadership: beyond initiation and consideration", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 693-703, doi: [10.1177/014920639001600403](https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639001600403).
- Shin, Y. (2012), "CEO ethical leadership, ethical climate, climate strength, and collective organizational citizenship behavior", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 108 No. 3, pp. 299-312, doi: [10.1007/s10551-011-1091-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1091-7).
- Singh, J., Arnold, T., Brady, M. and Brown, T. (2017), "The emergent field of organizational frontlines", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 3-11, doi: [10.1177/1094670516681513](https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670516681513).
- Somech, A. and Drach-Zahavy, A. (2004), "Exploring organizational citizenship behaviour from an organizational perspective: the relationship between organizational learning and organizational citizenship behaviour", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 77 No. 3, pp. 281-298, doi: [10.1348/0963179041752709](https://doi.org/10.1348/0963179041752709).
- Steers, R.M. (1977), "Antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 46-56, doi: [10.2307/2391745](https://doi.org/10.2307/2391745).
- Sun, L.-Y., Aryee, S. and Law, K.S. (2007), "High-performance human resource practices, citizenship behavior, and organizational performance: a relational perspective", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 50 No. 3, pp. 558-577, doi: [10.5465/amj.2007.25525821](https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.25525821).
- Tajfel, H. (1982), "Social psychology of intergroup relations", *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 1-39.
- Toncar, M.F. and Munch, J.M. (2010), "Meaningful replication: when is a replication no longer a replication? A rejoinder to Stella and Adam (2008)", *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 71-80, doi: [10.2753/MTP1069-6679180105](https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679180105).
- Trafimow, D. (2022), "A new way to think about internal and external validity", *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, Vol. 18 No. 5, pp. 1028-1046, doi: [10.1177/17456916221136117](https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916221136117).
- Van der Voet, J. and Steijn, B. (2021), "Relational job characteristics and prosocial motivation: a longitudinal study of youth care professionals", *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 57-77, doi: [10.1177/0734371X19862852](https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X19862852).
- Vough, H.C. and Parker, S.K. (2008), "Work design: still going strong", in Cooper, C.L. and Barling, J. (Eds.), *Handbook of Organizational Behavior*, Sage Publications, London, pp. 411-427.
- Wang, M.-L. (2009), "Does organizational support promote citizenship in service settings? The moderating role of service climate", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 149 No. 6, pp. 648-676, doi: [10.1080/00224540903347297](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224540903347297).
- Williams, L.J. and Anderson, S.E. (1991), "Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 601-617, doi: [10.1177/014920639101700305](https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700305).
- Wrzesniewski, A., McCauley, C., Rozin, P. and Schwartz, B. (1997), "Jobs, careers, and callings: People's relations to their work", *Journal of Research in Personality*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 21-33, doi: [10.1006/jrpe.1997.2162](https://doi.org/10.1006/jrpe.1997.2162).
- Wu, C.-H. (2016), "Personality change via work: a job demand-control model of big-five personality changes", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 92, pp. 157-166, doi: [10.1016/j.jvb.2015.12.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.12.001).

Xiong, L. and King, C. (2015), "Motivational drivers that fuel employees to champion the hospitality brand", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 44, pp. 58-69, doi: [10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.10.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.10.009).

Zhu, Y. and Akhtar, S. (2014), "How transformational leadership influences follower helping behaviors: the role of trust and prosocial motivation", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 373-392, doi: [10.1002/job.1884](https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1884).

### Further reading

Grant, A.M. (2009), "Putting self-interest out of business? Contributions and unanswered questions from use-inspired research on prosocial motivation", *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 94-98, doi: [10.1111/j.1754-9434.2008.01113.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2008.01113.x).

Hair, J.F., Sarstedt, M., Matthews, L.M., and Ringle, C.M. (2016), "Identifying and treating unobserved heterogeneity with FIMIX-PLS: part I—method", *European Business Review*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 63-76, doi: [10.1108/EBR-09-2015-0094](https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-09-2015-0094).

### Corresponding author

Jeremy J. Sierra can be contacted at: [js204@txstate.edu](mailto:js204@txstate.edu)