# Leadership continuity at stake –
# Succession management in nonprofit organizations

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# Kapitel 1: Synopse

## Leadership continuity at stake –
## Succession management in nonprofit organizations

**Problemstellung**

Als Attraktoren und vielfältige Advokaten des Gemeinwohls sind Nonprofit-Organisationen auf ausreichend qualifiziertes Personal angewiesen (Helmig & Boenigk, 2019; Kang et al., 2015; Wang, 2022). Ohne solch Personal können sie die Voraussetzungen für mehr Zusammenhalt in der differenzierten Gesellschaft nur unzureichend schaffen (Akingbola, 2013) und ihre komplexen Aufgaben in volatilen Zeiten (Ukrainekrieg, Nah-Ost-Konflikt, Fluchtbewegungen, Klimakrise, Pandemiefolgen, Extremismus, Desinformation etc.) nicht effektiv bearbeiten.

Trotz dieser organisationalen Zentralität von Personal gilt dessen Sicherstellung als entscheidende Herausforderung für Nonprofit-Organisationen (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016; Ihm & Baek, 2021). Neben der zeitgeistigen, demographischen Entwicklung, insbesondere der Ruhestandsbewegung der Babyboomer-Generation (Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Russel et al., 2020; Tierney, 2006), erhöhen weitere Trends auf dem Personalmarkt die Notwendigkeit für gemeinnützige Nonprofit-Organisationen, sich personalstrategisch aufzustellen. Zu diesen Trends zählen u.a. der zunehmende Wettbewerb um die Gewinnung von talentiertem Personal (Huvanandana, 2023; Guo et al., 2011; McKee & Froelich, 2016; Von Bergen, 2007) sowie nur bedingt-langfristiges Engagement im dritten Sektor (AbouAssi et al., 2021; Walk et al., 2021).

Neben der Gefährdung des unmittelbaren, operativen Betriebes durch fehlendes Personal können Personalleerstellen, vor allem bedingt durch den Organisationsaustritt von Schlüsselakteuren wie Vorstandsmitgliedern, operativen Geschäftsführer:innen oder Abteilungsleiter:innen, zu erheblichen Irritationen des Organisationswirkens führen (Ali & Mehreen, 2019; Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Schepker et al., 2017; Tebbe et al., 2017). Dies soll folgend verdeutlicht werden: Nonprofit-Organisationen verfolgen in ihrer Bereitstellung von gemeinwohlorientierten Dienstleistungen und Services langfristige Kooperationsansätze. Ihnen ist zum Beispiel an längerfristigen Beziehungen zu Spender:innen, Förderorganisationen, Mitarbeitenden und staatlichen Akteuren gelegen. Sie sind aber auch von diesen Beziehungen abhängig (Bish & Becker, 2016; Helmig & Boenigk, 2019). Eher disruptive Fluktuation in Top-Positionen kann die kritischen Beziehungen im kooperativen Nexus der Organisation (Wieland, 2020) massiv stören. Nicht zuletzt, da sie die partnerschaftliche Zuverlässigkeit (kommunikativ) untergräbt und latent Signale der Unsicherheit provoziert (Li, 2019). Zudem können Fluktuationsbewegungen, gerade in Führungspositionen, strategische Neuausrichtungen der Nonprofit-Organisation auslösen, welche ursprüngliche Bedingungen von unterhaltenen Beziehungen zu wichtigen Interessengruppen durcheinanderbringen.

Der Nonprofit-Geschäftsbetrieb kann ferner durch ausbleibende Pflege eines internen Talentpools („High Potentials“) gefährdet werden. Weist doch das Fehlen eines solchen Pools auf eine eher unausgereifte Nonprofit-Personalsystematik hinsichtlich der Talentrekrutierung, -entwicklung und -bindung hin und gibt Hinweis darauf, dass zukünftige Humankapitalbedürfnisse der Organisation nicht intern gedeckt werden. Dies torpediert ebenfalls Führungskontinuität und macht unerwünschte Organisationsunruhe wahrscheinlicher (Geib & Boenigk, 2022).

Im akademischen Diskurs wird kontinuierlich prognostiziert, dass es zukünftig, bedingt durch Arbeitsmarktdynamiken, zu häufigeren Nonprofit-Personalwechseln, insbesondere in der Führungsriege, kommen wird (Tierney, 2006; Cornelius et al., 2011; Johnson, 2022; Landles-Cobb et al. 2015). Infolgedessen hat sich systematisches Nachfolgemanagement in den letzten Jahren zu einem eigenen Forschungsthema in der Nonprofit-Managementliteratur emanzipiert (Bozer et al., 2015; Froelich et al., 2011; Geib & Boenigk, 2022; Li, 2019; Santora et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2020). Der Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagementprozess soll dabei in dieser Dissertation wie folgt definiert werden:

> *“The succession management process in nonprofits is defined as the persistent planning and implementation of […] activities in continuous loops that target nonprofit employees' personal development and career progression, as well as their transfer of knowledge of organizational specifics, aimed towards the outcome of a strong pipeline of leadership successors and, ultimately, leadership continuity.”* (Geib & Boenigk, 2022, S. 63)

Angelehnt an Rothwell (2005) steht hier im Fokus, dass Nonprofit-Organisationen Personalpraktiken implementieren, welche auf die Entwicklung von Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden (z.B. hinsichtlich Nonprofit-Leitungs- und Konfliktmanagement-Kompetenzen) sowie auf die Weitergabe von Wissen über organisatorische Besonderheiten (u.a. in Bezug auf Spender:innen-Konstellationen), abzielen. Beides mit dem Ziel, Humanpotentiale für Führungsnachfolgen herauszuarbeiten und die Kontinuität der Führung so langfristig zu gewährleisten. Im Widerspruch dazu attestiert die internationale Nonprofit-Forschung der Praxis aber bislang, dass sich nur wenige Organisationen durch die Umsetzung von umfassenden Nachfolgestrategien für die Zukunft personalstrategisch aufstellen (Carman et al., 2010; Chang & Besel, 2021; DeSimone & Roberts, 2023; Santora et al., 2015).

Dass Nonprofit-Organisationen sich unzureichend mit der Implementierung von Nachfolgemanagement befassen, zeigt sich aber nicht nur im Fehlen von implementierten (Führungs-)Entwicklungspraktiken, sondern auch in mangelnder Professionalisierung ihrer

Recruitment- und Bindungspraktiken. So weisen Autor:innen wie Huvanandana (2023) oder Guo et al. (2011) auf das spezifische Nonprofit-Problem der Talentakquise hin. Gleichzeitig zeigt u.a. eine Studie von Nonprofit HR (2022), dass über 70% der US-Nonprofit-Organisationen keine formellen Bindungspläne haben. Nachfolgemanagement kann jedoch nur durch ausreichend internes Personal effektiv gelingen, welches in der Organisation verbleibt, sich dort weiterentwickelt und so für zukünftig vakante Stellen eingeplant werden kann.

Neben der Notwendigkeit der Implementierung von umfassendem Nachfolgemanagement-Praktiken stehen Nonprofit-Organisationen daher auch unter dem allgemeineren Zugzwang, attraktive und ansprechende Arbeitsplätze durch Personalpraktiken bereitzustellen, die arbeitgeberattraktiv und bindungsfördernd wirken. Solche Praktiken umfassen nach Akingbola et al. (2023) neben Karriereentwicklungsmöglichkeiten, faire Gehaltspolicen, flexible Arbeitsmodelle, eine komfortable Büroausstattung, gute Vorgesetztenbeziehungen und vitalkollegiale Sozialisation.

Die vorliegende Dissertation setzt an diesem Punkt an und intendiert, den bisherigen Forschungsstand des Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagements in mehreren Hinsichten zu erweitern. Durch vier Studien fokussiert sich die Dissertation grundsätzlich auf Gelingensbedingungen für mehr Führungskontinuität. Insbesondere analysiert sie dabei, (1) inwiefern der Ansatz geteilter Führungsverantwortung von Vorstand, Geschäftsführenden/Abteilungsleitenden und Personalverantwortlichen Nachfolgemanagement-Praktiken wahrscheinlicher macht; (2) inwiefern zwei spezifische Motivationsfaktoren (flexible Arbeitsmodelle, Führungsentwicklungsmöglichkeiten) die Bewerbungsabsichten potentieller Nonprofit-Talente erhöhen; sowie (3) welche möglichen Personalpraktiken sich positiv auf die Bleibeabsicht von Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden auswirken. Es sei hier darauf hingewiesen, dass die Dissertation insgesamt Management-Bemühungen untersucht, die Nonprofit-Nachfolgen auf mehreren möglichen Führungsebenen (z.B. im Vorstand, in der Geschäftsführung, in der Abteilungs- bzw. Projektleitung) einschließt. Zudem legt die Dissertation ihr analytisches Augenmerk im Kontext von Nachfolgebemühungen auf hauptamtliche Nonprofit-Mitarbeiter:innen und nicht auf Ehrenamtliche oder Freiwillige.

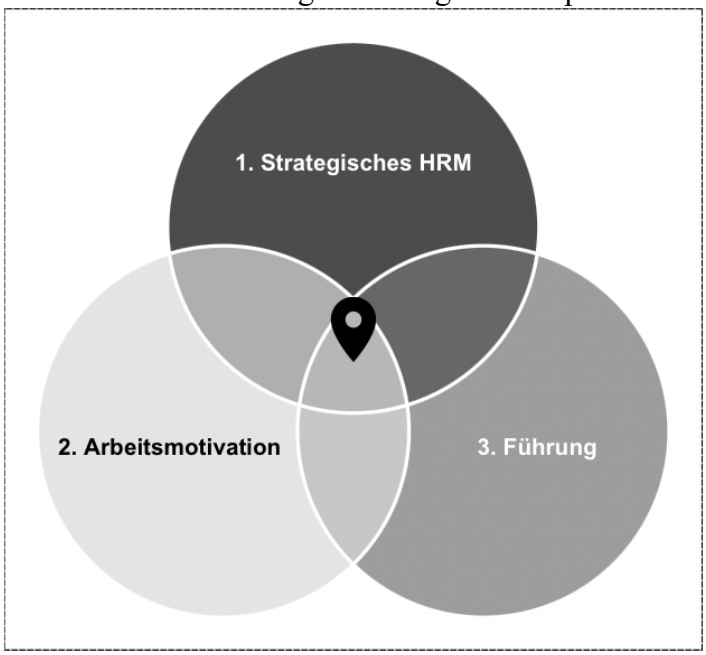
Der folgende Abschnitt verortet zunächst die akademische Auseinandersetzung des Nachfolgemanagements in den übergeordneten Diskursen der Nonprofit-Managementforschung. Hierbei werden drei Diskurse als wesentlich proklamiert: Strategisches Personalmanagement, Arbeitsmotivationsforschung und Führungsforschung (Schaubild 1). Auf die wissenschaftliche Verortung der Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagementforschung folgt anschließend die detaillierte Auseinandersetzung mit dem aktuellen Forschungsstand des

Nachfolgemanagements. Ferner werden drei explizite Forschungslücken identifiziert und Dissertationsziele formuliert, die in vier einzelnen Studienbeiträgen kumulativ adressiert werden. Die Beiträge werden zuvor noch in einem konzeptionellen Bezugsrahmen verortet, der auf einschlägigen Vorarbeiten beruht, diese jedoch erweitert und sich so als übersichtsdienlicher Impuls für zukünftige Forschungsarbeiten anbietet. Der ausführlichen Präsentation der einzelnen Beiträge gehen kurze Zusammenfassungen voraus.

**Verortung der Nachfolgediskussion in der Nonprofit-Forschung**

Die Nachfolgeforschung in Nonprofit-Organisationen ist im Schnittstellenfeld zwischen unterschiedlichen, wissenschaftlichen Forschungsbereichen verortet. Diese beinhalten das strategische Nonprofit-Personalmanagements (auch: Human Resource Management, Abk.: HRM) sowie die Arbeitsmotivations- und die Führungsforschung. Schaubild 1 illustriert diese Verortung.

**Schaubild 1.** Forschungsverortung des Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagements




*1. Strategisches Personalmanagement & Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement*

Strategisches Nonprofit-Personalmanagement schließt basal an die Forschung zum Nachfolgemanagement an, weil sich letzteres den besonderen Personalbedürfnissen in Bezug auf Führungskräfte annimmt. Insofern ist Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement am ehesten im organisationalen Aufgabenbereich des Personalmanagements angesiedelt. Strategisches Personalmanagement in Nonprofit-Organisationen wird an sich seit den späten 1990er Jahren international als wichtiges Instrument zur organisationalen Leistungssteigerung erkannt (Guo et al., 2011; Perry & Mesch, 1997). Während personalmanageriale Bemühungen bis dahin primär als Verwaltungstätigkeit angesehen werden (Englert, 2019; Guo et al., 2011), erkennen

Autor:innen wie Huselid et al. (1997), dass interne Richtlinien und Praktiken zur Förderung menschlicher Arbeitskraft den Organisationserfolg konkret mitbestimmen. Das Verständnis der den Erfolg beeinflussenden Triebkraft strategischen Personalmanagements hält jedoch erst mit Beginn des neuen Jahrtausends (Ban et al., 2003; Helmig et al., 2008; Jäger & Beyes, 2007; Lynn, 2003; Pynes, 2004) und im Laufe der 2010er Jahre (Akingbola, 2013; Boenigk et al., 2020; Ridder et al., 2012; Walk et al., 2014; Word & Sowa, 2017) Einzug in einschlägige Nonprofit-Forschungsdebatten. Angelehnt an Vorarbeiten der letzten zwei Dekaden definieren Helmig und Boenigk (2019) strategisches Nonprofit-Personalmanagement heute als die

> *„Aufgabe, das Personal einer Nonprofit-Organisation auf einem erwünschten Qualitätsniveau zu angemessenen Kosten zu gewinnen, zu erhalten, zu entwickeln und dieses wirtschaftlich sowie missionsorientiert in den Leistungs- und Führungsprozessen […] einzusetzen.“* (Helmig & Boenigk, 2019, S. 93)

Strategisches Nonprofit-Personalmanagement beschäftigt sich unter der Berücksichtigung von organisational zu verkraftenden Belastungen also mit der Planung und Implementierung von Praktiken, die zu (mehr) Personalzufluss und -bindung führen. Ferner tangiert es solche Praktiken, die komplementär und parallel auf die persönliche und professionelle Entwicklung von Mitarbeiter:innen abzielen. Strategisches Nonprofit-Personalmanagement verfolgt dabei das übergeordnete Ziel, Organisationsziele eher zu erreichen. Im Unterschied zur öffentlichen Verwaltung und zu privatwirtschaftlichen (profitorientierten) Unternehmen muss umfassendes Nonprofit-Personalmanagement neben hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter:innen auch Ehrenamtliche und Freiwillige integrieren (Helmig & Boenigk, 2019; Meyer et al., 2022).

In der Nonprofit-Managementliteratur ist bezüglich der spezifischen Typologisierung von Personalmanagement die theoretische, auf einem Kontinuum verlaufende, Distinktion zwischen zwei übergeordneten Dimensionen geläufig. So wird zwischen der strategischen und der ressourcen-basierten Orientierung unterschieden (Ridder & Baluch, 2010; Ridder & Baluch, 2017). In Bezug auf die strategische Orientierung geht es darum, darauf hinzuweisen, dass Nonprofit-Organisationen in ihren Personalaktivitäten maßgeblich von ihrer Organisationsumwelt, also von Markttrends und Wettbewerb, beeinflusst sind (Ridder & Baluch, 2010). Primär strategisch-orientierte Nonprofit-Organisationen analysieren dementsprechend ihr externes Umfeld – insbesondere Marktchancen und -restriktionen – und intendieren diese mit ihren eigenen Werten, ihrer satzungskonformen Mission und den Erwartungen ihrer individuellen Interessengruppen zu synchronisieren. Mit der ressourcen-basierten Orientierung ist dagegen gemeint, dass sich Nonprofit-Organisationen weniger an

Märkten und mehr an der Sichtung und Entwicklung von internen Ressourcen zur Generierung von Wettbewerbsvorteilen ausrichten können (Ridder & Baluch, 2017).

Im Einklang mit der Definition von Helmig und Boenigk (2019) des strategischen Personalmanagements haben schon Ridder und Baluch (2010) auf einen Idealtypus im Nonprofit-Personalmanagement verwiesen, welcher den Blick für Markt, Externalitäten und die strategische Mission stets reflektiert, gleichzeitig aber ein humanistisches Bild von Mitarbeiter:innen integriert. Die Autor:innen sprechen hierbei von wertebasiertem Personalmanagement („values-based HRM“) (Baluch & Ridder, 2017, S. 77). Demnach wird durch die Personalrekrutierung, -bindung und -entwicklung nicht nur das strategische Ziel des Organisationserfolgs (primär die Missionserfüllung), sondern gleichzeitig das Wohlbefinden des Nonprofit-Personals priorisiert (Walk et al., 2014; Walk et al., 2019).

Zu strategischen, wertebasierten Personalpraktiken, die dem Ziel von mehr Mitarbeiter:innen-Wohlbefinden entsprechen könnten, zählt die vorliegende Dissertation – neben tradiert-markbezogenen Initiativen – in Anlehnung an Akingbola et al. (2023) und Kim (2024) u.a.: (a) eine faire und transparente Gehaltsstaffellung, (b) flexible Arbeitsmodelle (hinsichtlich „Care“-Arbeit, Alter, Work-Life-Balance etc.), (c) komfortable Büroausstattung (hinsichtlich ÖPNV-Anbindung, Technik, Cafeteria/Küche, ergonomische Bestuhlung, Tageslicht, Hygiene-Infrastruktur etc.), (d) konstruktive Vorgesetztenbeziehungen (wie Absprachen, Feedbackschleifen, Schlichtungs- und Korrektivmechanismen etc.), (e) eine vital-kollegiale Sozialisation (wie Küchengespräche, Events, Stammtisch- und Antidiskriminierungsinitiativen) sowie ferner (f) Karriereentwicklungsmöglichkeiten (hinsichtlich Projektleitungs-, Weiterbildungs- und Netzwerkangebote etc.).

*2. Arbeitsmotivation & Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement*

Strategisches Nonprofit-Personalmanagement (Helmig & Boenigk, 2019; Ridder & Baluch, 2010), das auf das Wohlbefinden von Mitarbeiter:innen bedacht ist und seine Praktiken entsprechend ausrichtet, fußt auf theoretischen und empirischen Erkenntnissen aus der Arbeitsmotivationsforschung (Russel et al., 2020). In der Nonprofit-Personalmanagementforschung herrscht dabei weitgehend Konsens darüber, dass intrinsische Motivation zu gemeinwohlorientierter Arbeit bei Nonprofit-Arbeitnehmer:innen stark ausgeprägt ist (Einolf, 2022; Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Park & Word, 2012; Ritz et al., 2022; Word & Park, 2015). Gleichzeitig weisen Autor:innen aber auch darauf hin, dass andere (mitunter externe) Motivationsfaktoren gerade für die langfristige Arbeitsmotivation von Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden wichtig sind (Ballart & Rico, 2018; De Cooman & Pepermans, 2012; McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016; Russel et al., 2020; Walk et al., 2021). An dieser Stelle zeigt

sich auch die Überschneidung zwischen Arbeitsmotivationsforschung und Nachfolgemanagement, da letzteres in seinem internen Besetzungsbemühen von Führungsstellen auf längerfristig motiviertes Personal angewiesen ist.

Zum Pool prominenter Motivationstheorien im Kontext von Arbeit zählt Bassous (2015) u.a. die Theorie der Bedürfnishierarchie (Maslow, 1948; 1968), die Erwartungstheorie (auch: Valenz-Instrumentalitäts-Erwartungs-Theorie) (Vroom, 1964), die Zweifaktorentheorie (Herzberg, 1966; 1974) und die Job-Characteristics-Theorie (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Die vorliegende Dissertation verzichtet hier auf eine detaillierte Erläuterung dieser etablierten Motivationskonzepte und verweist für weitere Ausführungen auf Anhang 1. An dieser Stelle soll stattdessen intensiver Bezug auf weitere Motivationstheorien im Kontext von Arbeit genommen werden, insbesondere auf die Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2012). Interessant ist diese Theorie deshalb, weil sie klassisch-dichotome Sichtweisen auf Motivation (extrinsisch vs. intrinsisch) überholt und ein differenzierteres Motivationsspektrum anbietet (Chen & Bozeman, 2013). So versteht sie Motivation grundlegend als auf einem Kontinuum gelegen; zwischen Amotivation, völlig von außen kontrollierter (externer) Motivation über introjizierte, identifizierte und integrierte Motivation bis hin zu völlig autonomer, selbstbestimmter (intrinsischer) Motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Manganelli et al., 2018). Chen et al. (2018) erläutern die auf jenem Kontinuum liegenden Motivationstypen wie folgt: Arbeitsbezogene Verhaltensweisen von Arbeitnehmer:innen sind vollumfänglich extern motiviert, wenn dafür eine unmittelbare Belohnung erwartet bzw. eine unmittelbare Strafe vermieden werden kann. Introjizierte Motivation bezieht sich auf jene Verhaltensweisen, die lediglich ausgeführt werden, um psychologische Zustände wie Scham zu vermeiden oder Selbstaufwertung (z.B. vor anderen Arbeitnehmer:innen) zu betreiben. Identifizierte Motivation geht mit Verhaltensweisen einher, welche dem eigenen, internen Wertesystem entsprechen, also solchen, die persönlich selbst als wichtig erachtet werden. Mit integrierter Motivation sind darüber hinaus Verhaltensweisen verbunden, die nicht nur internalisiert als wichtig gewertet, sondern sogar als Teil der eigenen Identität wahrgenommen werden. Verhaltensweisen beruhen schließlich auf intrinsischer Motivation, wenn sie völlig selbstbestimmt, durch pure Freude an der Tätigkeit begründet sind. Neben ihrer differenzierten Motivationstypologie argumentieren die Begründer der Self-Determination Theory, dass es für Motivationsförderung eines (arbeitnehmenden) Individuums entscheidend ist, drei Grundbedürfnisse zu befriedigen: Autonomie, Kompetenz und Verbundenheit (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Autonomie bedeutet dabei, dass man die Möglichkeit hat, selbstbestimmt zu handeln. Kompetenz bezieht sich auf die Erfahrung der Nutzung und

Entwicklung von Fähigkeiten und Fachwissen. Bei Verbundenheit geht es darum, sinnstiftende Beziehungen zu anderen zu haben (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020; Vansteenkiste et al., 2023).

Während sich die bislang angeführten Motivationstheorien in ihrem Fokus unterscheiden, ist ihnen (teilweise sogar explizit) der Rückbezug auf zwischenmenschliche Interaktionen im Motivationsprozess gemein. Diese Erkenntnis nimmt die vorliegenden Disseration zum Anlass, den Forschungsstrang zur Arbeitsmotivation auch übergreifender, aus dem theoretischen Blickwinkel der Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), zu beleuchten. Die Social Exchange Theory geht davon aus, dass qualitative, langfristige soziale Beziehungen auf sozialen Prozessen beruhen, in welchen individuell (erwarteter) Nutzen einer Einheit (z.B. Arbeitnehmer:innen) eigenen Kosten einer Austauschhandlung gegenübersteht (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Der zugrundeliegende, soziale Interaktionsprozess ist dabei auf den Handel von individuell verwalteten Ressourcen konzentriert, denen beteiligte Einheiten Wert erst beimessen (Emerson, 1976). Im Arbeitskontext hieße das, dass Einheit A (z.B. eine Organisation) im reziproken Umfeld (z.B. am Arbeitsplatz) so agiert, dass es Einheit B (z.B. eine:r Mitarbeiter:in) von dieser/diesem wahrgenommen zugutekommt. Der Theorie nach motiviert das Einheit B dazu, das Verhalten von Einheit A in einer Weise zu honorieren, die für A wiederum von wahrgenommenem Nutzen ist (Blau, 1964; Kotey & Sharma, 2019). So bilden und reproduzieren sich über fortlaufende Austauschzeiträume Beziehungsketten.

Im Arbeitskontext ist die Social Exchange Theory schließlich noch mit der Organizational Support Theory (OST) verwandt (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Knapp et al., 2017; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Letztere geht davon aus, dass Arbeitnehmer:innen den Grad der Wertschätzung ihrer arbeitgebenden Organisation für ihre persönliche Leistung interpretieren. Die Interpretation erfolgt über den wahrgenommenen Aufwand, welchen die Organisation betreibt, um das Mitarbeiter:innen-Wohlbefinden zu unterstützen (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Knapp et al., 2017). Das psychologische Konstrukt, das diese Interpretation nahelegt, wird als Perceived Organizational Support (POS) bezeichnet, gilt aber in Nonprofit-Studien als eher vereinzelt genutzt (Prysmakova & Lallatin, 2023). Studien aus abweichenden Forschungsbereichen weisen darauf hin, dass die von Arbeitnehmer:innen wahrgenommene Organisationsunterstützung (engl.: POS) sich positiv auf Motivation auswirkt (Gagné et al., 2010; Gillet et al., 2013; Tremblay et al., 2009).

*3. Führung & Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement*

In der Forschung kann Führung grundsätzlich als produktive Organisationsressource beschrieben werden. Sie wird zwischen Akteur:innen in einem reziproken Prozess ausgehandelt. Führung meint dabei sowohl die individuelle Fähigkeit der gezielten

Beeinflussung und Motivation von persönlichen und gruppenbezogenen Dynamiken, als auch die Aktivierung und Unterstützung kollektiver Bemühungen zur Erreichung geteilter Nonprofit-Organisationsziele (House et al., 2002; Maak & Pless, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012; Wieland, 2018; Yukl, 2012). Im Einklang mit Salamon (2010) konsterniert Simsa (2020, S. 158) Führung in Nonprofit-Organisationen als eine Zumutung. Sie schreibt: „NPO leaders should function like the proverbial Swiss army knife, being capable of performing in all possible situations, combining personal capabilities with basic management skills, balancing tensions and diverging demands, lead and ensure participation, being fast and reflexive, and so on." Der Forscherin zufolge ist Nonprofit-Führung nicht durch einen einzigen Führungsstil charakterisierbar. Sie geht stattdessen davon aus, dass effektive Nonprofit-Führung durch vier Faktoren geprägt sei: (a) die internalisierte Akzeptanz der eigenen Führungsrolle im Selbstverständnis, (b) die aktive, sensible Beeinflussung von (weiteren) Leitungsgremien, (c) die Gestaltung von Stakeholderbeziehungen (z.B. zu finanzierungsrelevanten Stiftungen) und Pflege organisationaler Rechenschaftspflicht sowie (d) mikropolitisches Geschick in organisationalen Verhandlungs- und Kooperationsprozessen (z.B. hinsichtlich lösungsorientiertem Management von potentiellen Konflikten zwischen zu führenden Hauptamtlichen und Freiwilligen). Im folgenden Abschnitt werden aufbauend auf diesem basalen Begriffsverständnis von Nonprofit-Führung drei zentrale Führungsforschungsstränge, die in der Nonprofit-Literatur entweder reflektiert werden, mindestens aber anschließend sind, vorgestellt. Dabei wird vorgreifend auf Zusammenhänge mit Nachfolgemanagement rekurriert.

*Forschungsstrang 1: Governance & (operative) Organisationsführung.* Ein erster Forschungsstrang wendet sich der Nonprofit-Organisationsführung und deren Verschränkung mit operativem Management allgemein zu (Brown, 2020; Golensky & Hager, 2020; Herman & Heimovics, 1990; Herman & Renz, 1997; Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Abzug und Galaskiewicz (2001, S. 51) erfassen beispielsweise die wesentlichen Funktionen des Nonprofit-Vorstands in der Steuerung und Legitimationswahrung und unterstreichen, dass dieser die letztinstanzliche Garantie dafür sei, dass „the organization lives up to its mission and expends resources in a fiscally responsible manner". Autorinnen wie Miller-Millesen (2003) ergänzen, dass der Vorstand insbesondere hinsichtlich Ressourcen verknüpfend zwischen Nonprofit-Organisation und Umwelt agiert. Forschende wie LeRoux und Medina (2023), Brown (2020) und Lee (2023; 2024) beschäftigen sich ferner mit Einflussfaktoren, welche die spezifische Zusammenstellung der ehrenamtlichen Nonprofit-Leitungsgremien – Helmig und Boenigk (2019) nennen hier neben Vorstand z.B. Präsidium, Kuratorium und Stiftungsrat – beeinflussen. Andere untersuchen die Machtbeziehungen zwischen Nonprofit-Manager:innen und Vorstand

(Drucker, 1990; Herman & Heimovics, 1990; Hiland, 2008; Jäger & Rehli, 2012; LeRoux & Langer, 2016; Olinske & Hellman, 2017). Helmig und Boenigk (2019, S. 95) unterstreichen in diesem Kontext, dass dem Vorstand die Hauptaufgabe der „Kontrolle der meist hauptberuflichen Geschäftsführung" obliegt. Miller-Millesen (2003, S. 529) fügt an, dass in dieser Aufgabe das Vorstandscredo „managerial behavior is congruent with stakeholder expectations" leitend sein sollte. Im kooperativen Zusammenspiel von Vorstand und operativ Führenden resümieren Jäger und Rehli (2012), dass alle Beteiligten idealerweise in ihren Fähigkeiten gleichwertig und sensibel für jeweilige Präferenzen sind. Zudem sollten sie sich in Letzteren auch ergänzen und sie gegenseitig ausbalancieren können. Bezogen auf Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement muss die Nonprofit-Organisationsführung, insbesondere der Vorstand (Stewart et al., 2020), zukünftigen Führungsbedarf in seinen Verantwortungstätigkeiten antizipieren und ihm entgegensteuern (Allison, 2002).

*Forschungsstrang 2: Führungsverhalten.* Ein weiterer Forschungsstrang im Kontext von (Nonprofit-)Führungsforschung beschäftigt sich mit der Identifizierung und Charakterisierung von Führungsverhalten bzw. Führungsstilen (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Backhaus & Vogel, 2022; Heimann, et al., 2020; Kearns et al., 2013; Wieland, 2018; Yukl, 2012; Zhang et al., 2015). Neben klassischen Führungsstilen wie transaktionaler (Burns, 1978) und transformationaler Führung (Bass & Avolio, 1993) sind weitere Beispiele u.a. relationale (Wieland, 2018), paradoxe (Backhaus et al., 2022), geteilte (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Routhieaux, 2015) und dienende Führung (Greenleaf, 1991). Während sich jedoch nur vereinzelt explizite Nonprofit-Studien mit distinktem Nonprofit-Führungsverhalten beschäftigen (Rowe, 2014; Simsa & Patak, 2016), wird hier eher der Einfluss von schon etablierteren Führungsstiltheorien, z.B. hinsichtlich Effektivitätskennzahlen, untersucht (Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020; Linscott, 2011; Rowold et al., 2014). Bezogen auf Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement ist spezifisches Führungsverhalten in doppelter Hinsicht eminent wichtig. Erstens muss *im* Nachfolgemanagementprozess geführt werden. Zweitens müssen Nachfolgekandidat:innen in Nachfolgeinitiativen hinsichtlich effektiven Führungsverhaltens qualifiziert werden (Bozer et al., 2015; Einolf, 2022).

*Forschungsstrang 3: Führungseigenschaften.* Ein dritter Forschungsstrang fokussiert sich weniger auf Führungsverhalten und mehr auf persönliche Eigenschaften von Führungskräften (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004; House et al., 1999; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Offermann et al., 1994). Während frühe Überzeugungen hier noch angeborene Charakteristika im Sinne eines *Great Man* (Carlyle, 1849) als führungswürdig betrachten, dynamisiert sich die Eigenschaftsdebatte im Zuge des 20. Jahrhunderts. Obwohl sie

weiterhin von relativ konstanten, persönlich zuschreibbaren Führungseigenschaften ausgeht, bricht sie mit der Vorstellung dieser Eigenschaften qua Geburt (Kirkpatick & Locke, 1991). Ein Paradigmenwechsel hält spätestens in den 1990er Jahren Einzug. Seitdem wird insbesondere unter dem Dachbegriff impliziter Führungstheorien (ILT) die mitunter unbewusste, situative Wahrnehmung von idealen bzw. typischen Führungsarchetypen (der Belegschaft) anstelle objektiver Charakteristika untersucht (Junker & van Dick, 2014; Lord et al., 2020; Vogel & Werkmeister, 2021). Die Nonprofit-Führungsforschung, obschon anschlussfähig, hat sich in diesem Teilforschungsfeld bisher kaum beteiligt. Bezogen auf Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement könnte die Forschung zu Führungseigenschaften jedoch z.B. den Impuls liefern, organisationale Führungsarchetypen mit dem Personal zu eruieren, als ideal empfundenes Führungsverhalten demgemäß zu kultivieren und Nachfolgekandidat:innen entsprechend zu schulen.

**Nachfolgemanagement in Nonprofit-Organisationen**

Zunächst bezieht sich der Begriff des Nachfolgemanagements allgemein auf das systematisch-geplante und implementierte Bemühen einer Organisation, Führungskontinuität an zentralen Stellen durch Bindung von potentialtragendem Human- und Wissenskapital zu erhalten und durch interne Entwicklungsaktivitäten auch längerfristig sicherzustellen (Rothwell, 2005). Die Forschung unterscheidet dabei zwei Arten strategischen Nachfolgemanagements – notfallbasiertes (engl.: emergency-based) und abgangsbasiertes (engl.: departure-based) Nachfolgemanagement (Adams, 2005; Gothard & Austin, 2013). Beide unterscheiden sich primär darin, dass notfallbasiertes Nachfolgemanagement unerwarteten Ereignissen (Kündigung z.B. aufgrund von plötzlichen Gesundheitsproblemen) vorbeugen soll. Abgangsbasiertes Nachfolgemanagement hingegen ist weniger pragmatisch ausgerichtet und zeichnet sich durch einen stärkeren Fokus auf die strategische Entwicklung eines breiten personalgebundenen Führungskompetenzkaders aus (Gothard & Austin, 2013).

Die praktische Implementierung von Nachfolgemanagement zur Begegnung latenter Personalleerstellen ist in Nonprofit-Organisationen vielversprechend, weil Nachfolgemanagement dazu beiträgt, eine reibungslose Zusammenarbeit in der Bereitstellung von gemeinwohlfokussierten Dienstleistungen und Produkten gesellschaftlich aufrechtzuerhalten. Nachfolgemanagement im Nonprofit-Sektor reduziert Momente der Organisationsstörung, weil zukünftige Führungskräfte in diesem Rahmen mit den Eigenheiten und besonderen Führungsaufgaben eben dieses Sektors frühzeitig vertraut gemacht werden. Strategische Interessengruppen (z.B. Vorstand, Mitarbeiter:innen, Fördererorganisationen,

Partner:innen aus anderen Branchen und Sektoren) können zudem gezielt in die Schlüsselpersonalprozesse einbezogen werden (Kim, 2012).

Angelehnt an Autor:innen wie Adams (2006) ist dem Nachfolgemanagementprozess sowohl eine Initiierungs- als auch eine Entwicklungsphase implizit. In der Initiierungsphase verpflichten sich Entscheidungstragende (Vorstand, Geschäftsführer:in/Abteilungsleiter:in, Personalfachleute) zunächst zu strategischen Nachfolgepraktiken, erwerben Ressourcen für die Durchführung damit verbundener Arbeiten und identifizieren zentrale Jobfunktionen und Führungskompetenzen, die für das jeweilige Stellenumfeld erforderlich sind (Gothard & Austin, 2013; Rothwell, 2005; Wolfred, 2008). Die Entwicklungsphase umfasst ferner die Verwaltung von Aufgaben, beispielsweise der Organisation eines umfassenden Auswahlprozesses, der Identifizierung und Entwicklung von Talent (Charan et al., 2011; Groves, 2007) und der Erstellung von Kommunikations- und Berichtplänen (Gothard & Austin, 2013; Rothwell, 2005; Wolfred, 2008). Schließlich ist das Ziel eines jeden Nachfolgemanagementprozesses Führungskontinuität, d.h. ein übergreifender Personalzustand, der organisationale Stabilität signalisiert und an sich potentiellen Führungslücken entgegenwirkt (Kuenzi et al., 2021; Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Tierney, 2006).

In den letzten Jahrzehnten hat sich das Phänomen der Nachfolgeplanung innerhalb der der Managementwissenschaft als Forschungsobjekt herausgebildet (Austin & Gilmore, 1993; Charan et al., 2011; Kesner & Sebora, 1994; Rothwell, 2005). Ausgehend von Studien aus der universalen Managementliteratur, hat sich das Forschungsinteresse schnell in der Nonprofit-Domäne ausgebreitet (Allison, 2002; Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2020; Tierney, 2006; Wolfred, 2008). Dabei lassen sich drei komplementäre Nonprofit-Teilforschungsfelder identifizieren. In diese wird im Folgenden kurz eingeführt.

*1. Relevanz des Forschungsthemas.* Seit Beginn der akademischen Debatte um Nachfolgemanagement haben sich Studien mit der sachlichen Relevanz des Forschungsthemas der Nachfolgeplanung beschäftigt. In diesem Zusammenhang hat die Arbeit von Tierney (2006) zu Beginn des neuen Jahrtausends prognostiziert, dass US-Nonprofit-Organisationen bereits im Laufe des ersten Jahrzehnts mehr als eine halbe Million neue Führungskräfte finden müssten. Tierney (2006) sagt dem dritten Sektor damit ein drohendes Führungsdefizit voraus. Johnson (2009) aktualisiert diese Prognose einige Jahre später kritisch und argumentiert, dass gegenwärtige Trends (z.B. längere Arbeitszeiten älterer und die schnellere Kompetenzentwicklung jüngerer Arbeitnehmer:innen, sowie die Personalrekrutierung aus dem öffentlichen und profitorientierten Sektor) das Defizit abmilderten. Dem Optimismus der Autorin zum Trotz untermauern Studien von Santora et al. (2007), Cornelius et al. (2011) oder

Carman et al. (2010) das drohende Führungsdefizit im Nonprofit-Sektor jedoch weiter. Dem Defizit und der damit einhergehenden, organisationsexistentiellen Bedrohung durch strategisches Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement zu begegnen, bringt laut Forschung jedoch auch operativ spürbare Leistungsvorteile mit sich. So geht McDonald (2007) beispielsweise davon aus, dass durch Mitarbeiter:innenentwicklung – die insbesondere abgangsbasiertem Nachfolgemanagement innewohnt – ein innovatives Organisationsklima forciert wird, welches sich auch positiv auf die Freisetzung von leistungsbezogenen Wettbewerbsvorteilen auswirkt.

*2. Anwendungsbezogene Nachfolgemanagement-Anleitungen.* Ein anderer Teilbereich der Forschung hat sich zudem mit der Entwicklung von praktischen Leitlinien für die systematische Planung und Implementierung von Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement auseinandergesetzt. Zu den Arbeiten im Nonprofit-Kontext zählen hier die Anleitungen von Adams (2006), Gothard und Austin (2013), Hunter und Decker Pierce (2020), Kramer und Nayak (2013) sowie Wolfred (2008). Als wichtige Nachfolgemanagement-Praktiken werden dabei wiederkehrend die Klärung formaler Aufgabenzuständigkeiten, die Entwicklung von Kommunikationsplänen, das stetige Monitoring des Führungsbedarfs (der nächsten Jahre) und die Sicherung finanzieller Ressourcen für den Nachfolgemanagementprozess genannt (Adams, 2006; Wolfred, 2008). Während zudem Gothard und Austin (2013) die kritische Zusammenarbeit von Vorstand und operativem Management in Nachfolgebemühungen anmahnen, setzt sich der Leitfaden von Kramer und Nayak (2013) im Nonprofit-Kontext insbesondere für den für Nachfolgemanagement zentralen Aspekt der Führungskräfteentwicklung ein.

*3. (Fehlende) Praxis des Nachfolgemanagements.* Das dritte Teilfeld der Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagementforschung ist durch Arbeiten charakterisiert, welche international auf eine empirische Unzulänglichkeit des Nachfolgemanagements in der Praxis hinweisen (Santora & Sarros, 1995; Allison, 2002; Cornelius et al., 2011; Froelich et al., 2011; Santora et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2021). So befundet Allison (2002) beispielsweise, dass gemeinnützige Vorstände oft Schwierigkeiten haben, Nachfolgen strategisch anzugehen. Im Einklang mit späteren Veröffentlichungen, wie Tebbe et al. (2017), kommt der Autor zu dem Schluss, dass Nonprofits die Problematik von zu kurzen Führungsperioden unterschätzen und situative Führungsleerstellen nicht ausreichend nutzen (z.B. für eine organisatorische Erneuerung/Neuausrichtung). Im Einklang mit Allison (2002), zeigen Cornelius et al. (2011) den Mangel an Fachwissen im Vorstand von Nonprofit-Organisationen auf, Nachfolge intern strategisch zu behandeln. Santora et al. (2015) stellen im Vergleich von Ergebnissen aus Australien, Brasilien, Israel, Italien, Russland und den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika überdies fest, dass Nonprofits externes Personal als nachfolgende Führungskräfte bevorzugen.

Und das, obwohl in der allgemeinen Nachfolgeforschung interne Nachbesetzungen – abhängig von organisationaler Zielrichtung – als erfolgszuträglicher gelten (Shen & Cannella, 2002; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2004).

**Forschungslücken und Ziele des Dissertationsvorhabens**

Im Kontext des Forschungsstands des Nachfolgemanagements in Nonprofit-Organisationen identifiziert und adressiert die vorliegende Dissertation folgend drei spezifische Forschungslücken. Die erste Lücke bezieht sich auf den Befund fehlender Implementierung von Nachfolgemanagement in Nonprofit-Organisation, trotz teilweise reflektierter Nachfolgenotwendigkeit (Froelich et al., 2011). Die Lücke identifiziert Forschungsbedarf in der Frage, wie Nonprofit-Organisationen bei der Implementierung eher unterstützt werden könnten. Dies wird in der Nonprofit-Forschung bislang noch wenig thematisiert und stattdessen primär die Rolle des Vorstands oder der/des Geschäftsführer:in im Nachfolgemanagementprozess unterstrichen (Allison, 2002; Gothard & Austin, 2013; Hunter & Decker Pierce, 2020; Kramer & Nayak, 2013; Li, 2019; McKee & Froelich, 2016; Stewart, 2016; Stewart & Twumasi, 2020). Einige Autor:innen der Nachfolgeforschung betonen jedoch, dass ausgereiftes Nachfolgemanagement über den Verantwortungsbereich dieser beiden Akteure hinausstrahlt. So mahnen Autor:innen wie Santora (2019), Santora und Bozer (2015), oder Johnson (2022) an, dass umfassendes Nachfolgemanagement auch Fachwissen aus dem Personalmanagement (HRM) einbeziehen sollte. Das Plädoyer entspringt dabei dem Argument, dass Personalmanager:innen – auch in Nonprofit-Organisationen – in ihrer betrieblichen Tätigkeit täglich und ausschließlich auf die Betreuung und Anreicherung von organisationalem Humankapital eingestellt sind (Pynes, 2004; Saleh, 2020; Selden & Sowa, 2015). Dies macht es plausibel, dass sie den Vorstand und Geschäftsführer:innen, z.B. in arbeitsrechtlichen Themen oder bei der internen Identifikation von Humanpotentialen effektiv unterstützen oder hier zeitweilig sogar Führungsverantwortung übernehmen können. Daher scheint es lohnend, empirisch zu untersuchen, inwiefern ein geteilter Führungsansatz im Nachfolgemanagement von Vorstand, Geschäftsführer:innen/Abteilungsleiter:innen und Personalmanager:innen in Nonprofit-Organisationen den internen Nachfolgemanagementprozess verbessert.

*Erstes Dissertationsziel*

Das erste Dissertationsziel der vorliegenden Arbeit bezieht sich auf den ersten Studienbeitrag der Dissertation (Kapitel 2). Es ist vierteilig. Zunächst wird das Teilziel (1a) verfolgt, den Führungsansatz geteilter Führung (engl.: shared leadership) (Carson et al., 2007; Liang et al., 2021; Pearce & Conger, 2003) in der Nonprofit-Führungsforschung definitionserweiternd einzuführen. Teilziel (1b) ist darauf ausgerichtet, den Ansatz in dreigliedriger Auslegung in einem theoretischen Rahmen im Kontext von Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement einzubetten. Teilziel (1c) intendiert, durch eine Online-Umfrage (n=1020) empirische Einblicke in Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement aus dreigliedriger Führungsperspektive zu generieren. Diese Einblicke sollen schließlich das multinationale Wissen über Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement erweitern, indem entsprechende Daten aus Deutschland in den Forschungsdiskurs eingebracht werden (Teilziel 1d).

Die Identifikation der zweiten Forschungslücke gründet sich auf der Frage nach zentralen Voraussetzungen für optimale Ergebnisse des Nachfolgemanagements (d.h. ausreichend vielversprechende Nachfolgekandidat:innen). So bleibt der Diskurs um Nachfolgemanagement – trotz der vermehrten Einräumung von Relevanz in der Nonprofit-Forschung (Allison, 2002; Froelich et al., 2011; Gothard & Austin, 2013; Santora et al., 2015; Steward et al., 2020) – bislang unzureichend an die direkt beeinflussenden Voraussetzungen gekoppelt, die vor allem strategisches Personalmanagement betreffen: Einerseits wird regelmäßig auf den Schwerpunkt der internen Entwicklung von Personal im Nachfolgemanagement hingewiesen, andererseits gilt entsprechend passendes Personal als Kernherausforderung von Nonprofit-Organisationen (Huvanandana, 2023; Guo et al., 2011; Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Walk et al., 2021; Yawson, 2019). Demgemäß kann selbst idealimplementiertes Nachfolgemanagement (Adams, 2006; Kramer & Nayak, 2013; Rothwell, 2005) nur unter der Voraussetzung von ausreichend internen Humanpotentialen gelingen. Während sich vereinzelt Studien mit der Notwendigkeit der Nonprofit-Personalakquise beschäftigt haben, steht die Forschung mit unmittelbarem Bezug zu Nachfolgemanagement noch am Anfang. Studien widmen sich so beispielsweise der allgemeinen Arbeitsmotivation im Nonprofit-Sektor. Sie identifizieren dabei insbesondere die intrinsische Motivation, professionell für das Gemeinwohl tätig zu sein (Einolf, 2022; Kim & Torneo, 2021; Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Ritz et al., 2022; Word & Park, 2015). Darüber hinaus gibt es jedoch trotz des wiederkehrenden Hinweises von weiteren möglichen Motivationsanreizen für ein Arbeitsengagement im gemeinnützigen Nonprofit-Sektor (De Cooman & Pepermans, 2012; Russel et al., 2020) nur vereinzelt empirische Studien, die Motivationsanreizfaktoren analysieren (Ballart & Rico, 2018; McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016;

Walk et al., 2021). Um der Rekrutierungsherausforderung von Nonprofit-Organisationen, insbesondere hinsichtlich Talents, zu begegnen und so passenden Personaleinsatz in Nachfolgemanagementinitiativen wahrscheinlicher zu machen, scheinen mehr empirische Nonprofit-Anreizfaktorstudien notwendig.

*Zweites Dissertationsziel*

Das zweite Dissertationsziel der vorliegenden Arbeit bezieht sich auf den zweiten Studienbeitrag der Dissertation (Kapitel 3). Vor dem Hintergrund von zu wenig Anreizfaktorstudien wird mit Hilfe eines Online-Experiments untersucht, inwiefern (a) neue Arbeitsmodelle und (b) Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten von Führungskompetenzen den Rekrutierungserfolg (genauer: die Bewerbungsabsicht) von hochveranlagten Nonprofit-Arbeitskräften (Nonprofit-Talenten) beeinflussen. Dem Ziel geht es um die Erweiterung des Verständnisses von Motivationsfaktoren in der Nonprofit-Managementliteratur, um Manager:innen bei der Entwicklung erfolgreicher Strategien zur Talentgewinnung und der Vorbereitung von Nachfolgemanagementpraktik zu unterstützen.

Ebenfalls angelehnt an die Auseinandersetzung mit notwendigen Voraussetzungen für optimale Ergebnisse des Nachfolgemanagements ist neben der Rekrutierungsfrage auch die Frage der langfristigen Bindung von Nonprofit-Personal. Hieraus begründet sich die Identifikation der dritten Forschungslücke dieser Dissertation. Denn auch unter der Voraussetzung von genügend potentialtragenden Nonprofit-Rekrut:innen ist der Erfolg von Nachfolgemanagement (Adams, 2006; Gothard & Austin, 2013; Kramer & Nayak, 2013; Wolfred, 2008) nicht sicher. Ausreichend viele (mitunter diverse) Kandidat:innen für interne Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagementsysteme können vorhanden sein, diese müssen aber auch bereit sein, sich langfristig an die sie führungskompetenzfördernd zeigende Organisation zu binden. Um die insbesondere auf Motivation aufbauende Bindung von Nonprofit-Arbeitnehmer:innen zu fördern, sind gemäß Literatur unterschiedliche Personalpraktiken möglich (Akingbola et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2015). Allerdings existieren bislang nur vereinzelt Forschungsarbeiten zum Zusammenhang solcher Praktiken im Nonprofit-Bereich und Mitarbeiter:innenbindung. Zudem finden sich unter den vorhandenen Studien wenig Befunde, welche den Zusammenhang im Kontext inhaltswesentlich-gekoppelter, psychologischer Einstellungen mittels breiten Spektrums an Personalpraktiken analysieren. Solche Studien könnten allerdings hilfreich sein, um Nonprofit-Personalpraktiken, auch hinsichtlich begrenzter Ressourcen (u.a. Ban et al., 2003), effektiv und effizient zu gestalten und den Mitarbeiter:innenerhalt für zukünftigen Personaleinsatz – auch in Nachfolgemanagementsystemen – zu sichern.

*Drittes Dissertationsziel*

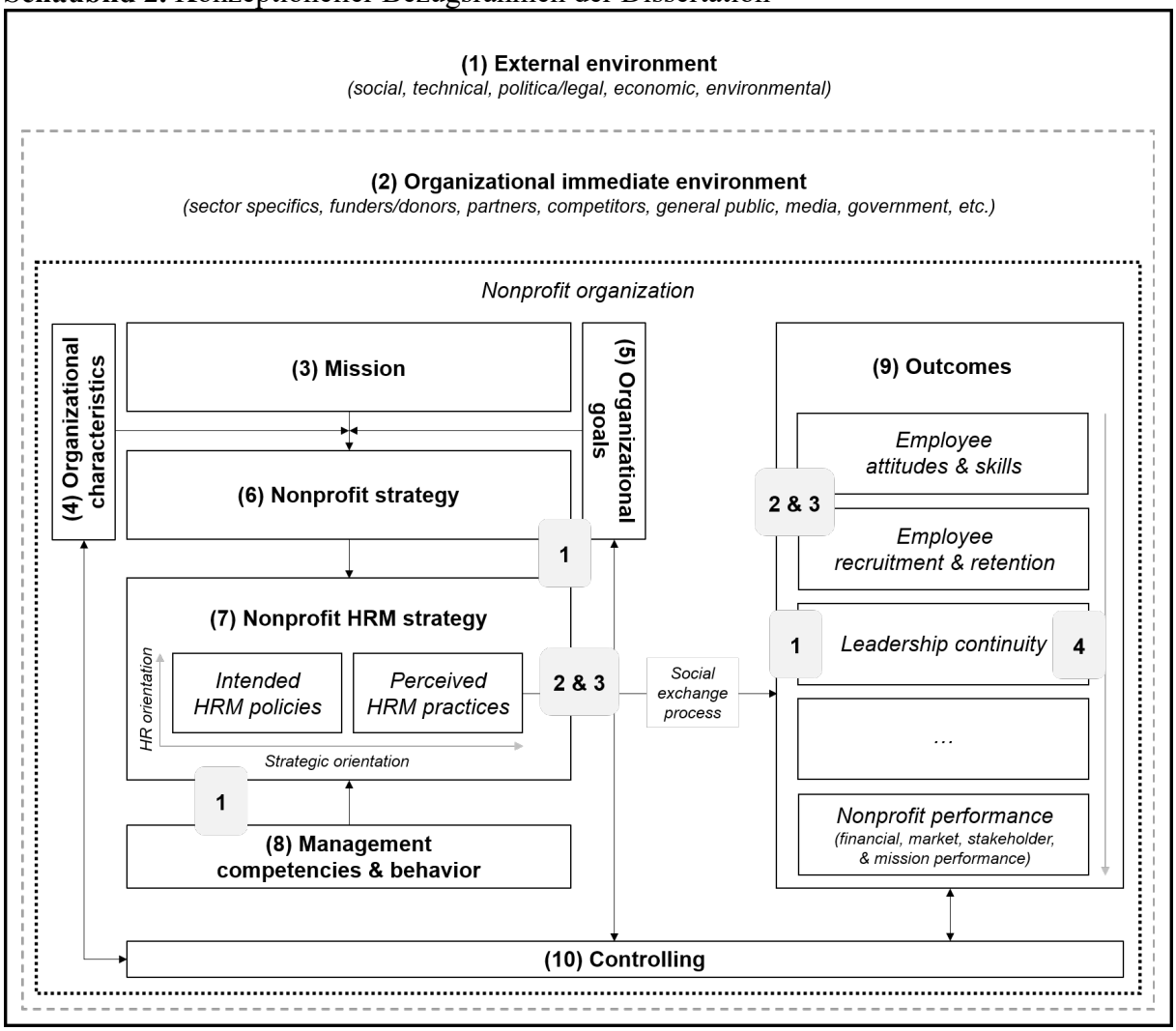
Das dritte Dissertationsziel der vorliegenden Arbeit bezieht sich auf den dritten Studienbeitrag der Dissertation (Kapitel 4). Basierend auf der Forschungsfrage, welche Personalpraktiken Nonprofit-Organisationen für mehr Mitarbeiter:innenbindung priorisieren sollten, werden zwei Teilziele adressiert. Teilziel (3a) widmet sich der Erweiterung der bindungstheoretischen Literatur in Nonprofit-Organisationen. So wird durch die Bezugnahme einschlägiger sozialbezüglicher Konzepte der Bindungsforschung die theoretische Sensibilität für eine Verschränkung von Social Exchange Theory (SET), der psychologischen Vertragstheorie und der HRM-Performance Chain in der Nonprofit-Personalforschungsdebatte gestärkt. Das zweite Teilziel (3b) analysiert unter der Verwendung eines Strukturgleichunsmodells (PLS SEM) den empirischen Zusammenhang von möglichen Personalpraktiken und Mitarbeiter:innenbindung (genauer: deren Bleibeabsicht). Dabei reflektiert der Beitrag drei arbeitsbezogene Einstellungen, welche den Zusammenhang mediieren können: Wahrgenommene Organisationsunterstützung (POS), Jobzufriedenheit und organisationales Commitment.

**Konzeptioneller Bezugsrahmen und Verortung der einzelnen Beiträge**

Die vier Studienbeiträge der vorliegenden Dissertation sind in einem übergeordneten, konzeptionellen Bezugsrahmen eingebettet (Schaubild 2). Der Verortung der Beiträge vorangestellt wird folgend die Erläuterung dieses Rahmens. Der Bezugsrahmen basiert auf einschlägigen, theoretischen Ansätzen und Modellen der Organisationstheorie sowie der allgemeineren Personalmanagement- und Nonprofit-Personalmanagementliteratur. Grundsätzlich fußt er auf organisationstheoretischen Überlegungen von Kühl und Muster (2016) und Salamon und Anheier (1992; 1999). Ferner folgt er modellierten Konzepten des strategischen Personalmanagements in Anlehnung an Truss und Gratton (1994). Darauf aufbauend nutzt er prominente Personalmanagementkonzepte aus der Nonprofit-Literatur, insbesondere das strategische Personalmanagementmodell von Akingbola (2013) und die Typologie der HR Architektur nach Ridder und Baluch (2010). Kernaspekte beider werden theoretisch reflektiert und synthetisiert. Der konzeptionelle Bezugsrahmen speist seine Originalität aus der Entwicklung dieser Vorleistungen. Er tut dies, indem er die Synthese erstens mit Hinweisen zur Arbeitnehmer:innen-Wahrnehmung von Personalmanagementpraktiken (Akingbola et al., 2023; Nishii et al., 2008; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) und zweitens mit Anmerkungen des Nonprofit-Managementkonzepts von Helmig und Boenigk (2019) anreichert. Schließlich bettet der Rahmen noch das Managementziel langfristiger Verfügbarmachung humaner Führungsressourcen ein.

Der konzeptionelle Bezugsrahmen (Schaubild 2) besteht aus zehn Komponenten: (1) *External environment*, (2) *Organizational immediate environment*, (3) *Mission*, (4) *Organizational characteristics*, (5) *Organizational goals*, (6) *Nonprofit strategy*, (7) *Nonprofit HRM strategy*, (8) *Management competencies & behavior*, (9) *Outcomes* und (10) *Controlling*.

**Schaubild 2.** Konzeptioneller Bezugsrahmen der Dissertation




Der Bezugsrahmen definiert Nonprofit-Organisationen aus organisationstheoretischer Sicht durch die formalen Kriterien Mitgliedschaft, Zweck und Hierarchie (Kühl & Muster, 2016): Nonprofit-Organisationen obliegt erstens die Befugnis, darüber zu entscheiden, wen sie mit Zugehörigkeit ausstatten (Coleman, 1974; Kühl & Muster, 2016; Luhmann, 1988; Weick, 1985). Zweitens verfolgen sie einen bestimmten Zweck (Kühl & Muster, 2016; Luhmann, 1973). Dieser manifestiert sich in Satzungen (Helmig & Boenigk, 2019). Drittens ist ihnen eine Hierarchieordnung implizit (Baecker, 1999; Kühl & Muster, 2016). Überdies werden Nonprofit-Organisationen aber noch spezifischer gefasst (Helmig & Boenigk, 2019; Kaltenbrunner, 2018; Stötzer, 2009). Um ein ex negativo Verständnis zu vermeiden (Beyes & Jäger, 2005), charakterisieren Salamon und Anheier (1992; 1999) sie durch ein Mindestmaß an

Formalität, durch ihre private Organisation, durch ein Minimum an Selbstverwaltung/Entscheidungsautonomie und Freiwilligkeit sowie durch ein Gewinnausschüttungsverbot.

Nonprofit-Organisationen agieren in Umwelt. Truss und Gratton (1994) unterscheiden dabei die externe Umwelt (*(1) External environment*) und die unmittelbare Organisationsumwelt (*(2) Organizational immediate environment*). Die externe Umwelt klassifizieren die Autorinnen weiter in soziale, technologische, politische/rechtliche und ökonomische Umwelt. In sozialer Hinsicht ist die externe Umwelt beispielsweise durch soziale Nöte und demografische Entwicklungen der Erwerbsbevölkerung geprägt. In technologischer Hinsicht ist sie durch technologische Entwicklungen, primär im Hard- und Softwarebereich (Konsequenzen: u.a. mobiles Arbeiten) eingefärbt. In politischer Hinsicht ist externe Umwelt dagegen durch die Durchsetzungsbemühungen zeitgeistiger Kollektivinteressen und nationaler Staatsformen strukturiert. In rechtlicher Hinsicht ist sie durch Gesetze mitgeformt, während sie ökonomisch beispielsweise durch Inflationsdynamik und deren Konsequenzen auf Wertschöpfungsketten beeinflusst wird. Truss und Grattons (1994) Differenzierung ließe sich an dieser Stelle und vor dem Hintergrund weitreichender, klimatischer Veränderungsprozesse in ökologischer Hinsicht erweitern (in Bezug auf ökologische Nöte, sich wandelndes Ressourcenbewusstsein etc.). Die unmittelbare Organisationsumwelt wird von den Autorinnen als sektorspezifisch, also komplexitätsreduzierend, gefasst. Bei Nonprofit-Organisationen wären hier Spezifika einzelner Arbeitsfelder (soziale Dienstleistungen, Bildung, Gesundheit, Kunst und Kultur etc.), die Art, wie Erfolg hier jeweils gemessen wird und einflussreiche Interessengruppen (Finanziers, Partnerorganisationen, Wettbewerber:innen, Medien, Regierung etc.) zu nennen.

Beeinflusst von der zweischichtigen Umwelt, geht das eigentliche Wirken von Nonprofit-Organisationen fundamental von ihrer jeweiligen *(3) Mission* (auch: Zweck, Auftrag) aus (Akingbola, 2013; Drucker, 1992). Helmig und Boenigk (2019) merken mit Bezug zu ihrem abgeleiteten Managementkonzept an, dass die Formulierung der Mission idealtypischerweise mit der Erstellung einer Vision und eines Leitbildes einhergeht. Aus der Mission der Nonprofit-Organisation leiten sich über die Bewertung eigener Charakteristika (*(4) Organizational characteristics*) (wie Organisationsalter und -größe, Mitarbeiter:innenqualifikationen und -anzahl etc.) und konkreter, sozialer und ökonomischer Zielformulierungen (*(5) Organizational goals*) (Helmig & Boenigk, 2019) Organisationsstrategien (*(6) Nonprofit strategy*) ab (Akingbola, 2013). Akingbola (2013, S. 226) definiert dabei eine Nonprofit-Strategie “as an integrated set of actions and processes that are developed and implemented to enable the

nonprofit to use its resources to deliver value to stakeholders, adapt to change and gain competitive advantage". Hinsichtlich übergeordneter Organisationsstrategien sind für Nonprofit-Organisationen laut Helmig und Boenigk (2019) u.a. Programm-Diversifikationsstrategien oder Strategien, welche auf der Wertschöpfungskonfiguration eines Wertshops oder Wertnetzwerks aufbauen, vielversprechend.

Verbunden mit Organisationsstrategien ist die daraus abgeleitete Personalmanagementstrategie (*(7) Nonprofit HRM strategy*). Rückbeziehend auf die Personalmanagementdefinition von Helmig und Boenigk (2019) gilt es hier also, kompetente Mitarbeiter:innen zu adäquaten Bedingungen zu rekrutieren, zu entwickeln, zu binden und dies stets wirtschaftlich und missionsdienlich zu tun. Truss und Gratton (1994) haben dazu betont, dass im Kontext dessen – innerhalb jeder Personalmanagementstrategie – zwischen intendierten und implementierten Personalpraktiken zu unterscheiden ist. Andere Arbeiten verweisen ebenfalls auf diese zu treffende Distinktion. Dabei geht es ihnen mehrheitlich darum, nicht die faktisch implementierten Praktiken von intendierten Personalrichtlinien zu trennen, sondern intendierte Personalrichtlinien und von Mitarbeiter:innen wahrgenommene Personalpraktiken (Akingbola et al., 2023; Nishii et al., 2008; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) zu unterscheiden. Diese Unterscheidung ist in den Bezugsrahmen dieser Dissertation eingeflossen (Schaubild 2), um zu unterstreichen, dass intendierte, personalstrategische Maßnahmen erst durch die faktische Wahrnehmung ihrer Adressaten ihre Wirkung entfalten. Schaubild 2 differenziert daher zwischen intendierten Personalrichtlinien (*Intended HRM policies*) und wahrgenommenen Personalpraktiken (*Perceived HRM practices*). Eine intendierte Personalrichtlinie könnte demzufolge lauten: „Unsere Nonprofit-Organisation ermöglicht ihren Mitarbeiter:innen flexible Arbeitsmodelle." Wahrgenommene Personalpraktik könnte dann über die Frage an Mitarbeitende (beispielsweise: „Finden Sie, dass Ihre arbeitgebende Organisation Ihnen flexibles Arbeiten ermöglicht?") evaluiert werden. Der Bezugsrahmen integriert innerhalb der *(7) Nonprofit HRM strategy* ferner die Typologie der sogenannten HR Architekturen nach Ridder und Baluch (2010). Die Autor:innen identifizieren divergierende Personalmanagementstrategien in Nonprofit-Organisationen entlang ihrer Ausprägungen auf den zwei Dimensionen Personalorientierung (engl.: HR orientation) und (2) strategischen Orientierung (engl.: strategic orientation). Sie erfassen insgesamt vier Idealkategorien, namentlich *administratives*, *strategisches*, *motivierendes* und *werte-basiertes* Personalmanagement. Ihrer Kategorisierung zufolge leitet sich Nonprofit-Personalmanagement also nicht nur aus übergreifenden Organisationsstrategien ab, sondern explizit auch aus der

Frage, inwiefern Personal strategisch, organisationsnützlich oder mitarbeiter:innen-orientiert betrachtet wird (Walk et al., 2014).

Angelehnt an Akingbola (2013) reflektiert Schaubild 2 auch den Einfluss von Nonprofit-Führungskräften (*(8) Management competencies & behavior*), insbesondere in Bezug auf die effektive Umsetzung von Personalstrategien (*(7) Nonprofit HRM strategy*). Akingbola (2013) formuliert hier die Idee, dass Nonprofit-Manager:innen ihre Führungskompetenzen in Verhalten transformieren und im Austauschprozess von Personalpraktiken für positive Arbeitnehmer:innen-Einstellungen und Arbeitsleistung einsetzen können.

Der konzeptionelle Bezugsrahmen impliziert weiterhin organisationale Erfolgsmaße (*(9) Outcomes*), die mit wahrgenommenen Nonprofit-Personalpraktiken zusammenhängen können. Dieser Zusammenhang wird in Schaubild 2 auf der theoretischen Grundlage der Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) antizipiert. Wie bereits erläutert, geht die Theorie grundlegend von einem sozialen Austauschprozess (engl.: Social exchange process) zwischen der Organisation und ihrem Personal aus. Dabei wird die Arbeitsleistung des Personals gegen (in)tangible Organisationsressourcen getauscht. Schaubild 2 stellt personalbezogenen Erfolg kaskadenartig dar. Angelehnt an Akingbola (2013) können Personalpraktiken zunächst die Einstellungen und Fähigkeiten (Employee attitudes & skills) von Arbeitnehmer:innen beeinflussen. Akingbola (2013, S. 233) postuliert diesbezüglich: „HR practices must be developed to sustain their [employees'] motivation and facilitate alignment with the expectations of nonprofits". Insbesondere in Bezug auf Einstellungen zeigen Studien, dass arbeitnehmer:innenorientierte Personalpraktiken (Baluch & Ridder, 2021; Piening et al., 2014), die von (zukünftigen) Mitarbeitenden wahrnehmbar sind (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007), Arbeitgeber:innenattraktivität erhöhen (Wörtler et al., 2021), Jobzufriedenheit und Arbeitsbereitschaft fördern (Knapp et al., 2017; Wang, 2022) sowie Abwanderungsabsichten reduzieren (Kang et al., 2015) können. Einstellungsbezogene Veränderungen machen organisationsdienliches Verhalten von (potentiellen) Arbeitnehmer:innen anschließend wahrscheinlicher – beispielsweise hinsichtlich des Erfolgs in der Personalakquise und -bindung (Employee recruitment & retention). Rekrutierungs- und Bindungserfolg sind ferner wichtige Voraussetzungen für das Erfolgsmaß Führungskontinuität (Leadership continuity).

Auch wenn weitere Erfolgsmaße durch Personalpraktiken mitbedingt sein können, kann ausreichend (kompetentes) Personal in Nonprofit-Organisationen nach Helmig und Boenigk (2019) mindestens indirekt auf vier organisationale Kerndimensionen von Erfolg wirken: Finanz-, Markt-, Stakeholder- und Mission-Performance (Nonprofit performance). Finanzielle Performance bezieht sich dabei auf die Frage, wie vital die Organisation hinsichtlich ihrer

Finanzierung aufgestellt ist. Markt-Performance kann anhand dessen gemessen werden, wie es um die Marktanteile und die Reputation der Organisation bestellt ist. Stakeholder-Performance umschreibt neben der Erfassung von Einstellungen der Mitarbeitenden auch jene weiterer, zentraler Interessengruppen. Mission-Performance wird schließlich durch den zurechenbaren Beitrag (Gugerty & Karlan, 2018) der Nonprofit-Organisation „zu den langfristigen Zielen" (Helmig & Boenigk, 2019, S. 87) evaluiert.

Die finale Komponente des konzeptionellen Bezugsrahmens ist – ganz im Sinne des obigen Abschnittes – die Kontrolle (*(10) Controlling*) des multidimensionalen Erfolgs von (Personal-)Zielen der Nonprofit-Organisation. Dabei soll aus Schaubild 2 ersichtlich werden, dass das *(10) Controlling* durch Rückkoppelungsschleifen insbesondere mit den Komponenten *(4) Organizational characteristics*, *(5) Organizational goals* und *(9) Outcomes* korrespondiert. So wird die Evaluation der Komponente *(9) Outcomes* via spezifischer Messindikatoren auf der Grundlage von *(4) Organizational characteristics* und *(5) Organizational goals* vorgenommen. Das Ergebnis wird anschließend zurückgesendet, was nicht nur Organisationsinventur (*(4) Organizational characteristics*) befördert, sondern auch Zielreformulierungen (*(5) Organizational goals*) auslösen kann.

**Kapitel 2: Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach**

Nonprofit-Organisationen stehen vor der Herausforderung Führungskontinuität langfristig sicherzustellen und entsprechend umfassendes Nachfolgemanagement zu implementieren (Carman et al., 2010; Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Russel et al., 2020; Tierney, 2006). Vor diesem Hintergrund untersucht die erste Studie dieser Dissertation in Kapitel 2, ob ein geteilter Führungsansatz von Vorstand, Geschäftsführende/Abteilungsleitenden und Personalmanager:innen den Nachfolgemanagementprozess verbessert und so auf Führungskontinuität rekurriert.

Unter Bezug auf die aktuellen, vorliegenden Bedarfsprognosen, beschreibt die Studie zunächst die Relevanz der Auseinandersetzung mit Nachfolgemanagement in Nonprofit-Organisationen. Dabei geht die Studie auf einschlägige Literatur ein (Froelich et al., 2011; Santora et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2020). Daraus ableitend führt sie das Potential eines dreigliedrigen Führungsansatzes (Vorstand, Geschäftsführende/Abteilungsleitenden, Personalmanager:innen) in Nachfolgeangelegenheiten an. Sie entwickelt aus diesem Zusammenhang anwendungsbezogene Definitionen von geteilter Führung (engl.: shared leadership) und Nachfolgemanagement im Nonprofit-Kontext. Überdies stößt die Studie die Konzeptualisierung von Führungskontinuität (engl.: leadership continuity) an.

Darauffolgend analysiert die Studie empirisch den Einfluss von geteilter Führung auf Nachfolgemanagementaktivität und Führungskontinuität. Dies wird anhand erhobener Online-Umfragedaten von insgesamt 1020 Nonprofit-Führungskräften in Deutschland geleistet. Dabei folgt die Zusammenhangsanalyse der zunächst deskriptiv-statistischen Auswertung der Daten. Neben Soziodemografika (Alter, Geschlecht etc.) werden auch Organisationscharakteristika (Jahreseinnahmen, Betätigungsfeld etc.) beschrieben. Die Datenanalyse folgt einer Partial Least Squares Strukturgleichungsmodellierung (PLS-SEM) zum Test aufgestellter Forschungshypothesen (Bayonne et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2012).

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass nur eine Minderheit der befragten Organisationen in Deutschland einen dreigliedrigen Führungsansatz im Nachfolgemanagement praktizieren. Allerdings ergeben sich auch Hinweise darauf, dass geteilte Führung (Vorstand, Geschäftsführende/Abteilungsleitenden, Personalmanager:innen) einen systematischen Nachfolgeprozesses und Führungskontinuität wahrscheinlicher machen.

**Kapitel 3: Nonprofit talent recruitment: An online experiment on new ways of working and leadership development opportunities**

Die zweite Studie der Dissertation (Kapitel 3) widmet sich einer zentralen Voraussetzung für (idealtypisches) Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement, namentlich genügend talentiertes Personal in der Organisation. Um der Rekrutierungsherausforderung in Nonprofit-Organisationen zu begegnen und mehr talentiertes Personal mit Potential (zu Führungskräften) für Nachfolgemanagementsysteme zu akquirieren, sucht die Studie nach möglichen Anreizen. Sie fokussiert sich auf zwei mögliche und stellt die Frage, inwiefern die Bewerbung neuer Arbeitsmodelle und die Möglichkeit zur Führungskraftentwicklung die Nonprofit-Bewerbungsabsicht verbessern.

Die Studie baut auf zentralen, motivationstheoretischen Annahmen der Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2004) auf. Sie geht insbesondere davon aus, dass potentielle Arbeitskräfte eher motiviert sind, sich auf einen Nonprofit-Job zu bewerben, wenn dieser ihnen die Befriedigung von Grundbedürfnissen signalisiert. Hierbei fokussiert sich die Studie auf die Bedürfnisse Autonomie und Kompetenz (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020; Vansteenkiste et al., 2023). Sie konzeptualisiert, dass Jobanzeigen, die neue Arbeitsmodelle im Job kommunizieren, potentiellen Bewerber:innen Bedürfnisbefriedigung von Autonomie signalisieren. Zudem geht sie davon aus, dass Jobanzeigen, welche die Möglichkeit zur Führungskraftentwicklung kommunizieren, Kompetenz-Bedürfnisbefriedigung signalisieren.

Aufbauend darauf untersucht die Studie anhand eines Online-Experiments mit drei Gruppen und insgesamt 389 Proband:innen, inwiefern sich Signale (Asseburg et al., 2020; Celani & Singh, 2011) neuer Arbeitsmodelle und der Möglichkeit zur Führungsentwicklung in Nonprofit-Jobanzeigen auf die jeweilige Bewerbungsabsicht auswirken. Dem Experiment voran geht ein Pretest (n=150). Nach deskriptiv-statistischer Auswertung der Experimentaldaten (u.a. der Beschreibung der Stichprobe) und dem Manipulationscheck erfolgt die Datenanalyse primär via Regressionsmodellierung.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass sich Nonprofit-Organisationen in einem starken Arbeitnehmer:innen-Wettbewerb mit dem öffentlichen und dem privatwirtschaftlichen Sektor befinden. Nur 13.6% der Befragten präferieren demnach einen Job im Nonprofit-Sektor. Dabei weisen die Ergebnisse darauf hin, dass die Bewerbung neuer Arbeitsmodelle in Jobanzeigen die Bewerbungsabsicht von potentiellen Talenten auf Nonprofit-Jobs erhöht. Die Studie schließt u.a. mit der Implikation für Nonprofit-Manager:innen, insbesondere neue

Arbeitsmodelle zu implementieren, um talentiertes Personal anzuziehen und den Nonprofit-Sektor am Arbeitsmarkt wettbewerbsfähig zu halten.

**Kapitel 4: Offer to remain? Examining HRM practices in nonprofit employee retention**

Der dritte Studienbeitrag dieser Dissertation orientiert sich in Kapitel 4 ebenfalls an der identifizierten und herausfordernden Bedingung ausreichender Personalressourcen zur effektiven Implementierung von Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement. Die Studie fokussiert allerdings nicht das Rekrutieren von Nonprofit-Arbeitnehmer:innen, sondern ihre Bindung. Vor dem Hintergrund einschlägiger Bindungsliteratur erforscht die Studie die Frage, welche Personalpraktiken Nonprofit-Organisationen priorisieren sollten, um Bindung zu fördern.

Die Studie konzeptualisiert dabei auf der Grundlage der Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) arbeitsbezogene Einstellungsveränderungen – insbesondere die langfristige Bleibeabsicht – auf Seiten von Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden im sozialen Austauschprozess für Personalpraktiken der Nonprofit-Organisation. Dabei reflektiert die Studie ein aus der Managementliteratur abgeleitetes, breites Spektrum an für Nonprofit-Organisationen möglichen Personalpraktiken gegenüber ihren Mitarbeitenden (Gehalt, flexible Arbeitsmodelle, Karriereentwicklung, Sozialisationsinitiativen, Führungspraktik etc.).

Anhand einer Online-Umfrage mit insgesamt 229 Nonprofit-Mitarbeiter:innen in Deutschland wird zunächst evaluiert, ob die Befragten von spezifischen Personalpraktiken in ihrem Nonprofit-Job profitieren. Zudem wird gemessen, inwiefern die Befragten sich von ihrer arbeitsgebenden Organisation unterstützt fühlen, wie zufrieden sie mit ihrem Job sind, wie hoch ihr organisationales Commitment ist und wie es um ihre Bleibeabsicht bestellt ist. Neben der deskriptiven Analyse der Stichprobe werden Zusammenhangsanalysen zwischen einzelnen Personalpraktiken und den arbeitsbezogenen Einstellungen der Mitarbeitenden anhand einer Partial Least Squares Strukturgleichungsmodellierung (PLS-SEM) (Bayonne et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2012) vorgenommen.

Die Analysen geben Hinweise darauf, dass sich insbesondere flexible Arbeitsmodelle, Karriereentwicklungsinitiativen und Führungspraktik signifikant auf die wahrgenommene Organisationsunterstützung der Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden auswirken. Diese wiederum erweist sich, über die Mediation der Jobzufriedenheit, als zentraler Prädiktor der Bleibeabsicht. Als Handlungsempfehlung für die Praxis argumentiert die Studie schließlich für verstärkte (formalisierte) Bindungsinitiativen in Nonprofit-Organisationen. Dabei betont sie die Verbesserung von Führungspraktik, die Entwicklung und Implementierung von neuen Arbeitsmodellen (z.B. flexible Arbeitszeiten) sowie die Qualifizierung von Mitarbeitenden als besonders vielversprechend für Nonprofit-Bindungserfolg.

**Kapitel 5: Preparing for the next chapter: Reviewing and advancing research and practice on nonprofit leadership continuity**

Kapitel 5 impliziert die vierte Studie der vorliegenden Dissertation. Sie ist als Zusatzstudie zu verstehen und nimmt eine Sonderstellung ein, da sie den einzigen konzeptionellen Beitrag der Dissertation darstellt. Der Beitrag verfolgt das Ziel, einen aktuellen, narrativen Überblick über die Literatur zum Thema Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement für anschließende Forschungsleistungen anzubieten. Dabei wird vor allem argumentiert, dass Nachfolgeplanung in Nonprofit-Organisationen umfassend begriffen werden und nicht auf den unmittelbaren Übergang von Führungskräften reduziert werden sollte.

Anhand eines meta-narrativen Ansatzes, ähnlich dem von Pandey (2021), sichtet der Beitrag zunächst bereits bestehende Forschungsarbeiten zu Nachfolgen (Charan et al., 2011; Froelich et al., 2011; Kramer & Nayak, 2013; Li, 2019; Rothwell, 2005; Stewart & Twumasi, 2020), primär in Nonprofit-Organisationen. Anders als ein systematischer Literaturüberblick plädiert der Ansatz dabei für die reflektive Fokussierung auf die Entwicklung des Nachfolgethemas und die Beleuchtung von dessen verschiedenen, einander komplettierenden Perspektiven.

Der so generierte Überblick schlägt über die Auseinandersetzung mit der unmittelbaren Nachfolge in Nonprofit-Organisationen hinaus eine Perspektiverweiterung vor, welche die Vorbereitung und Entwicklung von Führungskapazitäten mittels unterschiedlicher, managerialer Strategieeinschläge sowie die organisationalen Konsequenzen des Übergangs in den Blick nimmt. Das durch den Beitrag entstehende, breiter wirkende Blickfeld auf Nachfolgen in Nonprofit-Organisationen wird ferner durch den Blickwinkel der Nachhaltigkeit flankiert und mit Wertedebatten über Vielfalt, Gleichberechtigung, Integration und Gerechtigkeit verbunden. Die Studie zeigt dabei vielversprechende, zukünftige Forschungsmöglichkeiten auf. Diese könnten auf qualitativen, hypothesen-generierenden Arbeiten aufbauen und anhand großer Umfragedaten getestet werden. So könnten komparativ-quantitative Studien schließlich detaillierter aufzeigen, inwieweit unterschiedliche Nachfolgemanagementstrategien in miteinander vergleichbaren Nonprofit-Organisationen unterschiedliche Konsequenzen und Erfolgsevaluationen nach sich ziehen.

**Tabelle 1.** Übersicht zu den einzelnen Dissertationsprojekten

| Forschende | Titel & Status des Projekts | Forschungsfrage | Forschungsdesign & Daten | Analyse | Zentrale Ergebnisse |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kapitel 2: Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach (Studie 1)** | | | | | |
| **Geib & Boenigk** | **Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach**<br>*Nonprofit Management and Leadership*<br><br>**Status: Veröffentlicht**<br>VHB-JOURQUAL 3: B<br>IMPACT FACTOR: 2,8 | ▪ Inwiefern verbessert ein geteilter Führungsansatz von Vorstand, Geschäftsführende/Abteilungsleitenden und Personalmanager:innen den Nachfolgemanagementprozess und Führungskontinuität in Nonprofit-Organisationen? | ▪ Online-Umfrage<br>▪ Stichprobe basiert auf der Synthese von Datenbanken (Vereinsregister, Stiftungsregister des Bundesverbands Deutscher Stiftungen, DZI-Organisationen)<br>▪ n=1020 Nonprofit-Geschäftsführende, Abteilungsleitende, Personalmanager:innen | ▪ Deskriptiv-statistische Auswertung<br>▪ PLS-SEM | ▪ Wenige Nonprofit-Organisationen praktizieren einen dreigliedrigen Führungsansatz im Nachfolgemanagement.<br>▪ Geteilte Führung (Vorstand, Geschäftsführende/Abteilungsleitenden, Personalmanager:innen) beeinflussen den Nachfolgeprozess und Führungskontinuität positiv. |
| **Kapitel 3: Nonprofit talent recruitment: An online experiment on new ways of working and leadership development opportunities (Studie 2)** | | | | | |
| **Geib & Boenigk** | **Nonprofit talent recruitment: An online experiment on new ways of working and leadership development opportunities**<br>*Nonprofit Management and Leadership*<br><br>**Status: Veröffentlicht**<br>VHB-JOURQUAL 3: B<br>IMPACT FACTOR: 2,8 | ▪ Inwiefern erhöhen neue Arbeitsmodelle und die Möglichkeit zur Führungskraftentwicklung die Nonprofit-Bewerbungsabsicht (für Nachfolgemanagement)? | ▪ Online-Experiment; between-subjects-Design<br>▪ Stichprobe rekrutiert via Respondi<br>▪ n=389 Arbeiternehmer:innen | ▪ Chi-Quadrat-Tests<br>▪ Mann-Whitney U Tests<br>▪ GLM-Regression<br>▪ Post-hoc Scheffé Tests | ▪ Nonprofit-Organisationen sind in einem starken Arbeitnehmer:innen-Wettbewerb mit dem öffentlichen und dem privatwirtschaftlichen Sektor. Nur 13.6% der Befragten präferieren Nonprofit-Jobs.<br>▪ Nur neue Arbeitsmodelle in Jobanzeigen erhöhen die Bewerbungsabsicht auf Nonprofit-Jobs. |
| **Kapitel 4: Offer to remain? Examining HRM practices in nonprofit employee retention (Studie 3)** | | | | | |
| **Geib** | **Offer to remain? Examining HRM practices in nonprofit employee retention**<br>*Nonprofit Management and Leadership*<br><br>**Status: Im Begutachtungsprozess**<br>VHB-JOURQUAL 3: B<br>IMPACT FACTOR: 2,8 | ▪ Welche Personalpraktiken sollten Nonprofit-Organisationen priorisieren, um die Mitarbeiter:innen-Bindung (für Nachfolgemanagement) zu fördern? | ▪ Online-Umfrage<br>▪ Stichprobe rekrutiert via Respondi / LinkedIn<br>▪ n=229 Nonprofit-Mitarbeiter:innen | ▪ Deskriptiv-statistische Auswertung<br>▪ PLS-SEM inkl. Importance-performance maps (IPMA) | ▪ Neue Arbeitsmodelle, Karriereentwicklungsinitiativen und Führungspraktik beeinflussen die wahrgenommene Organisationsunterstützung (POS) von Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden.<br>▪ POS wirkt sich über Jobzufriedenheit auf die Bleibeabsicht aus. |
| **Kapitel 5: Preparing for the next chapter: Reviewing and advancing research and practice on nonprofit leadership continuity (Zusatzstudie 4)** | | | | | |
| **Burns, Einolf, Geib, Peng & Stewart** | **Preparing for the next chapter: Reviewing and advancing research and practice on nonprofit leadership continuity**<br>*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*<br><br>**Status: Im Begutachtungsprozess**<br>VHB-JOURQUAL 3: B<br>IMPACT FACTOR: 2,8 | | ▪ Narrative Reflexion | ▪ Meta-narrativer Literaturüberblick | ▪ Führungskontinuität wird durch umfassend gedachtes Nachfolgemanagement sichergestellt.<br>▪ Ihre Förderung beruht auf ineinandergreifenden, wertebasierten Leitungsaktivitäten und interner Personalentwicklung bei gleichzeitiger, Strategie-Orientierung an spezifischen, organisationalen Erfolgskennzahlen. |

**Beiträge der Dissertation zur Forschung und Praxis**

In der Gesamtbetrachtung bietet diese Dissertation wissenschaftliche Beiträge zum Nachfolgemanagement in Nonprofit-Organisationen an. Sie schärft grundsätzlich den empirischen Blick auf eine durch multiple Arbeitsmarkttrends dynamisierte, existentielle Managementherausforderung im gemeinnützigen Sektor in Deutschland (Hamm et al., 2021). Ihre Studien tragen in unterschiedlicher Hinsicht zum umfassenden Verständnis effektiver Inhalte und Herangehensweisen strategischer Nachfolgebemühungen in Nonprofit-Organisationen bei. Die Dissertation zeigt insbesondere auf, inwiefern Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement die Implementation spezifischer Praktiken bedingt und Führungskontinuität über die organisationsstrategische Ebene und nachfolgende Personalmanagementprozesse (hinsichtlich Rekrutierung, Entwicklung und Bindung) positiv beeinflusst. Ferner identifiziert sie weiter zu bearbeitende Forschungsleerstellen, die durch zukünftige Untersuchungen gefüllt werden könnten. Schließlich werden praktische Handlungsempfehlungen angeboten, die Nonprofit-Manager:innen nutzen können, um sich personalstrategischer aufzustellen und führungstechnisch abzusichern.

Nachfolgemanagement in Nonprofit-Organisationen impliziert ein wichtiges, bislang aber weniger beachtetes Forschungsterrain im managerialen Nonprofit-Kontext (Li, 2019). Die vorliegende Dissertation erkennt existentielle Risiken, die fehlendes Nachfolgemanagement in Nonprofit-Organisationen erhöht. Vor diesem Hintergrund erfasst sie den managerialen Umgang mit Nachfolgen in Nonprofit-Organisationen in Deutschland als ihren zentralen Forschungsgegenstand. Ihr Forschungsausgang basiert auf ersten, territorialen Vorleistungen, primär aus dem U.S.-amerikanischen Nonprofit-Kontext. Hinzu kommen die Reflektion und die Synthese konzeptioneller Ideen und empirischer Befunde aus der allgemeinen Management-Literatur. Aufbauend auf beidem bringt die Dissertation eigens erhobene, empirische Daten aus dem deutschen Nonprofit-Sektor in den wissenschaftlichen Nachfolgediskurs ein. Im Folgenden werden die Forschungs- und Praxisbeiträge der individuellen Studien der kumulativen Dissertation näher erläutert. Es folgt abschließend ein Ausblick auf anschlussfähige Forschung.

Der Forschungsbeitrag von Dissertationsstudie 1 (Kapitel 2) bezieht sich zunächst auf die übergreifende Kartierung des Terrains der Nonprofit-Nachfolgeforschung. Er legt offen, dass nur wenige Nonprofit-Organisationen in Deutschland umfassendes Nachfolgemanagement in ihrer Organisation implementiert wissen. Kontrastierend sieht dem Studienbefund zufolge ein Drittel (32.7%) der befragten Organisationen Führungskontinuität

in Gefahr. Diese Tendenzen ähneln ersten Einblicken in anderen Länderkontexten (Carman et al., 2010; Froelich et al., 2011; Santora et al., 2015) und laden zu weiteren, komparativen Untersuchungen ein. Der Studienbeitrag ist überdies – auch dank robuster Stichprobengröße (n=1020) – der externen Validierung vergleichbarer Prekaritätsbefunde hinsichtlich Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement zuträglich. Gleichzeitig geht Studie 1 über validierende Zustandsbeschreibungen hinaus. Als Forschungsplädoyer für pragmatische (hier: lösungsorientierte) Analysen zur Unterstützung der Implementation strategischer Nachfolgebemühungen im dritten Sektor führt sie einen konkreten Unterstützungsansatz zur professionellen Nachfolgehandhabung in den akademischen Nonprofit-Diskurs ein und testet diesen. Der Ansatz impliziert, dass Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement durch die Teilung von Führungsverantwortung (engl.: shared leadership) durch den Vorstand, die Geschäftsführung/Abteilungsleitung und Personalmanager:innen (Santora, 2019; Johnson, 2022) wahrscheinlicher orchestriert und umfassender implementiert werden kann. Zudem führt Studie 1 (Kapitel 2) die Erfolgsgröße der Führungskontinuität (engl.: leadership continuity) als personenbezogene Erfolgsgröße in die quantitative Nonprofit-Forschung ein. Der Beitrag der ersten Studie manifestiert sich schließlich noch in dem Zusammenschluss einer internationalen Forschungsgruppe (USA, Hongkong, Deutschland), die sich seit einem gemeinsamen Panel auf einer Nonprofit-Fachkonferenz (ARNOVA) der wissenschaftlichen Ausreifung des Nachfolgephänomens in Nonprofit-Organisationen verschreibt.

Eine diesen Ausreifungsauftrag anstoßende Initiative manifestiert sich bereits in einer gemeinsamen, konzeptionellen Arbeit. Diese stellt einen zusätzlichen Studienbeitrag (Kapitel 5, Studie 4) der Dissertation dar. Er bündelt aktuelle Forschungserkenntnisse und wirft ein meta-narratives Schlaglicht auf das Nonprofit-Nachfolgeforschungsterrain. Eine weitere Leistung von Zusatzstudie 4 (Kapitel 5) besteht in dem auf Studie 1 dieser Dissertation aufbauenden, konzeptionellen Appell, sich Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement fortan insbesondere über die organisationale Erfolgsgröße Führungskontinuität zu nähern.

Aus praktischer Perspektive hält insbesondere Dissertationsstudie 1 Nonprofit-Manager:innen dazu an, Führungskontinuität regelmäßig zu evaluieren. Auswertungen dessen können Geschäftsführung/Abteilungsleitung und Personalmanager:innen Kennzahlen und weitere, interne Erkenntnisse dazu liefern, wie effektiv Nachfolgebemühungen bereits greifen. Dies kann obersten Entscheidungsträger:innen (i.d.R. dem Vorstand) berichtet werden und verbessert Entscheidungsgrundlagen für langfristige Führungspersonalstrategien. Sollte Führungskontinuität als gefährdet erkannt werden, schlägt Studie 1 Nonprofit-Manager:innen

vor, die Führungsverantwortung im Nachfolgemanagement zu teilen, um, idealerweise, das Potential unterschiedlicher Expertise (Vorstand, Geschäftsführung/Abteilungsleitung und Personalmanager:innen) effizient zu nutzen.

Die Dissertationsbeiträge 2 (Kapitel 3) und 3 (Kapitel 4) leisten ebenfalls Vitales in der wissenschaftlichen Kartierung des Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagementprozesses. Ihre Leistungen lassen sich im direkten Transfer von Erkenntnissen des allgemeineren, strategischen Personalmanagements auf den Nachfolgemanagementprozess verorten. Bislang wurden interne Personalressourcen in der akademischen Auseinandersetzung mit Nachfolgen zwar als wichtig benannt, Rekrutierungs- und Bindungsvoraussetzungen wurden empirisch aber kaum mit der Nonprofit-Nachfolgeliteratur verknüpft. Studie 2 und 3 der Dissertation setzen an diesem Punkt an und dienen der Forschungsverschränkung von personellen Voraussetzungen, effektivem Nachfolgemanagement und Führungskontinuität.

Aus forschungstheoretischer Sicht fordert Studie 2 (Kapitel 3) zunächst ein prominentes Argument über die rekrutierungsrelevante Frage der Arbeitsmotivation im Nonprofit-Sektor heraus. So geht die Studie, in Reflektion zeitgeistiger Arbeitsmarktdynamiken, nicht davon aus, dass Nonprofit-Organisationen zukünftig auf ausreichend Personal bauen können, das primär über ausgeprägte Nonprofit Service Motivation zu Nonprofit-Arbeitsleistung aktiviert wird (Light, 2002); schon deshalb nicht, weil gemeinwohlorientiertes Wirken nicht vom dritten Sektor monopolisiert wird (Liu et al., 2015; Steen, 2008). Es sind zudem die umfangreichen Führungskompetenzanforderungen in Nonprofit-Organisationen (Hunter & Decker Pierce, 2020; McMullin & Raggo, 2020; Simsa & Patak, 2016; Simsa, 2020), die in Zweifel ziehen lassen, dass sich genügend Arbeitskräfte mit Führungspotentialen aufgrund dominanter Nonprofit Service Motivation auf Sektor-Jobs bewerben und intern – eben *im Nachfolgemanagementprozess* – hinsichtlich dieser Potentiale entwickelt werden können. Vor diesem Hintergrund führt Studie 2 über die Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2004) zwei im gemeinnützigen Sektor bisher kaum untersuchte, zusätzliche Jobanreizangebote für potentielle Bewerber:innen ein. Studie 2 testet dabei flexible Arbeitsmodelle und Führungsentwicklungsmöglichkeiten. Im Ergebnis wird ein kausaler Zusammenhang zwischen einem Jobangebot mit flexiblem Arbeitsmodell und erhöhter Nonprofit-Bewerbungsabsicht aufgezeigt. Insgesamt trägt Studie 2 dazu bei, attraktivitätssteigernde Potentiale für den Nonprofit-Sektor wissenschaftlich weiter zu erhellen und Rekrutierungspraktik im Diskurs auf Nonprofit-Nachfolgeterrain konzeptionell wie empirisch eher mitzudenken.

Aus praktischer Perspektive hält Dissertationsstudie 2 Nonprofit-Manager:innen, insbesondere jene mit strategischer Personalverantwortung, dazu an, Bedarfsanalysen der Mitarbeitenden in Bezug auf neue (flexible) Arbeitsmodelle durchzuführen. Hier bieten sich niedrigschwellige, anonyme Befragungen an. Die Befragungen können neben individuellen Anregungen des Personals entlang der Arbeit von Gerards et al. (2017) ausgerichtet werden. Diese orientieren sich u.a. an Fragen zur individuellen Wichtigkeit selbstbestimmter Arbeitszeiten, ortunabhängiger Arbeitsmöglichkeiten sowie flexiblen Anpassungsregelungen des eigenen Arbeitspensums in unterschiedlichen Lebenssituationen. Gleichzeitig müssen die Bedarfe operativ auch umsetzbar sein, hierfür sind Einschätzungen der Nonprofit-Führungsriegen elementar. Mitarbeiterumfragen sollten außerdem bereits bestehende Angebote neuer Arbeitsmodelle evaluieren. Nonprofit-Manager:innen sollten überdies bereits in der frühen Rekrutierungsphase (in Stellenausschreibungen) die Möglichkeit kommunizieren, in neuen (flexiblen) Arbeitsmodellen zu arbeiten. Dies erhöht die Wahrscheinlichkeit, mehr (bzw. auch mehr talentierte) Bewerber:innen zu gewinnen, Humankapital gezielt aufbauen zu können und z.B. als Teamleitung einzusetzen. Eine Implementierung von neuen Arbeitsmodellen vor ihrer Kommunikation in frühen Rekrutierungsmaßnahmen ist dabei unabdingbar, um dem Risiko des Verlusts der Glaubwürdigkeit aus Sicht (neuer) Mitarbeitender oder gar Abwanderung vorzubeugen (Hur & Bae, 2021; Schott et al., 2019; Miller-Mor-Attias & Vigoda-Gadot, 2022).

Studie 3 (Kapitel 4) schließt konzeptionelle Lücken zwischen der Nonprofit-Bindungsliteratur und der Nachfolgeforschung. Dabei geht die Studie, ähnlich der Annahmen in Studie 2, nicht davon aus, dass individuelle Nonprofit Service Motivation Personal langfristig in Nonprofit-Organisationen bzw. im gemeinnützigen Sektor hält (Mann, 2006). Gleichzeitig betont sie, dass die nachhaltige Personalverfügbarkeit für effektives Nachfolgemanagement und interne Nachbesetzungsbemühungen notwendig ist. In diesem Sinne bettet Studie 3 die wenigen, bereits verfügbaren Arbeitsmotivations- und Bindungsuntersuchungen im Nonprofit-Bereich (u.a. Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Kang et al., 2015; Kim & Lee, 2007) in den Nachfolgemanagement-Kontext ein. Die Studie bietet der Forschung diesbezüglich auch ein theoretisches Modell an. Die empirisch geleistete Analyse in Studie 3, entlang dieses Modells, zeigt Zusammenhänge zwischen Personalpraktiken und psychologischen Einstellungen in Bezug auf Jobzufriedenheit, organisationalem Commitment und Bindungsabsicht von Mitarbeitenden. Dabei synthetisiert (und validiert) die Studie erste Analysen wie die von Knapp et al. (2017) und Wang (2022). Zudem sensibilisiert sie die

Nonprofit-Personalforschung für die theoretische Unterscheidung von strategisch-intendierten und von Arbeitnehmer:innen wahrgenommenen Praktiken über das Konstrukt der wahrgenommenen Organisationsunterstützung (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Studie 3 präsentiert auch Hinweise auf positive Zusammenhänge von flexiblen Arbeitsmodellen, Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten sowie Sozialisations- und Führungspraktiken mit Nonprofit-Jobzufriedenheit und -Bleibeabsicht. Aus Forschungsperspektive wird dabei insbesondere (a) die doppelte Prägnanz von flexiblen Arbeitsmodellen komplementär zum Rekrutierungspotential (Studie 2) auch im Bindungskontext (Studie 3) hervorgehoben sowie (b) verdeutlicht, dass sozialer Austausch für Nonprofit-Bindungserfolg im Nachfolgemanagementprozess zentral ist.

Mit diesen Ergebnissen hält Dissertationsstudie 3 Nonprofit-Manager:innen aus praktischer Perspektive dazu an, Bindungspläne zu formulieren. Diese bedingen sowohl Bedarfsanalysen für zukünftigen Personaleinsatz (z.B. für Führungsnachfolgen), als auch daraus folgende Bindungsziele (z.B. niedrige Fluktuationsraten, gute (Zufriedenheits-) Bewertungen auf einschlägigen Jobportalen etc.). Da Studie 3 den Führungseinfluss auf Bleibeabsichten von Nonprofit-Personal besonders deutlich macht, sollten Nonprofit-Verantwortliche auch über (anonyme) Führungsevaluationen durch Mitarbeitende beraten. Die Evaluationen könnten z.B. von Ombudspersonen gemeinsam mit Führungskräften reflektiert werden und als effektive, wenngleich weiche Korrektivverfahren fungieren. Sie könnten ferner zielgerichtete Impulse für Führungstrainings und Teamworkshops zur Verbesserung bindungsorientierter Führung darstellen. Nonprofit-Management sollte gemäß Studie 3 ebenso auf die Karriereentwicklung von Mitarbeiter:innen bedacht sein. Leitende und Personalverantwortliche könnten Mitarbeitende z.B. in halbjährigen Treffen in der Ausarbeitung persönlicher Entwicklungsschritte beraten und sie über Weiterbildungsangebote qualifizieren. Schließlich trägt Studie 3 auch zu praktischen Erkenntnissen bei, weshalb es sich lohnt, Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden neue (flexible) Arbeitsmodelle anzubieten. So zeigt sich, dass sich Nonprofit-Personal durch arbeitsbezogene Flexibilitätsgarantien in ihren persönlichen Agenden unterstützt fühlen, während sie Organisationsziele miterarbeiten.

*Ausblick auf künftige Forschung*

Trotz der in der vorliegenden Dissertation vorgenommenen Kartierung des Forschungsgegenstands des Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagements und seiner Überschneidungen mit Rekrutierungs- und Bindungsfragen besteht weiterhin Forschungsbedarf. So müssen die Ergebnisse von Dissertationsstudie 1, besonders in Bezug auf die sich andeutenden Vorteile

eines geteilten Führungsansatz, u.a. weiteren Anschlussarbeiten standhalten bzw. durch diese ergänzt werden. Die Nonprofit-Forschung sollte beispielsweise quantitative Alternativen zur Aggregationsmessung von geteilter Führung (Zhu et al., 2018) für die detailliertere Erfassung von Führungsteamdynamiken nutzen, wie den Ansatz der sozialen Netzwerkanalyse (Carson et al., 2007; Sato & Makabe, 2021). Folgende Untersuchungen könnten zudem ausdrücklich zwischen spezifischen Nachfolgeereignissen in Nonprofit-Organisationen differenzieren; beispielsweise hinsichtlich der Stellen, die Nachfolgebedarfe proklamieren (Vorstandsposten vs. operative Leitungsstellen etc.). Darüber hinaus sollten Forschungsarbeiten die Strahlkraft von Führungskontinuität auf unterschiedliche Erfolgsdimensionen von Nonprofit-Organisationen in den empirischen Blick nehmen. Hier wären neben Zusammenhangsanalysen zwischen Führungskontinuität und finanzieller Nonprofit-Performance auch qualitative Untersuchungen denkbar, die sich dem Einfluss von Führungskontinuität auf Stakeholder-Performance detaillierter annehmen.

Forschungsbedarf besteht überdies hinsichtlich der engmaschigen, mit Nachfolgemanagement verschränkten Nonprofit-Rekrutierungs- und Bindungsstudien. So könnten die Ergebnisse aus Dissertationsstudie 2 hinsichtlich externer Validität u.a. durch Studien komplementiert werden, deren Stichproben ausschließlich aus jobsuchenden Proband:innen bestehen. In diesem Sinne wären erste Arbeiten nach dem Vorbild von Linos (2018) oder Keppeler und Papenfuß (2021) lohnend, welche Bewerbungsabsichten unter realen Bedingungen feldexperimentell untersuchen. Gleichzeitig könnte eine noch strengere Kriterienansetzung der untersuchten Grundgesamtheit anvisiert werden, um Ergebnisse aus Studie 2 zu ergänzen. So könnten Arbeiten die Qualität von Bewerbungen (in Bezug auf talentierte Bewerber:innen) noch konkreter forcieren, z.B. durch das Anzapfen von Stipendiatsnetzwerken hinsichtlich adäquater Stichprobengrundlage. Schließlich könnten die Erkenntnisse aus Studie 2 zum Anlass genommen werden, innerhalb des Rekrutierungsprozesses unterschiedliche Phasen zu unterscheiden. Denn obschon Studie 2 keinen signifikanten Einfluss des Jobanreizes durch die Möglichkeit der Entwicklung von Führungskompetenzen auf die Bewerbungsabsicht feststellen konnte, könnte dies mitunter noch in späteren Phasen, wie Vorstellungsgesprächen und Verhandlungen zum Einstiegsgehalt, attraktivitätsrelevant werden.

Weiterhin sollten die Befunde von Dissertationsstudie 3 durch zukünftige Untersuchungen ergänzt und herausgefordert werden. So könnten die Studienergebnisse mit denen longitudinaler Feldexperimente verglichen werden, was der internen Validität der

Ergebnisse zuträglich wäre. So könnten Zusammenhänge zwischen spezifischen Personalpraktiken und Bleibeabsicht real abgebildet und als kausal interpretiert werden. Die Forschungskooperation mit einer Nonprofit-Organisation mit ausgebildeter Personalstruktur (festangestellten Mitarbeitenden) kann hier Abhilfe schaffen: Personalpraktiken könnten nach der Evaluation von arbeitsbezogenen Grundeinstellungen zunächst bei einer Teilgruppe von vergleichbaren Arbeitnehmer:innen (Gruppe 1) unter dem Label eines Pilotprojekts implementiert werden. Nach einem halben Jahr könnten zentrale psychologische Einstellungen wie wahrgenommene Organisationsunterstützung und Jobzufriedenheit sowie quantifizierte Bindungsraten mit einer vergleichbaren Teilgruppe ohne diese Gunst (Kontrollgruppe 2) kontrastiert werden. Bezüglich der externen Validität von Studie 3 muss durch Anschlussarbeiten ebenfalls Weiterentwicklung stattfinden. Es kann dabei sinnvoll sein, sich im deutschen Nonprofit-Kontext an größeren Nonprofit-Arbeitsfeldern (wie sozialen Diensten) (Schubert et al., 2023) zu orientieren. Aufschlussreich könnte es auch sein, Karriereaufstiegsabsichten im Kontext des Zusammenhangs zwischen Personalpraktiken und psychologischen Einstellungskonstrukten mit zu erheben. Abschließend könnten Conjoint-Ansätze erhellen, inwieweit fehlende (wahrgenommene) Existenz einer Personalpraktik durch die Perzeption anderer kompensiert werden könnte.

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**Anhang 1.** Weiterführende Theorie-Erläuterungen

| | |
|---|---|
| Die Theorie der Bedürfnishierarchie<br><br>Maslow (1948; 1968) | Im Mittelpunkt der Theorie nach Maslow (1948; 1968) steht zunächst eine hierarchische Bedürfnispyramide, nach welcher im Arbeitskontext Mitarbeiter:innen erst durch die Erfüllung von Grundbedürfnissen (z.B. Entlohnung, Arbeitsplatzsicherheit) dazu motiviert sind, die nächste Pyramidenstufe (z.B. das Streben nach Selbstverwirklichung im Job) zu fokussieren (Bassous, 2015). |
| Die Erwartungstheorie<br><br>Vroom (1964) | Eine Kernaussage der Erwartungstheorie (auch: Valenz-Instrumentalitäts-Erwartungs-Theorie) nach Vroom (1964) besagt hingegen, dass Mitarbeiter:innen zu Arbeitsleistung dann motiviert sind, wenn sie erwarten, dass eigene Mühen tatsächlich zu Leistung führen und manifeste Ergebnisse erzielt werden, die persönlich als erstrebenswert gewertet werden. |
| Die Zweifaktorentheorie<br><br>Herzberg (1966; 1974) | Die Zweitfaktorentheorie (Herzberg, 1966; 1774) unterscheidet derweil dichotom zwischen Faktoren, die sich erstens auf den Arbeitsinhalt (Motivatoren) und zweitens auf den Arbeitskontext (Hygienefaktoren) beziehen. Zu den Motivatoren gehören laut Hackman und Oldham (1976) arbeitsbezogen Anerkennung, Erfolg, Verantwortung, (Be-)Förderung und persönliche Kompetenzentwicklung. Zu den Hygienefaktoren zählen derweil Organisationspolicen, Führungspraktiken, Gehaltspläne und allgemeine Arbeitsbedingungen. Der Theorie nach beeinflussen Hygienefaktoren bei Mitarbeiter:innen den Grad der Arbeitsunzufriedenheit, während inhaltsbezogene Motivatoren auf den Grad der Arbeitszufriedenheit wirken (Herzberg, 1774). |
| Die Job-Characteristics-Theorie<br><br>Hackman & Oldham (1980) | Hackman und Oldham (1980) gehen ferner der Frage nach (intrinsischer) Arbeitsmotivationsförderung anhand von fünf Job-Charakteristiken (Anforderungsvielfalt, Ganzheitlichkeit, Bedeutsamkeit, Autonomie und Feedback) nach. Den Autoren zufolge bereiten diese wiederum drei psychischen Zuständen (Sinnhaftigkeit der Arbeit, Verantwortung für Arbeitsergebnisse, Kenntnisse der Arbeitsergebnisse) den Weg. Diese Zustände provozieren der Theorie nach u.a. Arbeitsmotivation (Knapp et al., 2017; Saavedra et al., 2000; Schepers et al., 2005). |

# Kapitel 2: Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach

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# Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach

Nils Geib and Silke Boenigk

## Abstract

The topic of nonprofit succession management has gained increasing research attention in recent years. However, the organizational implementation rate of succession management is often low – and even where present, may be mere "lip service." Previous studies in the field mostly focus on the role of boards or executive directors in succession management. Grounded in shared leadership theory, this study takes a broader perspective, and stresses the shared responsibilities among boards, executive directors/division executives, and human resource (HR) professionals within the succession management process. As such, the study's framework comprises three components: shared leadership, the succession management process, and nonprofit leadership continuity as an outcome variable. The results of a large online survey in Germany (n=1020) show that only 12.3% of responding nonprofit organizations in Germany practice tripartite shared leadership in succession management. However, applying partial least squares analysis indicates, for example, a positive relationship of shared leadership behavior among boards, executive directors/ division executives, and HR professionals with the likelihood of a systematic succession management process, as well as nonprofit leadership continuity. Reflecting on our findings and current threats to nonprofits, such as COVID-19, we conclude by offering practical implications for nonprofit decision-makers and for academia. Among other things, we argue that nonprofit practice should push for more (tripartite) shared leadership to improve succession management and leadership continuity.

**Keywords:** leadership continuity, nonprofit human resource planning, nonprofit leadership, PLS-SEM analysis, shared leadership, succession management

## 1. Introduction

The departure of long-time board members or executive directors can cause major disruptions to an organization's operations (Ali & Mehreen, 2019; Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Schepker et al., 2017; Tebbe et al., 2017). Whereas in U.S. nonprofit organizations up to 75% of leaders plan to leave in the coming years (Kunreuther et al., 2013), only a few nonprofits have prepared for this by implementing succession strategies (Carman et al., 2010; Chang & Besel, 2021; Santora et al., 2015; Sargeant & Day, 2018). Yet, the need to realize strategy-led successions, gearing toward smooth transitions on the board and at the executive director/division executive level, may become even more substantial in the near future in light of the latest market trends – for instance, the retirement of the baby boomer generation (Russel et al., 2020; Tierney, 2006), increasing competition to attract young talent (McKee & Froelich, 2016; Von Bergen, 2007), and conditional sector commitment (AbouAssi et al., 2021; Walk et al., 2021), to name just a few. These trends are likely to make changes in nonprofit leadership more frequent. As a consequence, systematic succession management has evolved to an important research topic in nonprofit literature in recent years (Bozer et al., 2015; Froelich et al., 2011; Li, 2019; Santora et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2020).

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has immensely affected the nonprofit workplace for more than 2 years now. Kuenzi et al. (2021) highlight how COVID-19 has altered aspiring leaders' job choices. The authors also argue that the pandemic torpedoes the implementation of strategic HR development in nonprofits, since in challenging times resources are more directed toward the organization's immediate survival (Kuenzi et al., 2021). In contrast, however, that same pandemic also pushes nonprofits to, for example, “review the succession planning process for CEO governance” (Santora, 2020, p. 5) and thus makes salient the need to improve succession management.

While previous studies have yielded initial insights on succession practices in the nonprofit context, research usually focuses either on the role of boards or executive directors in succession management (Allison, 2002; Gothard & Austin, 2013; Hunter & Decker Pierce, 2020; Kramer & Nayak, 2013; Li, 2019; McKee & Froelich, 2016; Stewart, 2016; Stewart & Twumasi, 2020). Recently, however, several authors have noted that human resource (HR) professionals also play a pivotal role in nonprofit succession management (Santora, 2019; Santora & Bozer, 2015; Varhegyi & Jepsen, 2017). This is mainly because HR professionals enrich human capital in strategic and daily operational practice (Pynes, 2004; Saleh, 2020; Selden & Sowa, 2015). As such, they are well educated to support the board and executives in

the succession management process (Varhegyi & Jepsen, 2017) and could take the lead in tackling corresponding questions, for instance, concerning labor market law issues. Against this backdrop, Santora (2019, p. 8) notes a "[…] great need for a tripartite call for action among boards, CEOs, and HR professionals" in nonprofit succession management.

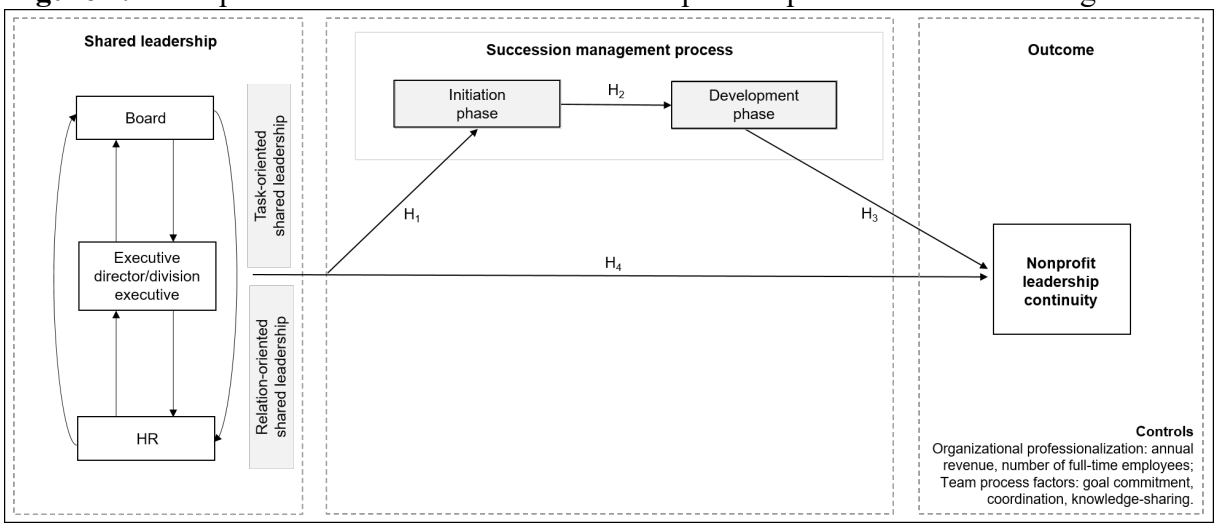
While we agree with this view, here we develop and test a theoretical framework of nonprofit succession management from a tripartite shared leadership perspective (Carson et al., 2007; Liang et al., 2021; Pearce & Conger, 2003). We elaborate on this in Section 2. Based on our framework, we aim to answer the following overarching research question: *Does shared leadership of boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals improve the nonprofit succession management process, and finally, nonprofit leadership continuity?*

Our study makes several important contributions. First, we provide an extended definitional introduction to shared leadership in nonprofit succession management (see Table A1). Second, we develop a theoretical framework of shared leadership in succession management for the nonprofit context. In contrast to most existing succession management studies, this framework is not limited to one actor (boards, executive directors) but rather has a shared, tripartite leadership perspective. Third, our study is also among the first to offer empirical insights into nonprofit succession management from a shared leadership perspective by conducting a large online survey (n=1020). Last, we extend knowledge on nonprofit succession management in different national contexts (Santora et al., 2015) by introducing quantitative data from the German nonprofit sector to the nonprofit succession discourse. Below, we next present the theoretical background of our research before explaining our methodological approach.

## 2. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

Figure 1 provides a visual overview of our conceptual framework of shared leadership in nonprofit succession management. It consists of three main components: shared leadership, the succession management process, and nonprofit leadership continuity, as the intended outcome. Overall, we assume positive relationships between these components. For a concise overview of our components' key definitions, see Table A1. We argue specifically that shared leadership among boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals in succession contexts is positively related to a comprehensive succession management process and nonprofit leadership continuity. We explain our framework and propose hypotheses in the following four subsections.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of shared leadership in nonprofit succession management




## 2.1 Shared leadership in nonprofit succession management

Our framework's *first component* is shared leadership. The shared leadership concept is based on work in the interdisciplinary field of organizational and leadership theory since the 1930s (Follett, 1924), where contributions like social exchange theory, emergent leadership, followership theory, and participative decision-making theory paved the way (Pearce & Conger, 2003). A clearer vision of the shared leadership concept, however, evolved beginning in the 1990s (Pearce, 1997; Routhieaux, 2015). Since then, scholars have examined the issue in different ways and settings (Lorinkova & Bartol, 2021; Zhu et al., 2018), as it addresses real-life leadership challenges that frequently occur in organizations (Pearce et al., 2014; Yukl, 2012).

Building on pertinent literature (Carson et al., 2007; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Santora, 2019), we offer an expanded definition of shared leadership explicitly for the context of nonprofit succession management. As such, we define it as the interactive and emergent process of mutual influence among boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals beyond their formal roles, which emphasizes the situational and horizontal dispersion of leadership responsibilities in structuring and executing succession management activities through task- and relation-oriented behaviors (Table A1). In the following, we explain what our definition is based on.

Commonly, scholars define shared leadership as the lateral and evolving process of mutual influence in regards to leadership responsibilities among team members to promote situational task completion (Carson et al., 2007; Liang et al., 2021; Pearce & Conger, 2003). A shared leadership perspective deemphasizes leadership characterized by top-down influence

on subordinates (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020) and instead stresses leadership as a fluid label (McIntyre & Foti, 2013) horizontally distributed to team-working individuals in social interactions (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Pearce et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2020). Drawing on research by Morgeson et al. (2010), Klasmeier and Rowold (2020, p. 916) further specify that shared leadership primarily helps team members "jointly structure and plan their tasks and mutually provide feedback." In our view, and consistent with Santora (2019), in nonprofit succession management, this is done mainly by leadership-sharing team members: boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals.

Generally, a shared leadership perspective does not negate the coexistence of vertical leadership (formal authority of command) (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Zhu et al., 2018). Hierarchical-formal leadership structures can remain in place or even foster the distribution of leadership responsibility to non-formal leadership actors on a task-related basis, for example, by reducing task-ambiguity (Freund, 2017; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Ziegert & Dust, 2021). Pearce et al. (2001) and Pearce et al. (2004) first introduced the shared leadership approach into the nonprofit context; Routhieaux (2015), among others, later linked it to nonprofit succession management. We visualize this connection in our framework (Figure 1). Approaching nonprofit succession management in shared leadership of boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals, we argue that it requires leadership commitment from both the remaining and exiting leadership actors.

Grille and Kauffeld (2015) and Han et al. (2018) declare that two key dimensions of shared leadership are task-oriented and relation-oriented shared leadership. Whereas task-oriented shared leadership emphasizes tasks and objectives, relation-oriented shared leadership is about support and care among shared leadership actors (Grille & Kauffeld, 2015; Han et al., 2018; Yukl, 2006, 2012). In nonprofit succession management settings, the task-oriented dimension revolves around the shared long-term goal and related activities to ensure leadership continuity, carried out by boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals. By contrast, the relation-oriented dimension stresses positive relationship factors, for example, promoting cohesion and voice among the three leadership actors. We conceptualize shared leadership in nonprofit succession management in terms of both key dimensions.

### 2.2 Succession management process

Our framework's *second component* is the succession management process. Scholars here typically refer to Rothwell (2005) who has defined succession management as the "systematic

effort by an organization to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future, and encourage individual advancement" (Rothwell, 2005, p. 10). In general, scholars and practitioners distinguish between two types of strategic succession practices: emergency-based and departure-based succession management. The major difference between them is the expected versus unexpected character of the processes (e.g., a board member/executive director is due to leave the NPO in 2022 vs. health problems of executive directors due to COVID-19) (Adams, 2005; Gothard & Austin, 2013). In our conceptual framework (Figure 1), we emphasize departure-based rather than emergency-based succession management.

Echoing aforementioned contributions, we specify the succession management process for nonprofit settings. We define it as the persistent planning and implementation of initial and developmental activities in continuous loops that target nonprofit employees' personal development and career progression and their transfer of knowledge of organizational specifics, aimed toward the outcome of a strong pipeline of leadership successors and, ultimately, leadership continuity. Next, we explain our definition by describing how the nonprofit succession management process is composed and indicating the extent to which it can induce situational role overlap.

Inspired by succession management scholars like Adams (2006), our framework conceptualizes an *initiation* and a *development phase* of the succession management process. In the initiation phase, decision-makers (boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals) first commit to strategic succession practices, acquire resources to carry out related work, and identify key job functions and leadership competencies required in future environments (Gothard & Austin, 2013; Rothwell, 2005; Wolfred, 2008). The development phase then entails managing tasks like organizing a comprehensive selection process, identifying and developing talent (Charan et al., 2011; Groves, 2007), and creating communication and reporting plans (Gothard & Austin, 2013; Rothwell, 2005; Wolfred, 2008). For an overview of all critical succession management activities in both phases, see Tables A2 and A4.

Yet from a shared leadership perspective, the nonprofit succession management process may cause role overlap among boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professional at times. For example, boards, mainly responsible for some critical tasks, such as resource acquisitions and executive recruitment (Miller-Millesen, 2003), may leave leadership to (director/division) executives and HR professionals (Santora, 2019), with more situational

expertise (Jäger & Rehli, 2012; Ziegert & Dust, 2021). However, deliberate overlaps of leadership responsibilities in succession management do not undermine the fundamental need for formal (vertical) leadership roles and chains of command. On that level, leadership aspirations of HR professionals remain limited to the administration and development of human capital, while boards and their executive principals hold more authority to issue directions and must lead in a broader range of areas, both strategically and operationally.

### 2.3 Nonprofit leadership continuity

Our framework's *third component* is nonprofit leadership continuity. In line with Lynn (2001), we argue that this is a construct distinct from succession management, describing a critical organizational outcome, and thus it can and should be measured independently (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006). Consequently, we define nonprofit leadership continuity as a key organizational outcome of a nonprofit management process. As such, it displays the extent to which a nonprofit is capable of developing and retaining leadership potential and planning ahead for leader deputization, thus ensuring ongoing leadership. In this regard, an example of developing leadership potential may be offers of training in problem-solving, project management, and effective communication made by executives and HR for eager employees. Additionally, retaining leadership potential implies, for example, that boards and executives actively promote a motivating work climate, impact-oriented ways of working, and career opportunities (including deputization clarification) administered by HR professionals and made visible throughout the organization.

Logically, we see succession management activities as affecting the organizational outcome of nonprofit leadership continuity at best. Striving for leadership continuity, however, reflects an overarching strategy pursuing an outcome display of organizational steadiness while combating a pending leadership void (Kuenzi et al., 2021; Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Tierney, 2006). It may rely on succession management and more strategic measures of leadership capacity building (Connolly & York, 2003; Despard, 2017), but might also build on proxies, for example, sheer board experience (McKee & Froelich, 2016; Stewart et al., 2020).

### 2.4 Hypotheses

According to the shared leadership literature, several positive effects on team-working tasks – such as succession management (Santora, 2019) – are observable (Zhu et al., 2018). For example, Erkutlu and Chafra (2012) find that shared leadership fosters proactive team behavior. This in turn is crucial for initiating a comprehensive succession management process (Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Santora & Bozer, 2015). Here, executive directors/division

executives and HR professionals must anticipatively approach each other and the board with mutual reminders to pursue strategy-led succession management. A shared leadership perspective supports them in offering their specific leadership expertise in individual succession management steps right from the start. Against this background, we suggest that shared leadership amplifies the proactive behavior of boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals to implement initial activities (initiation phase) of a systematic succession management process. Thus, our first hypothesis is as follows.

**H1:** Shared leadership among boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals is positively related to the initiation phase of a nonprofit succession management process.

Moreover, initiating succession management ought to evoke further action to form a more comprehensive process (Adams, 2006). In this sense, subsequent succession management activities of developmental character (Charan et al., 2011; Groves, 2007) depend on previous initial ones (Rothwell, 2005; Wolfred, 2008). In practice, however, little is yet known about whether initial efforts – such as the formulation of future required leadership competencies agreed upon by executive directors/division executives with the board and HR professionals – actually have a causal link to developmental activities and thus a comprehensive process. Consequently, we check if the initiation of first activities in a strategic succession management process triggers the implementation of developmental succession management activities thereafter. In this vein, we posit as follows.

**H2:** The initiation phase of a succession management process is positively related to implementing the development phase of a nonprofit succession management process.

Following our discussion in Section 2.3, we further argue that leadership continuity is an ultimate goal and desired outcome of a nonprofit's succession management process (Adams, 2017; Lynn, 2001; Santora et al., 2015). With this in mind, we conceptualize a third path in our conceptual framework and empirically examine whether development activities indeed pay off in achieving this desired goal. Specifically, we expect that implementing leadership development activities in nonprofits' succession management process – leading to completion of a comprehensive process – feed into our framework's outcome component of nonprofit leadership continuity. Hence, we hypothesize as follows.

**H3:** The development phase of a succession management process is positively related to nonprofit leadership continuity.

In addition to indirect effects, we also hypothesize a direct relationship of shared leadership with nonprofit leadership continuity. Our conceptualization is based on Routhieaux (2015, p. 145), who predicts that "shared leadership and decision making will have stronger human capital and be better positioned for smooth and effective transitions." Furthermore, Santora (2019) claims that involving boards, executives, and HR equally in implementing a succession management process improves organizational continuity. This also echoes researchers' claims that ensuring leadership promotes organizational continuity (Heimovics et al., 1993; McMullin & Raggo, 2020). We view leadership continuity as a critical part of organizational continuity, and, consistent with Routhieaux (2015), assume that it is fostered by shared leadership. Therefore, we posit the following.

**H4:** Shared leadership among boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals is positively related to nonprofit leadership continuity.

We control for the organizational number of full-time employees and annual revenue, and for the three team process factors of goal commitment, coordination, and knowledge sharing. We include the number of full-time employees and annual revenue as indicators of the organization's degree of professionalization. The team process factors are rooted in Han et al. (2018), which indicates that shared leadership positively affects these factors and team performance in collaborative settings.

## 3. Methods

This section explains the data collection process and presents details of the sample. Then, it explains the questionnaire measurements, and finally, shows details of data analysis.

### 3.1 Data collection and sample

Data collection took place in July and August 2021 by means of an online survey. We sent out a questionnaire to 24,722 nonprofit organizations in Germany, addressing leadership personnel, namely board members, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals. For this, we collected the organizations' email addresses using an external service provider, which generated the addresses based on a daily-updating web-scraping technique, from publicly available sources. After reviewing the address list, we compared it with openly available addresses of (a) the 51 largest German foundations (Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen, 2021) and (b) all 231 nonprofits that currently bear the most prominent seal of approval for nonprofit organizations in Germany, the German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI) seal (DZI, 2021). The DZI is a watchdog institution and key player in supervising high-quality giving standards in Germany. Its seal of approval accredits the quality

of accountability of nonprofit money collecting nonprofits (Boenigk et al., 2017). If organizations were not present in the provider's list, we added them. Responses were anonymous; we excluded those who (1) did not agree to our privacy policy or (2) dropped out of the survey before we asked them questions about succession management. Our final sample included 1020 responses (response rate = 4.13%).

Table 1 shows an overview of our sociodemographic sample characteristics. Of the respondents, 309 are female (30.3%), 468 are male (45.9%), and 5 (0.5%) are of diverse gender (missing: n=238). Only 4.6% are 30 years old or younger. By comparison, when added up, the percentage of respondents over the age of 50 years amounts to 42.7%. Meanwhile, 653 respondents (64.0%) are board members, 452 (44.3%) are executive directors/division executives, and 146 (14.3%) are HR professionals; 16.1% have been working in their position for more than a decade; and 57.5% serve their organizations on an honorary or voluntary basis, while 41.0% are employed full-time.

Turning to organizational characteristics (Table A3), most respondents are working in the nonprofit fields of education (25.9%), arts and culture (17.5%), or social services (15.4%), and the fewest in civil protection/disaster control (2.4%). Most respondents work in associations (72.6%), and the others in foundations (2.5%), cooperatives (0.1%), and nonprofit limited liability companies (2.2%). Just under one-fifth (18.5%) generate annual revenues of between 100,000 and 1 million euros, while a plurality (30.7%) have 10 employees or fewer. In sum, 14.4% have a seal of approval, such as that of the DZI.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic characteristics of study participants

| **Variable** | **Number of responses** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Female | 309 | 30.3 |
| Male | 468 | 45.9 |
| Diverse | 5 | 0.5 |
| *Missing* | *238* | *23.3* |
| **Age** (years) | | |
| ≤30 | 47 | 4.6 |
| 31-40 | 121 | 11.9 |
| 41-50 | 141 | 13.8 |
| 51-60 | 225 | 22.0 |
| >60 | 211 | 20.7 |
| *Missing* | *275* | *27.0* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Function within organization**[a] | | |
| Board member | 653 | 64.0 |
| Executive director/division executive | 452 | 44.3 |
| HR professional | 146 | 14.3 |
| Other | 29 | 2.8 |
| *Missing* | *0* | *0* |
| **Length of organizational function** (years) | | |
| ≤1 | 11 | 1.1 |
| 2-5 | 158 | 15.5 |
| 6-10 | 194 | 19.0 |
| 11-20 | 117 | 11.5 |
| >20 | 47 | 4.6 |
| *Missing* | *493* | *48.3* |
| **Employment type** | | |
| Honorary/voluntary | 587 | 57.5 |
| Employed full-time | 418 | 41.0 |
| *Missing* | *15* | *1.5* |

Note: n=1020.
[a]Does not amount to n=1020 (100%) responses, because respondents could provide multiple answers.

A sample is considered representative if its characteristics reflect those of a population. Based on a lack of recent representative data of nonprofit organizations in Germany (Mews & Boenigk, 2015), the only reliable studies available in these regards are the *Civil Society in Numbers* (*ZiviZ*) surveys. According to them, for example, 95% of organizations are associations (Priemer et al., 2017). However, this percentage is only 72.6% in our sample (Table A3). Likewise, our sample's distribution of nonprofits' annual revenues differs from that of the population. In this aspect, 4% of the German population's nonprofits generate annual revenues of more than 1 million euros (Priemer et al., 2015), while it is 11.4% in our sample. Reflecting this, we label our study, by strict definition, as nonrepresentative. Nevertheless, we use our sample confidently as it (a) is characterized by a robust sample size, (b) provides insight in the context of our research focus, and (c) exhibits at least some indication of representativeness from a broader perspective. Apart from the deviations already mentioned in the context of associations, the distribution of legal forms in our sample is, for example, virtually identical to that of the population (Priemer et al., 2017).

### 3.2 Measurement

Our questionnaire contains key measures of (1) *shared leadership*, (2) the *succession management process*, and (3) *nonprofit leadership continuity*. Where possible, we draw accepted scales from topic-specific studies and adapt them to our context. To measure all multi-item and single-item constructs, we use a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). For an overview of our measures, see Table A2.

*Shared leadership*. To measure shared leadership, we refer to the aggregation approach (Sato & Makabe, 2021) and adopt the 10-item scale developed by Han et al. (2018). This scale builds on the Shared Professional Leadership Inventory for Teams (SPLIT), originally introduced by Grille and Kauffeld (2015). It spotlights the construct's task-oriented and relation-oriented dimensions in particular. We conceptualize the construct of shared leadership as consisting of both these dimensions, and later measure it accordingly. Hence, we treat shared leadership as a high-order construct (HOC) (Sarstedt et al., 2019). After checking whether there is shared leadership in the organizations' succession management, we ask respondents whether they agree with statements like “The responsible executives clearly assign internal tasks of succession management” or “The responsible executives take sufficient time to address the concerns of others in succession management.”

*Succession management process*. We measure the succession management process based on succession management activity items previously used by Rothwell (2005). To validate them, we exposed them to external HR experts familiar with the nonprofit sector. Ultimately, our measurement captures an initiation phase (six items) and a development phase (eight items). For example, we ask respondents whether they agree with statements like “My organization develops indicators to measure the success of succession management” and “My organization implements programs to develop employees with leadership potential.”

*Nonprofit leadership continuity*. To date, no established scale to measure nonprofit leadership continuity exists. However, Bernthal and Wellins (2006) provide several indicators of leadership continuity in succession management, which we consult. We formulate five items asking respondents whether they agree with such statements as “In my organization, enough employees are developed into leaders” and “In my organization, continuity in leadership is always guaranteed.”

### 3.3 Data analysis

For data analysis, we run partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to test our hypotheses (Bayonne et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2012). This enables us to simultaneously

check for significant relations (hypotheses) between our framework's constructs and their indicators. PLS-SEM is especially applicable when empirical research designs include formative measured constructs (Ringle et al., 2020) but also when exploring theoretical extensions of established theories (Hair et al., 2019). Typically, PLS-SEM follows a two-step procedure: first, evaluate a measurement model (step 1) and then assess a structural model (step 2) (Sarstedt et al., 2017). For this purpose, we use the software package SmartPLS (version 3.3.2) (Ringle et al., 2015).

## 4. Results

This section presents the descriptive results and then the PLS-SEM analyses, including the measurement model and structural model assessment.

### 4.1 Descriptive results

Table 2 presents our descriptive results. When asked to indicate which leadership actors are substantially involved in succession management, only 12.3% state that their organization practices tripartite shared leadership by boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals, but 633 (62.0%) report shared leadership in succession management to some extent. Apart from tripartite shared leadership, boards and executive directors/division executives are responsible in 28.4% of all cases, while respondents rarely indicate a shared leadership team composed of boards and HR professionals (1.8%), or executive directors/division executives and HR professionals (1.3%). Instead, various respondents acknowledge that different actors also play a role in their organization's succession management (18.2%). Hence, our results suggest that up to now, tripartite shared leadership of boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals has not been the most common shared leadership composition. In this respect, our study confirms that practitioners in Germany have not yet followed Santora's (2019) call. On the one hand, this could be because many nonprofits are too small (Ban et al., 2003) to differentiate organizational leadership levels, for example, HR, clearly (although this is changing; Nonprofit HR, 2019). On the other hand, some nonprofits might not attribute succession management tasks to the three leadership levels of boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals, but instead find other ways to distribute succession management activities or roles (Table 2).

Turning to the degree of implementation of the succession management process, only 10.3% of respondents report one of the top two scale values (4–5), indicating that few organizations have sufficiently implemented succession management. By direct comparison (Table A5), this percentage is 13.8% for respondents saying that shared leadership in

succession management is present in their organization, and 5.8% for those stating it is absent. When looking at pivotal succession management activities (low two [1–2]/top two values), an ambivalent pattern emerges. More than one-third (37.4%) of respondents agree or totally agree that their organization defines current and future job requirements and competencies for leadership positions. Again, in comparison, this percentage amounts to 45.1% for respondents stating that shared leadership in succession management is present, whereas it is 24.5% for respondents indicating it is absent. Moreover, most respondents (39.2%) affirm that their organization determines which actor is in charge to communicate internal and external information about succession management concerns (shared leadership present = 47.4%, shared leadership absent = 25.4%).

By contrast, only 14.0% of respondents agree or totally agree that their organization implements specific programs to develop employees with leadership potential (shared leadership present = 16.8%, shared leadership absent = 10.3%). Likewise, nonprofits identify a lack of innovativeness in measures to meet their organization-specific succession needs. In this aspect, only 13.3% of respondents agree or totally agree that their organization undertakes creative endeavor (shared leadership present = 15.6%, shared leadership absent = 9.3%).

Given these findings, we assume that some succession management activities are easier for organizations to implement than others. Indeed, nonprofits perform weakly, in particular, when it comes to developing personnel into leaders (especially through unconventional means). This may be because such tasks require more time, collaborative effort, and resources than, for example, formulating job requirements or clarifying communication responsibilities. In addition, our observations point to at least three possible explanatory phenomena. (1) A lack of voice and mutual trust among responsible actors in succession management may inhibit more complex efforts (Carson et al., 2007; Freund, 2017). (2) A misconception of effective succession management may prevail among nonprofit decisionmakers who conceive of succession management activities as substitutive. (3) Unbalanced activity manifestations may be due to a reduction in a board's management activity (McMullin & Raggo, 2020; Miller-Millesen, 2003) and in administrative resources tangential to the COVID-19 pandemic (Kuenzi et al., 2021).

Overall, only 14.6% of respondents consider that their organizations sufficiently ensure nonprofit leadership continuity. On the other side of the spectrum, almost one-third (32.7%) indicate their nonprofit's leadership continuity to be at risk.

**Table 2.** Descriptive results

| **Variables** (5-point Likert scale, 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree") | **Number of responses** | **%** | **Mean (SD)** | **Median** | **Low two (1–2)** | **Top two (4–5)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Shared leadership in succession management** | | | | | | |
| Yes (to some extent) | 633 | 62.0 | | | | |
| No | 311 | 30.5 | | | | |
| *Missing* | *76* | *7.5* | | | | |
| **Shared leadership composition in succession management** | | | | | | |
| Board + Executive director/division executive + HR professional | 125 | **12.3** | | | | |
| Board + Executive director/division executive | 290 | 28.4 | | | | |
| Board + HR professional | 18 | 1.8 | | | | |
| Executive director/division executive + HR professional | 13 | 1.3 | | | | |
| Other | 186 | 18.2 | | | | |
| *Missing* | *388* | *38.0* | | | | |
| **Implementation of the succession management process** | 955 | 93.6 | 1.9 (1.1) | 2.0 | 67.8% | **10.3%** |
| *Missing* | *65* | *6.4* | | | | |
| **Succession management process activities in place**[a] | | | | | | |
| Defined current/future job requirements and competencies | 1000 | 98.0 | 2.9 (1.3) | 3.0 | 40.3% | 37.4% |
| *Missing* | *20* | *2.0* | | | | |
| Responsible actors determined to communicate information internally/externally | 989 | 97.0 | 2.9 (1.4) | 3.0 | 39.0% | 39.2% |
| *Missing* | *31* | *3.0* | | | | |
| Programs implemented to develop employees with leadership potential | 989 | 97.0 | 2.0 (1.2) | 2.0 | 64.7% | 14.0% |
| *Missing* | *31* | *3.0* | | | | |
| Innovative measures implemented to meet succession needs | 988 | 96.9 | 2.1 (1.1) | 2.0 | 65.0% | 13.3% |
| *Missing* | *32* | *3.1* | | | | |
| **Nonprofit leadership continuity** | 809 | 79.3 | 3.0 (0.9) | 3.0 | 32.7% | **14.6%** |
| *Missing* | *211* | *20.7* | | | | |

Note: Bold values are explicitly discussed in the results section; n=1020.
[a]Activities presented are a selection of all 14 activities measured in our survey. For a comprehensive overview of all activity values, see Table A4.

## 4.2 PLS results

To test our hypotheses, we cut our sample from 1020 to 550 for two main reasons. First, of the 1020 respondents, 633 indicate that responsible actors in succession management practice shared leadership. Second, of the remaining 633 cases, 83 respondents (13.1%) do not provide sufficient information on all constructs essential to our analyses. We do not apply imputation, because missing percentage values are substantial for some variables. However, 550 responses are completely sufficient to calculate valid analyses with SmartPLS in our study (Hair et al., 2019). We present the results of our PLS-SEM analyses below. First, we evaluate the quality of the measurement model. Next, we address the quality of the structural model and hypothesis testing.

### *4.2.1 Measurement model evaluation*

Our measurement model constitutes formative and reflective operationalized constructs. To evaluate both types of constructs, different quality criteria apply (Hair et al., 2019). In our case, all constructs yield good measurement quality (Table A6). As shown in Table A6, we make use of the embedded two-stage approach and treat shared leadership as a reflective-formative HOC (Sarstedt et al., 2019). Thus, we conceptualize the two key dimensions of task-oriented and relation-oriented shared leadership as lower-order constructs (LOCs) reflectively and subsequently compute the HOC of shared leadership from the LOCs' latent variable scores formatively. Moreover, we operationalize the succession management process in a formative way. By contrast, we reflectively assess nonprofit leadership continuity.

First, we examine the quality of our formative measures. In this regard, we test whether critical collinearity issues occur in our data. Checking the variance inflation factor (VIF), we find no collinearity issues. All VIF values of the higher-order shared leadership construct and the succession management process are below the maximum threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2019). In addition, we assess the statistical significance of all indicator weights. We find that all but two indicators reach significant weights. However, we keep all indicators because their outer loadings, which we assess by applying the bootstrapping technique, display significance and are above values of 0.5 (Ramayah et al., 2018); hence, the indicators' absolute contribution to the construct is high (Hair et al., 2019).

Assessing quality for our reflective measures, we examine item and construct reliability. Moreover, we determine convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). In total, the results indicate good quality of all constructs. For the LOCs of task- and relation-oriented shared leadership dimensions, factor loadings are all above the suggested threshold of 0.7,

which implies high item reliability (Chin, 1998). For nonprofit leadership continuity, factor loadings for all but two items exceed the values of 0.7. However, we demonstrate the significance of both items using the bootstrapping procedure (Table A6). For testing construct reliability, we additionally check Cronbach's alpha values. All values suggest excellent or good quality: $\alpha = 0.91$ (task-oriented shared leadership), $\alpha = 0.91$ (relation-oriented shared leadership), and $\alpha = 0.75$ for nonprofit leadership continuity (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012). To address convergent validity, we determine average variance extracted (AVE) metrics: all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.5. In terms of discriminant validity, we also estimate heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios. Here, all values revolve around the recommended threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015).

*4.2.2 Structural model evaluation*

By calculating path coefficients for all posited relations in our model, we provide information on our hypotheses. We can interpret path coefficients as standardized beta coefficients of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. Table 3 presents an overview of the results of our structural model.

Table 3 displays our results. After having checked inner VIF values to assess collinearity (VIF < 5), we find support for all our hypotheses. Regarding the influence of shared leadership on the succession management process, we find support for H1. Our model's path coefficient of 0.612*** ($p = 0.000$) shows that shared leadership is significantly related to initial succession management activities (the initiation phase). Consistent with the work of Erkutlu and Chafra (2012), we can thus consider shared leadership particularly promising when it comes to the pivotal initiation effort in succession management (Landles-Cobb et al., 2015).

Moreover, we find support for H2. Accordingly, our model's path coefficient of 0.727*** ($p = 0.000$) indicates that the initiation phase of a succession management process is significantly related to developmental activities (the development phase). As anticipated, succession management activities of developmental character (Charan et al., 2011; Groves, 2007) indeed become more likely via preparatory initial activities (Rothwell, 2005; Wolfred, 2008).

**Table 3.** Results of the structural model

| **Hypotheses** | **Path coefficients** | **p-values** | **SD** | **H supported** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1: Shared leadership → SM initiation phase | .612*** | 0.000 | .029 | Yes |
| H2: SM initiation phase → SM development phase | .727*** | 0.000 | .020 | Yes |
| H3: SM development phase → Nonprofit leadership continuity | .285*** | 0.000 | .055 | Yes |
| H4: Shared leadership → Nonprofit leadership continuity | .115* | 0.048 | .058 | Yes |
| **Controls** | | | | |
| *Organizational professionalization* | | | | |
| Number of full-time employees → Nonprofit leadership continuity | .019 ns | 0.452 | .025 | |
| Annual revenue (0 = < 1 million, 1 = > 1 million) → Nonprofit leadership continuity | .029 ns | 0.305 | .028 | |
| *Team process factors* | | | | |
| Goal commitment → Nonprofit leadership continuity | .088 ns | 0.143 | .060 | |
| Coordination → Nonprofit leadership continuity | .292*** | 0.000 | .072 | |
| Knowledge sharing → Nonprofit leadership continuity | -.035 ns | 0.607 | .069 | |
| **Endogenous outcome construct** | **$R^2$** | | **$Q^2$** | |
| Nonprofit leadership continuity | .39 | | .18 | |

Note: SmartPLS bootstrapping settings: 5000 iterations; SmartPLS omission distance: 7; n=550.
Abbreviations: ns=not significant; SD=standard deviation; SM=succession management.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

In addition, we discover in our model that the development phase of the succession management process is significantly related to nonprofit leadership continuity, with a path coefficient of 0.285***, $p = 0.000$. Hence, our results support H3. In this aspect, our study echoes what scholars continuously proclaim – comprehensive succession management is indeed positively related to nonprofit leadership continuity (Adams, 2017; Lynn, 2001; Santora et al., 2015).

However, when looking for a direct relationship of shared leadership with nonprofit leadership continuity, our model's path coefficient of 0.115* ($p = 0.048$) indicates only a weak significant relationship. Still, we find support for H4. Apparently, shared leadership in itself pushes nonprofits' leadership continuity to some extent, although shared leadership in succession management rather captures the full impact.

Apart from testing our hypotheses, we also determine the coefficient of determination (R2) (goodness of fit) for our endogenous outcome construct of nonprofit leadership continuity. We can consider the resulting value of $R2 = 0.39$ as moderate (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, we additionally estimate a Q2 value for nonprofit leadership continuity. In this way, we check our model's predictive accuracy. Using the blindfolding procedure (Hair et al., 2019), this Q2 value surpasses the suggested threshold of zero. Thus, our study's path model has predictive relevance.

Turning to our controls, only coordination (0.292***, $p = 0.000$) shows a significant relationship with our model's endogenous outcome variable of nonprofit leadership continuity. Regardless, we find shared leadership in succession management to have significant effects on nonprofit leadership continuity beyond the influence of both organizational professionalization and team process factors.

**5. Limitations and future research**

There are some limitations to our study, which future research on succession management should address. First, our study has a rather low response rate of 4.13%. Whereas Lu (2015, p. 303) notes that reaching high response rates "is always a challenge in nonprofit studies that use survey methods", Hager et al. (2003) underscore this issue to be salient in particular when surveys ask for organizational rather than personal characteristics. In addition to these factors, however, our low response rate could also be apparent because we conducted a web survey rather than a mail survey (Lin & Van Ryzin, 2012). Moreover, it may be partially caused by the fact that our survey's contact information for nonprofit organizations was from an external service provider and included only general email addresses. In this vein, we assume that a large

number of invitations to participate in our survey did not reach respondents of interest (boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals). Hence, future quantitative researchers may put additional effort into personalizing the contact information beforehand. In addition, respondents of interest could be offered explicit incentives for their survey participation. Since monetary rewards, however, appear to be less effective in a nonprofit context (Hager et al., 2003), nonmonetary benefits may be more promising. In this aspect, future collaboration in research and teaching or visibility within the university (as a recruitment activity) may be possible offerings. Overall, this could improve response rates and help meeting the sector's need for more studies that fulfill the criteria of representativeness and generalizability.

Second, our survey shows a noticeable dropout rate, as many of the organizations addressed considered their organizations too small or not sufficiently professionalized with regard to succession management issues to respond to our survey questions. In this aspect, our results could be biased, as the self-selection of respondents may be implicit in our sample. Consequently, future researchers should also focus more on the extent to which succession management is managed or tailored to the explicit realities of small nonprofits with little annual revenues and without paid staff.

Third, our study is cross-sectional by nature and uses an anonymous organizational sample. Therefore, we cannot control for or aim to assess long-term dynamics over time. Future research should, however, apply a longitudinal research design that takes precisely these aspects into account. Of particular interest in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic would be a study that looks at changes in succession management activities before and since the pandemic. In this way, the impact of an existential crisis on strategic management behavior, for example, at the board level (Miller-Millesen, 2003), and decisions may be exemplary documented.

Fourth, we use the aggregation approach to measure shared leadership behaviors (Zhu et al., 2018). However, this approach does not capture network and team dynamics fully. To do so, future research may apply social network analysis approach to measure shared leadership behaviors (Carson et al., 2007; Sato & Makabe, 2021).

Fifth, we consider the German nonprofit sector in our study only. Follow-up studies should investigate the extent to which our assumptions hold true and similar evidence is found in other national contexts, for example, in other European, African, and Asian countries, or the United States.

Sixth, our study does not explicitly distinguish between different peculiarities of nonprofits, such as board successions (nonpaid leadership positions) and operational leadership successions (rather paid leadership positions) entail. This, too, could be considered more deeply in follow-up research.

Finally, our study mostly emphasizes departure-based succession management. With regard to the current COVID-19 pandemic, however, future research may also dig deeper into the strategy implementation of nonprofits' emergency-based succession management (Gothard & Austin, 2013; Santora, 2020).

## 6. Practical implications

Our study has several implications for practice. In general, we recommend that nonprofit boards and executives, together with HR, should critically reflect on their internal prioritization of the planning and implementation of a systematic succession management process. In doing so, they take steps toward the goal of organizational continuity, which most nonprofits pursue (McKee & Froelich, 2016; Stewart et al., 2020). Additionally, reflecting threats due to COVID-19, succession management via shared leadership will help nonprofits to build crisis resilience, particularly in terms of leadership talent retention through offering career advancement paths.

Directly based on our finding that shared leadership is positively related to succession management activities, we specifically advise nonprofit managers to push for tripartite pooling of boards, executives, and HR and their competencies in implementation efforts. Here, we recommend that all leadership actors explicitly discuss their sometimes overlapping roles and future activities of succession management in detail. Whereas the pivotal actor of the board, for example, should address succession management issues more frequently in its meetings and consider it in financial planning, HR professionals may anticipate their function to be reminding and training the board to take up this responsibility as well as providing situational leadership to the board itself. Moreover, executive directors/division executives, together with HR professionals, could (a) lead the development and scouting of internal candidates who have potential to become future organizational leaders; (b) report to the board, and thus (c) enhance leadership over time. If necessary, nonprofits may also bring in external consultants in this process to meet key nonprofit staff challenges (more competition, job retirement, conditional sector commitment, among others).

Moreover, our data analysis shows that comprehensive succession management is indeed positively related to nonprofit leadership continuity. For practical purposes, this suggests that the latter should be monitored on a regular basis, particularly in order to infer, through

monitoring, the effectiveness of engagements already undertaken with respect to succession management. In addition, monitoring the organizational outcome of leadership continuity can provide internal insights into whether a key organizational objective is being ensured, by any means, over the long term. Executive directors/division executives together with HR professionals may lead this task in particular. In the event that the assessment is not satisfactory, our research also provides guidance to nonprofit decision-makers on how to better ensure leadership continuity, namely by implementing a succession management process pushed by shared leadership.

We conclude by noting three broader lessons for the nonprofit sector. First, our research underscores the plea in the sector for more overhead tolerance in order to leverage internal (leadership) resources (Schubert & Boenigk, 2019; Schubert & Willems, 2021). In this vein, we suggest funders in particular strengthen leadership development in the sector by providing both additional financing for nonprofits' own initiatives and also for expert advice through (external) workshops and consulting, especially in Germany.

Second, our research is an indication that there are too few potential future leaders in the nonprofit sector for organizations to draw upon (at least in Germany). Against this background, our research echoes the call for more explicit training and academic programs with a specific focus on nonprofit management. In this way, a pending leadership continuity deficit could be addressed somewhat upstream, not just through initiatives by nonprofit organizations themselves. Likewise, targeting future nonprofit managers with academic awareness of the benefits of the shared leadership approach could also make it easier to implement such approaches in tomorrow's nonprofits.

Last, nonprofit management research should continue its efforts to illuminate the attractiveness and assets of the sector for potential leaders – for in doing so, it contributes to strengthening the sector's profile, promotes its recognition in career decisions made by potential leaders, and thus helps pave the way for viable nonprofit leadership pipelines.

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**Table A1.** Key definitions

| Construct | Our definition |
|---|---|
| *Shared leadership*<br><br>Han et al. (2018), Carson et al. (2007), Klasmeier and Rowold (2020), Liang et al. (2021), Pearce and Conger (2003) | Shared leadership in nonprofit succession management is defined as an interactive and emergent process of mutual influence among boards, executive directors/division executives, and HR professionals beyond their formal roles, which emphasizes the situational and horizontal dispersion of leadership responsibilities in structuring and executing succession management activities through task- and relation-oriented behaviors. |
| *Succession management process*<br><br>Adams (2006), Charan et al. (2011), Gothard and Austin (2013), Groves (2007), Rothwell (2005), Wolfred (2008) | The succession management process in nonprofits is defined as the persistent planning and implementation of initial and developmental activities in continuous loops that target nonprofit employees' personal development and career progression, as well as their transfer of knowledge of organizational specifics, aimed towards the outcome of a strong pipeline of leadership successors and, ultimately, leadership continuity. |
| *Nonprofit leadership continuity*<br><br>Bernthal and Wellins (2006), Lynn (2001), Rothwell (2005) | Nonprofit leadership continuity is defined as the key organizational outcome of a systematic nonprofit management process. It displays the extent to which a nonprofit is genuinely capable of developing and retaining leadership potential as well as plan ahead for leader deputization, thus ensuring ongoing leadership. |

**Table A2.** Scales, means, and standard deviations

| **Constructs** (5-point Likert scale, 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree") | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Measurement scales** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| **Shared leadership** (Han et al., 2018) | | |
| *Task-oriented dimension* | 3.1 | 1.1 |
| 1. The responsible executives clearly assign the internal tasks of succession management. | 2.9 | 1.3 |
| 2. The responsible executives clearly communicate expectations to each other. | 3.0 | 1.2 |
| 3. The responsible executives communicate important succession management information among themselves. | 3.4 | 1.2 |
| 4. The responsible executives ensure that all those involved know their roles in succession management. | 3.1 | 1.3 |
| 5. The responsible executives monitor the achievement of succession management targets. | 2.8 | 1.3 |
| *Relation-oriented dimension* | 3.2 | 1.1 |
| 1. The responsible executives take sufficient time to address the concerns of others in succession management. | 3.0 | 1.3 |
| 2. The responsible executives recognize good performance in succession management. | 3.0 | 1.3 |
| 3. The responsible executives promote cohesion among the organizational units of succession management. | 3.0 | 1.3 |
| 4. The responsible executives support each other in dealing with problems in succession management. | 3.4 | 1.3 |
| 5. The responsible executives never let each other down in the succession management process. | 3.4 | 1.2 |
| **Succession management process** (Rothwell, 2005) | | |
| *The initiation phase* | | |
| 1. My organization has concrete ideas on how succession management should ideally proceed. | 2.8 | 1.2 |
| 2. My organization organizes regular meetings with the relevant managers to exchange views on succession management. | 2.1 | 1.2 |
| 3. My organization defines current and future job requirements and competencies for key positions. | 2.9 | 1.3 |
| 4. My organization also takes into account special needs of the organization. | 3.3 | 1.3 |
| 5. My organization develops indicators to measure the success of succession management (for example, number of positions filled per year). | 1.6 | 1.0 |
| 6. My organization communicates internally in a transparent manner about upcoming succession plans. | 3.0 | 1.3 |
| *The development phase* | | |
| 1. My organization offers potential leaders the opportunity to plan their careers within the organization. | 2.7 | 1.4 |
| 2. My organization points out to managers and employees their roles in succession management (for example, as mentors, internal talent scouts). | 2.5 | 1.3 |
| 3. My organization implements programs to develop employees with leadership potential. | 2.0 | 1.2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | My organization evaluates the potential of employees to assume leadership positions in the future. | 2.7 | 1.3 |
| 5. | My organization also reflects on employee performance in relation to a future leadership position. | 2.9 | 1.3 |
| 6. | My organization implements innovative measures to meet its succession needs. | 2.1 | 1.1 |
| 7. | My organization is there to advise those in charge on how to deal with succession management issues. | 2.8 | 1.4 |
| 8. | My organization specifically determines which responsible persons communicate which information internally and externally (for example, job advertisement, contact persons for interested parties, succession announcements). | 2.9 | 1.4 |
| **Nonprofit leadership continuity** (adopted from Bernthal and Wellins, 2006) | | | |
| 1. | In my organization, enough employees are developed into leaders. | 2.3 | 1.2 |
| 2. | In my organization, potential leaders do not leave. | 2.9 | 1.3 |
| 3. | In my organization, internal candidates fill leadership positions. | 3.4 | 1.3 |
| 4. | In my organization, there are clear regulations for deputization of all key (leadership) positions. | 3.1 | 1.4 |
| 5. | My organization always guarantees continuity in leadership. | 3.3 | 1.3 |
| **Controls of team process factors** (inspired by Han et al., 2018) | | | |
| *Goal commitment* | | | |
| 1. | In my organization, I judge the pursuit of goals by the responsible succession management executives to be very consistent. | 2.9 | 1.2 |
| *Coordination* | | | |
| 1. | In my organization, I judge the internal coordination of all responsible managers in succession management to be very good. | 3.2 | 1.2 |
| *Knowledge sharing* | | | |
| 1. | In my organization, I judge the knowledge sharing of the responsible executives in succession management to be very good. | 3.3 | 1.2 |

Note: n=1020.

**Table A3.** Organizational characteristics of study participants

| Variable | Number of responses | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Working field**[a] | | |
| Education | 264 | 25.9 |
| Arts and culture | 179 | 17.5 |
| Social services | 157 | 15.4 |
| Health | 143 | 14.0 |
| Civil protection/disaster control | 24 | 2.4 |
| *Missing* | *226* | *22.2* |
| **Legal form** | | |
| Association | 740 | 72.6 |
| Foundation | 26 | 2.5 |
| Cooperative | 1 | 0.1 |
| Nonprofit limited liability company (gGmbH) | 22 | 2.2 |
| *Missing* | *231* | *22.6* |
| **Annual revenue** (€) | | |
| ≤10,000 | 147 | 14.4 |
| 10,001-20,000 | 93 | 9.1 |
| 20,001-100,000 | 168 | 16.5 |
| 100,001-1,000,000 | 189 | 18.5 |
| >1,000,000 | 116 | 11.4 |
| *Missing* | *307* | *30.1* |
| **Number of employees** (full-time) | | |
| 0 | 254 | 24.9 |
| 1-10 | 313 | 30.7 |
| 11-50 | 123 | 12.1 |
| 51-150 | 33 | 3.2 |
| 151-4,000 | 31 | 3.0 |
| *Missing* | *266* | *26.1* |
| **Donation seal** | | |
| German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI) seal | 39 | 3.8 |
| Initiative Transparent Civil Society (ITZ) seal | 59 | 5.8 |
| Other | 49 | 4.8 |
| None | 647 | 63.4 |
| *Missing* | *226* | *22.2* |

Note: n=1020.
[a]Does not amount to 1020 (100%) responses, because it is only a selection of given answers, and respondents could provide multiple answers.

**Table A4.** Succession management process activities

| **Variables** (5-point Likert scale, 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree") | **Number of responses** | **Mean (SD)** | **Median** | **Low two (1–2)** | **Top two (4–5)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My organization has concrete ideas on how succession management should ideally proceed. | 1002<br>*Missings=18* | 2.8(1.3) | 3.0 | 41.8% | 34.6% |
| My organization organizes regular meetings with the relevant managers to exchange views on succession management | 1000<br>*Missings=20* | 2.1(1.2) | 2.0 | 66.6% | 16.8% |
| My organization defines current and future job requirements and competencies for key positions. | 1000<br>*Missings=20* | 2.9(1.3) | 3.0 | 40.3% | 37.4% |
| My organization also takes into account special needs of the organization. | 995<br>*Missings=25* | 3.3(1.3) | 4.0 | 28.5% | 50.2% |
| My organization develops indicators to measure the success of succession management (for example, number of positions filled per year). | 994<br>*Missings=26* | 1.7(1.0) | 1.0 | *78.6%* | *7.8%* |
| My organization communicates internally in a transparent manner about upcoming succession plans. | 999<br>*Missings=21* | 3.0(1.3) | 3.0 | 37.5% | 39.5% |
| My organization offers potential leaders the opportunity to plan their careers within the organization. | 998<br>*Missings=22* | 2.7(1.4) | 3.0 | 41.7% | 34.6% |
| My organization points out to managers and employees their roles in succession management (for example, as mentors, internal talent scouts). | 992<br>*Missings=28* | 2.5(1.3) | 2.0 | 50.2% | 27.8% |
| My organization implements programs to develop employees with leadership potential. | 989<br>*Missings=31* | 2.0(1.2) | 2.0 | 64.7% | 14.0% |
| My organization evaluates the potential of employees to assume leadership positions in the future. | 993<br>*Missings=27* | 2.8(1.3) | 3.0 | 42.6% | 33.2% |
| My organization also reflects on employee performance in relation to a future leadership position. | 993<br>*Missings=27* | 2.9(1.3) | 3.0 | 37.6% | 37.5% |
| My organization implements innovative measures to meet its succession needs. | 988<br>*Missings=32* | 2.1(1.1) | 2.0 | 65.0% | 13.3% |
| My organization is there to advise those in charge on how to deal with succession management issues. | 984<br>*Missings=36* | 2.8(1.4) | 3.0 | 43.5% | 33.7% |
| My organization specifically determines which responsible persons communicate which information internally and externally (for example, job advertisement, contact persons for interested parties, succession announcements). | 989<br>*Missings=31* | 2.9(1.4) | 3.0 | 39.0% | 39.2% |

Note: n=1020.

**Table A5.** Succession management process activities (shared leadership: absent vs. present)

| **Variables** (5-point Likert scale, 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree") | **Number of responses** | **Mean (SD)** | **Median** | **Low two (1–2)** | **Top two (4–5)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Implementation of the succession management process** | | | | | |
| Shared leadership (present) | 624<br>*Missings=9* | 2.1 (1.1) | 2.0 | 65.8% | 13.8% |
| Shared leadership (absent) | 304<br>*Missings=7* | 1.5 (0.9) | 1.0 | 82.6% | 5.8% |
| **Defined current/future job requirements and competencies** | | | | | |
| Shared leadership (present) | 627<br>*Missings=6* | 3.1 (1.3) | 3.0 | 31.9% | 45.1% |
| Shared leadership (absent) | 306<br>*Missings=5* | 2.4 (1.3) | 2.0 | 56.9% | 24.5% |
| **Responsible actors determined to communicate information internally/externally** | | | | | |
| Shared leadership (present) | 622<br>*Missings=11* | 3.2 (1.3) | 3.0 | 29.1% | 47.4% |
| Shared leadership (absent) | 303<br>*Missings=8* | 2.3 (1.4) | 2.0 | 59.2% | 25.4% |
| **Programs implemented to develop employees with leadership potential** | | | | | |
| Shared leadership (present) | 623<br>*Missings=10* | 2.2 (1.2) | 2.0 | 60.8% | 16.8% |
| Shared leadership (absent) | *303*<br>*Missings=8* | 1.7 (1.1) | 1.0 | 74.3% | 10.3% |
| **Innovative measures implemented to meet succession needs** | | | | | |
| Shared leadership (present) | 621<br>*Missings=12* | 2.2 (1.9) | 2.0 | 59.5% | 15.6% |
| Shared leadership (absent) | 304<br>*Missings=7* | 1.7 (1.0) | 1.0 | 78.1% | 9.3% |

Note: Responses do not add up to 1020, because only respondents who provided information on the possible existence of shared leadership are included (see Table 2); n=944.

**Table A6.** Measurement quality report

| **Constructs** (5-point Likert scale, 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree") | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Formative-HOC measurement scale** | **VIF** | **Indicator weights** | **Outer loadings** |
| **Shared leadership** (Han et al., 2018) (HOC) | | | |
| 1. Task-oriented shared leadership dimension (LOC) | 2.726 | .488*** | .939*** |
| 2. Relation-oriented shared leadership dimension (LOC) | 2.726 | .567*** | .955*** |
| **Formative measurement scale** | **VIF** | **Indicator weights** | **Outer loadings** |
| **Succession management process** (Rothwell, 2005) | | | |
| *The initiation phase* | | | |
| 1. My organization has concrete ideas on how succession management should ideally proceed. | 1.794 | .187** | .746*** |
| 2. My organization organizes regular meetings with the relevant managers to exchange views on succession management. | 1.845 | .094 ns | .701*** |
| 3. My organization defines current and future job requirements and competencies for key positions. | 2.326 | .246*** | .816*** |
| 4. My organization also takes into account special needs of the organization. | 2.336 | .310*** | .827*** |
| 5. My organization develops indicators to measure the success of succession management (for example, number of positions filled per year). | 1.464 | .299*** | .680*** |
| 6. My organization communicates internally in a transparent manner about upcoming succession plans. | 1.539 | .193*** | .691*** |
| *The development phase* | | | |
| 1. My organization offers potential leaders the opportunity to plan their careers within the organization. | 1.863 | .116* | .645*** |
| 2. My organization points out to managers and employees their roles in succession management (for example, as mentors, internal talent scouts). | 2.193 | .118* | .744*** |
| 3. My organization implements programs to develop employees with leadership potential. | 1.825 | .110* | .694*** |
| 4. My organization evaluates the potential of employees to assume leadership positions in the future. | 3.171 | .199** | .743*** |
| 5. My organization also reflects on employee performance in relation to a future leadership position. | 3.549 | .022 ns | .749*** |
| 6. My organization implements innovative measures to meet its succession needs. | 1.829 | .315*** | .801*** |
| 7. My organization is there to advise those in charge on how to deal with succession management issues. | 1.723 | .202*** | .745*** |
| 8. My organization specifically determines which responsible persons communicate which information internally and externally (for example, job | 1.583 | .265*** | .735*** |

advertisement, contact persons for interested parties, succession announcements).

| **Reflective-LOC measurement scales** | **Factor loadings** | **Cronbach's alpha** | **AVE** | **HTMT ratio** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Task-oriented shared leadership** (Han et al., 2018) (LOC) | | **.91** | **.745** | **<.87** |
| 1. The responsible executives clearly assign the internal tasks of succession management. | .834*** | | | |
| 2. The responsible executives clearly communicate expectations to each other. | .893*** | | | |
| 3. The responsible executives communicate important succession management information among themselves. | .846*** | | | |
| 4. The responsible executives ensure that all those involved know their roles in succession management. | .899*** | | | |
| 5. The responsible executives monitor the achievement of succession management targets. | .843*** | | | |
| **Relation-oriented shared leadership** (Han et al., 2018) (LOC) | | **.91** | **.742** | **<.87** |
| 1. The responsible executives take sufficient time to address the concerns of others in succession management. | .845*** | | | |
| 2. The responsible executives recognize good performance in succession management. | .838*** | | | |
| 3. The responsible executives promote cohesion among the organizational units of succession management. | .890*** | | | |
| 4. The responsible executives support each other in dealing with problems in succession management. | .888*** | | | |
| 5. The responsible executives never let each other down in the succession management process. | .845*** | | | |
| **Reflective measurement scale** | **Factor loadings** | **Cronbach's alpha** | **AVE** | **HTMT ratio** |
| **Nonprofit leadership continuity** (adopted from Bernthal and Wellins, 2006) | | **.75** | **.502** | **<.85** |
| 1. In my organization, enough employees are developed into leaders. | .746*** | | | |
| 2. In my organization, potential leaders do not leave. | .730*** | | | |
| 3. In my organization, leadership positions are filled with internal candidates. | .611*** | | | |
| 4. In my organization, there are clear regulations for deputization of all key (leadership) positions. | .688*** | | | |
| 5. My organization always guarantees continuity in leadership. | .757*** | | | |

Note: SmartPLS bootstrapping settings: 5000 iterations; n=550.
Abbreviations: HOC=higher-order construct; LOC=lower-order construct; ns=not significant.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

# Kapitel 3: Nonprofit talent recruitment: An online experiment on new ways of working and leadership development opportunities

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# Nonprofit talent recruitment: An online experiment on new ways of working and leadership development opportunities

Nils Geib and Silke Boenigk

**Abstract**

Recruiting talented employees is challenging for nonprofit organizations. This study examines the effects of two possible human resource recruitment practices – offering new ways of working and leadership development opportunities – on the intention of talent to apply for a nonprofit job. Building on self-determination theory, the authors conducted an online survey experiment (n=389) with potential job aspirants in Germany. Results show that, out of both offered practices, only new ways of working significantly increase individuals' intention to apply. Regarding work sector preferences, the findings confirm that nonprofits are in a war for talent as only 13.6% prefer the nonprofit sector, while most participants (47.8%) prefer to find a job in a for-profit company or the public sector (38.6%). As a key nonprofit management implication, recruiters should develop and implement new ways of working to attract talented employees to the nonprofit sector.

**Keywords:** recruitment, nonprofit human resource management, talent management, online experiment, job advertisement, new ways of working, leadership development

## 1. Introduction

Talent recruitment is crucial for nonprofits (Suh, 2018). It is important because it helps to meet future needs, boosts human capital, and caters to leadership and successions (Carpenter, 2017; Geib & Boenigk, 2022; Kim, 2017; Rothwell, 2005). While recruiting talent is essential for every organization (Maier et al., 2022), it is notably difficult for nonprofits (Huvanandana, 2023; Guo et al., 2011). As evidenced by a European study revealing just 5% of Portuguese graduates opting for nonprofit jobs (Santinha et al., 2021), these organizations face stiff competition from for-profit and public sectors (Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Walk et al., 2021). It also confirms the global "war for talent" in the nonprofit sector (Meaney & Keller, 2017).

Although the debate on the term "talent" in human resource literature is ongoing (Lewis & Heckmann, 2006; Yildiz & Esmer, 2023), we adopt the broad definition by Michaels et al. (2001, p. 111). The authors explained that talent can be defined as individuals' combination of "a sharp strategic mind, leadership ability, emotional maturity, communication skills, the ability to attract and inspire other talented people, entrepreneurial instincts, fundamental skills and the ability to deliver results."

Effective talent recruitment in nonprofits involves aligning mission-oriented HRM practices with employee needs, considering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors (Abzug, 2017; Baluch & Ridder, 2021; Barhate & Dirani, 2021). Existing research acknowledges the role of high public service or nonprofit service motivation (Park & Word, 2012) as an intrinsic factor that positively impacts individuals' work in a nonprofit (Einolf, 2022; Kim & Torneo, 2021; Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020; Ritz et al., 2022; Word & Park, 2015). Moreover, external motivation is influenced by factors such as compensation (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016; Walk et al., 2021) and job stability (Ballart & Rico, 2018). Our study expands upon Word and Sowa's (2017) proposition to investigate two under-researched job motivators in nonprofit literature: (1) new ways of working and (2) leadership development opportunities.

New ways of working, such as flexible schedules and remote work, are increasingly considered vital by talents for balancing life and work, a trend further accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ahamad et al., 2022; Gerards et al., 2018; Howe & Menges, 2022). In terms of the latter, a study by Bain & Company (2022, p. 2) notes that talents feel "to rethink the balance between life and work." In our study, we take up this point and propose that talented

employees' demand for flexible work arrangements will continue to appeal to potential recruits, including in nonprofits.

Simultaneously, career development opportunities have emerged as a decisive factor for younger workers when choosing an employer (Deloitte, 2022). HRM nonprofit research stresses this as well. Gazley (2016, p. 96), for example, highlights that the opportunity to advance in one's careers is one of the "principle organizational factors that support nonprofit staff recruitment." We agree with her statement and assume that offering leadership development as a career advancement opportunity can effectively attract talent.

To date, empirical research on new ways of working and leadership development opportunities as major job motivators in nonprofit talent recruitment is scarce. However, we address both motivators by means of an online experiment in this study. Specifically, we manipulate fictitious yet realistic vignettes of a nonprofit job ad to answer the following research question: *Is offering (1) new ways of working and (2) leadership development opportunities effective in improving nonprofit talent recruitment?*

Our study fills the research gap on the role of new ways of working and leadership development opportunities as key job motivators in nonprofit recruitment through an online experiment. We aim to determine the effectiveness of these offerings in attracting talent to nonprofits. Our contributions include enhancing the understanding of job-related motivational factors in the nonprofit management literature and introducing an experimental design to assess these specific motivators in nonprofit recruitment. This will aid nonprofit human resource managers in devising successful talent acquisition strategies.

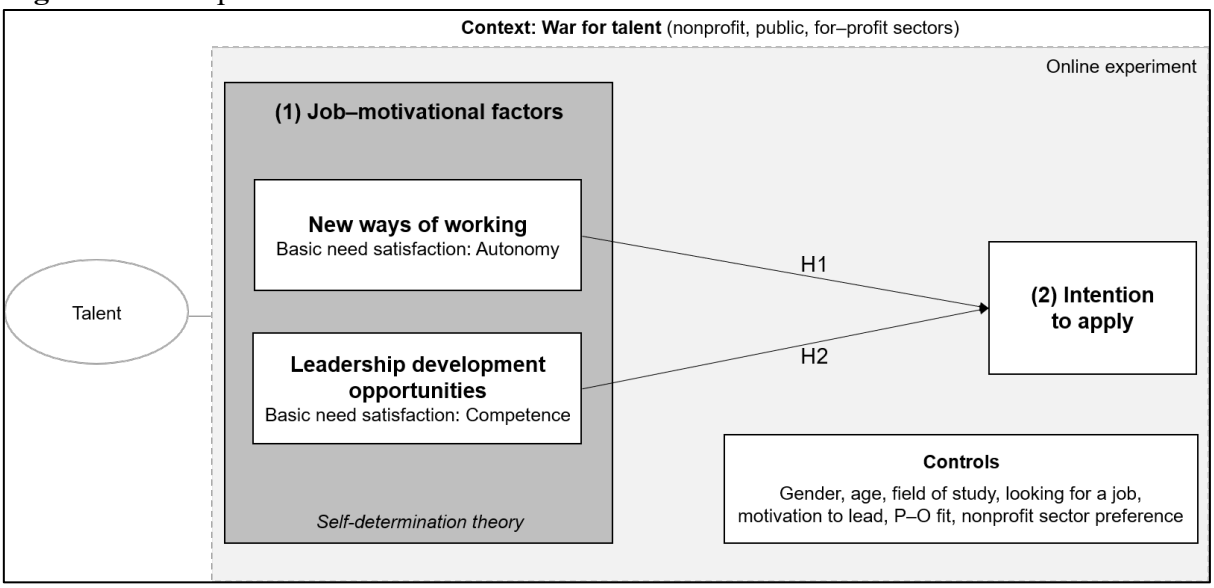
## 2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

Figure 1 displays our conceptual framework. It signifies two related components: (1) Job-motivational factors and (2) intention to apply. The former incorporates two sub-components, namely new ways of working and leadership development opportunities. The framework emphasizes a positive influence of these two sub-components on the intention to apply for a job in the nonprofit sector. It theoretically embeds this in a recruitment setting, which is shaped by the war for talent among the nonprofit, public, and for-profit sectors.

Our conceptualization draws on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2004). As such, the theory's core is concerned with human motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2012). It conceives motivation's degree of regulation as a continuum between controlled (external) and self-determined (intrinsic) motivation, next to two intermediate types (Manganelli et al., 2018). The theory's forefathers argue that to foster an individual's intrinsic motivation towards a specific

action, it is crucial to satisfy three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Autonomy refers to being given the opportunity for self-direction. Competence deals with the experience of utilizing and developing skills and expertise. Lastly, relatedness is about having meaningful relationships with others (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020; Vansteenkiste et al., 2023). According to Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 68), the three needs are "essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as constructive social development and personal well-being."

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework




Following Zhao et al. (2023), self-determination theory is promising in describing vocational-related dynamics. Scholars observe, for example, that when the need for autonomy and competence are addressed by employers, intrinsic motivation to work increases (Marescaux et al., 2012; Pak et al., 2019). Moreover, when basic needs are satisfied, this positively relates to employees' job attitudes and performance (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

Building on the above, this study's framework (Figure 1) stresses two basic needs in a work-recruitment setting. As such, it links the basic need of autonomy to new ways of working and competence to leadership development opportunities. In the following two sub-sections, both conceptual connections and their integration into the framework are explained in detail. They end with the derivation of hypotheses (H1, H2).

*New ways of working*

To date, HRM researchers and practitioners have extensively discussed new ways of working (Peters et al., 2014). However, a shared understanding of what practices refer to the term lacks consensus. In this study, we refer to Gerards et al. 's (2018) five-facet approach and consider

new ways of working facets as follows: the first facet entails that employees are relatively free to decide where and when to work to best deliver results. The second facet underlines employees' ability to work the way that best suits them to perform their organizational tasks. The third facet accentuates employees' accessibility to organizational information and social work relations via personal devices (tablets, smartphones, computers). The fourth facet emphasizes the idea of employers encouraging the reconciliation of employees' work and private lives. Finally, the fifth facet underscores the need to create physical spaces available to staff at all times.

We propose these facets affect autonomy, a basic need identified by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2017), defined as "a sense of choice and self-endorsement of one's actions" (Rigby & Ryan, 2018, p. 138). Previous HRM studies highlight autonomy's positive influence on employees' motivation and engagement (Deci et al., 2017; Gerards et al., 2018; Manganelli et al., 2018). In this study, however, we argue that nonprofit organizations signaling autonomy by offering new ways of working will increase individuals' intent to apply for nonprofit jobs. We hinge on scholars like Schmoll and Süß (2019), who refer to self-determination theory when uncovering how temporal and spatial job flexibility signals influence positive attitudes toward an employer. This, too, is consistent with the work of Smit and Lawson (2023), and Thompson et al. (2015).

Our argument also draws from literature emphasizing job-related motivational signals in fostering positive attitudes towards an employer (Ahamad et al., 2022; Asseburg et al., 2020; Linos, 2018; Sievert et al., 2022). As Asseburg et al. (2020, p. 42) illustrate: "[e]mployers use job advertisements to send signals about the vacancy to create favorable attitudes on the part of job seekers, who use the received signals […] and, at best, form initial intentions to apply." Despite the knowledge of signals' radiant power in job advertisements (early recruitment stage), its empirical validation for the nonprofit sector is scarce. However, in this study, we employ a signal to show the possibility for new ways of working for nonprofit talent recruitment. We anticipate that it will attract talent by increasing their desire to apply for jobs. Our corresponding and first hypothesis is:

**H1:** New ways of working signaled in nonprofit job advertisements lead to a higher intention to apply.

*Leadership development opportunities*

HRM research has started associating the job-related motivational factor of career advancement opportunities with the satisfaction of the need for competence (Rigby & Ryan, 2018; Landry

et al., 2017). As Rigby and Ryan (2018, p. 139) pinpoint in work contexts, "[c]ompetence is our basic need […] to grow." The need for competence is also touched upon in nonprofit employment discourse. For instance, Gazley (2016) suggests that nonprofit job recruits value career advancement opportunities. By using graduate panel data, Kang et al. (2015) also show that low satisfaction with career opportunities can negatively affect nonprofit employee retention. Lee and Wilkins (2011) reveal that managers seeking career advancement tend to avoid nonprofit sector jobs, indicating that nonprofits may underinvest in (top) employees. Moreover, Manganelli et al. (2018, p. 235) argue that addressing the need of competence can be pursued by allowing employees to "develop a variety of skills."

Based on these initial studies, we conclude that offering a leadership development program – as an explicit career development opportunity – is a promising HRM strategy not only for employee retention, but for talent recruitment. Best-practice examples for leadership development programs, according to Day (2000), include "360-degree feedback, executive coaching, mentoring, networking, job assignments, and action learning" (Mahapatra & Dash, 2022, p. 3). In our study, we focus on the recruitment success of leadership development opportunities and expect it to increase talent's intention to apply for a nonprofit job. Our second hypothesis is:

**H2:** Leadership development opportunities signaled in nonprofit job advertisements lead to a higher intention to apply.

*Controls*

Echoing previous studies, our framework includes several individual-level control variables in the conceptualization. We control for gender (Choi, 2017), age, field of study (Pedersen, 2013), looking for a job, motivation to lead, Person-Organization fit (P-O fit), and sector preference. We reflect these controls, as they could affect potential applicants' appreciation of human resource recruitment practices – manifested in their intention to apply for a job:

*Gender:* Scholars like Chung (2019) or Shockley and Allen (2007) show that new ways of working opportunities can be appealing to women especially; to balance vocational and domestic labor more easily.

*Age:* Early on, Salthouse and Maurer (1996) highlighted that signaling leadership development opportunities may be less effective for older applicants, who are at the end of their career.

*Field of study:* We argue that potential applicants' academic discipline represents their vocational interests and thus shapes their employment considerations. This could alter their intentions to apply for a sector-specific job.

*Looking for a job:* The framework effects could be influenced, if potential applicants look for a (new) job. Actual job-searchers may be prone to be generally interested more in job offers, which could impact their attitudes and behavior.

*Motivation to lead:* Chan and Drasgow (2001) stressed that motivation to lead evaluates individuals' preference to assume leadership responsibilities. As our study utilizes signals in a job advertisement for a position with managerial duties (see Table A1), we account for its influence on the intention to apply.

*P-O fit*: P-O fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) assesses individual and employer congruence in terms of values, goals, and attributes. Research indicates that it can affect potential applicants' intention to apply (Andela & van der Doef, 2019). For scholars like Wei et al. (2016), employer impressions can drive job seekers' identification. In theory, these impressions can exist independently of specific signals and affect perceived P-O fit.

*Nonprofit sector preference:* Our study deals with a sector-specific (nonprofit) job advertisement. Thus, potential applicants' (nonprofit) sector preference should associate with their intention to apply, too.

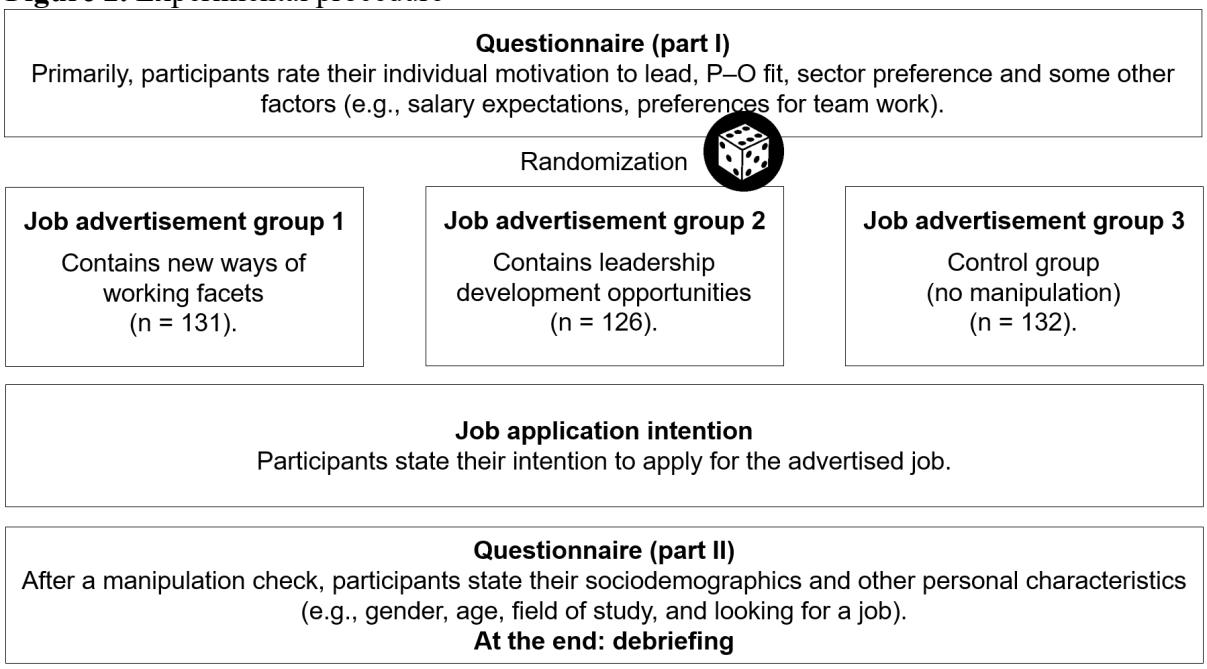
## 3. Methods

*Research design, data collection, and procedure*

We conducted a survey experiment and employed a between-subjects online design with potential job aspirants (n=389) in Germany. In the experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one of three stimulus conditions (two treatments and one control condition) for a job advertisement to become a nonprofit manager in the fictitious Foundation of German Accident Aid (Stiftung Deutsche Unfallhilfe). We manipulated this advertisement so that it contained (a) new ways of working and (b) leadership development opportunities in only one of the two treatment conditions. Everything else was held equal, and the stimulus in the control condition did not include either new ways of working or leadership development opportunities. Table A1 provides an overview of our three conditions. All participants ultimately stated whether they intended to apply for the job.

Figure 2 outlines our experimental procedure. Data collection took place in Germany in September and October 2022. We recruited the participants through the online panel provider Bilendi.

**Figure 2.** Experimental procedure




In our German-language experiment, participants first read instructions and consented to data usage. We assured data anonymity. They then completed a questionnaire assessing their motivation to lead (Felfe et al., 2012), (nonprofit) sector preferences, and salary expectations. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions. Those in the first group read a nonprofit job ad emphasizing new ways of working, the second group saw the same ad with leadership development opportunities, and the third group saw the ad without either aspect. We then gauged participants' intent to apply for the advertised job, reminding them it was a hypothetical scenario. Lastly, they provided sociodemographic and other details like their field of study, and whether they were currently looking for a job. To prevent misunderstandings, we clarified that the job ad and organization were fictitious and directed participants to a real nonprofit job platform (www.nachhaltigejobs.de) and an initiative for potential job opportunities with an integrated leadership program (www.onpurpose.org).

*Pretest*

In the pretest, we conducted a trial with 150 students. After analyzing the results, we gained confidence that our experiment would work as intended, with slight modifications. For instance, to make the items clearer to the participants, we added organizations (such as

associations, public companies, and so on) (see Table A2) to the respective statements on sector preferences.

*Measures*

To measure the constructs, we relied on operationalizations from previous studies and used validated psychometric instruments whenever applicable. If necessary, we translated English items into German (some had versions in German available). We slightly modified the wording of the items for the practical use of our questionnaire. We then back-translated them into English to ensure their reliability and content accuracy (Mullen, 1995). Table A2 presents a quality report of our main measures and Table A3 describes the supplementary measures.

*Dependent variable*

*Intention to apply*. Job application intentions can be gauged in different ways such as yes-no questions (Swider et al., 2015) or Likert scales (Gomes & Neves, 2011; Sievert et al., 2022; Silva & Dias, 2022; Wang, 2013). We opted for a Likert scale as per Gomes and Neves (2011) for this study due to two reasons: It distinguishes intention from action and prevents data loss from dichotomization (Cohen, 1983; MacCallum et al., 2002). On a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*), we included three items. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements like "If I were looking for a job, I would most likely apply for this job" or "If I were looking for a job, I could very well imagine myself working in this job." Mean scores were calculated for analysis (for all latent constructs). According to George & Mallery (2003), our measurement indicates excellent internal consistency; with a Cronbach's alpha value of .94 for the single-construct of intention to apply.

*Independent variable*

The experimental manipulation, our independent variable, was embedded in a job ad for a fictitious social service nonprofit, given the prominence of this field in Germany. Table A2 shows the text for our treatment conditions.

*Participants*

We sourced participants for our study from Bilendi. The provider financially incentivized participants for their participation. To recruit the participants, we set the following two fundamental sample requirements: All the participants had to be German citizens and they had to be between 20 and 45 years old. We chose this to reach out to talent-bearing, potential employees within the German labor market. Initially, we had 450 participants, but we excluded 61 speeders who completed the experiment under 5 minutes, as it could bias the results (the

average duration in the pretest and main study was 10 minutes). Our final sample comprised 389 participants. Their characteristics are described in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Sample characteristics

| Variable | Overall n=389 | NWW n=131 | LDO n=126 | Control n=132 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Female | 254 (65.3) | 81 (61.8) | 82 (65.1) | 91 (68.9) |
| Male | 130 (33.4) | 47 (35.9) | 43 (34.1) | 40 (30.3) |
| Non-binary | 2 (0.5) | 1 (0.8) | | 1 (0.8) |
| *Missings* | *3 (0.8)* | 2 (1.5) | *1 (0.8)* | |
| **Age** (years) | | | | |
| 20-24 | 27 (6.9) | 8 (6.1) | 8 (6.3) | 11 (8.3) |
| 25-29 | 94 (24.2) | 31 (23.7) | 31 (24.6) | 32 (24.2) |
| 30-34 | 124 (31.9) | 47 (35.9) | 42 (33.3) | 35 (26.5) |
| 35-39 | 123 (31.6) | 39 (29.8) | 37 (29.4) | 47 (35.6) |
| 40-45 | 18 (4.6) | 4 (3.1) | 7 (5.6) | 7 (5.3) |
| *Missings* | *3 (0.8)* | *2 (1.5)* | *1 (0.8)* | |
| **Academic background** | | | | |
| Yes | 357 (91.8) | 124 (94.7) | 116 (92.1) | 117 (88.6) |
| No | 32 (8.2) | 7 (5.3) | 10 (7.9) | 15 (11.4) |
| **Field of study** | | | | |
| Social sciences | 49 (12.6) | 22 (16.8) | 14 (11.1) | 13 (9.8) |
| Business administration | 90 (23.1) | 25 (19.1) | 29 (23.0) | 36 (27.6) |
| Interdisciplinary | 17 (4.4) | 7 (5.3) | 5 (4.0) | 5 (3.8) |
| Other | 230 (59.1) | 75 (57.3) | 77 (61.1) | 78 (59.1) |
| *Missings* | *3 (0.8)* | *2 (1.5)* | *1 (0.8)* | |
| **Educational degree** (highest) | | | | |
| High school diploma | 35 (9.0) | 11 (8.4) | 10 (7.4) | 14 (10.6) |
| Bachelor's (B.A./B.Sc.) | 172 (44.2) | 57 (43.5) | 57 (45.2) | 58 (43.9) |
| Master's (M.A./M.Sc.) | 148 (38.0) | 48 (36.6) | 52 (41.3) | 48 (36.4) |
| Ph.D. | 18 (4.6) | 9 (6.9) | 3 (2.4) | 6 (4.5) |
| Other | 11 (2.8) | 2 (1.5) | 3 (2.4) | 6 (4.5) |
| *Missings* | *3 (0.8)* | *2 (1.5)* | *1 (0.8)* | |
| **Work experiences**[a] | | | | |
| Internship | 195 (50.1) | 65 (49.6) | 68 (54.0) | 62 (47.0) |
| Marginal job (≤ EUR 450/month) | 157 (40.4) | 54 (41.2) | 50 (39.7) | 53 (40.2) |
| Student job (≤ 20 h/week) | 70 (18.0) | 23 (17.6) | 25 (19.8) | 22 (16.7) |
| ≤ 1 year (full-time/part-time) | 36 (9.3) | 10 (7.6) | 13 (10.3) | 13 (9.8) |
| > 1 year (full-time/part-time) | 290 (74.6) | 94 (71.8) | 94 (74.6) | 102 (77.3) |

Note: n=389.
[a]Does not amount to n=389 (100%) because the participants were allowed to select multiple answers.
Abbreviations: NWW=New ways of working; LDO=Leadership development opportunities.

Our participants comprised 65.3% females and 33.4% males, primarily aged between 25-29 years (24.2%), 30-34 years (31.9%), and 35-39 years (31.6%). On average, they were 32 years old (Table A2). Altogether, 44.2% held a bachelor's and 38.0% a master's degree. 40.1% studied business administration, social sciences, or both as an interdisciplinary program (Table A4). 74.6% had more than a year of work experience (full-time or part-time).

*Randomization and attention checks*

Our randomization was successful as shown in Table A4, with no significant differences in the key sample characteristics gender, age, academic background, field of study, looking for a job, educational degree, and work experience via $Chi^2$-tests. Moreover, we assessed participant attention by instructing them to select "totally agree" on the 5-point Likert scale immediately before the actual manipulation, which 97.4% (n=379) correctly followed.

*Manipulation check*

We validated our manipulation by checking if participants perceived the differences in job ad conditions. One-way ANOVAs confirmed significant differences in perceptions [$F_{NWW}(2, 386)=83.44$, p=000], [$F_{LDO}(2, 386)=98.96$, p=000], [$F_{Control}(2, 386)=62.06$, p=000]. Post-hoc Scheffé tests additionally revealed that, for example, participants perceived new ways of working significantly more in group 1 (NWW) (M=4.10, SD=1.15) than in group 2 (LDO) (M=2.40, SD=1.22, p=.000, 95%-CI [1.32, 2.07]) and the control group (M=2.42, SD=1.26, p=.000, 95%-CI [1.31, 2.04]). Similarly, leadership development opportunities were perceived more in the leadership development opportunities group (M=4.19, SD=1.00) than the new ways of working (M=2.51, SD=1.23, p=.000, 95%-CI [1.33, 2.03]) and control groups (M=2.37, SD=1.19, p=.000, 95%-CI [1.47, 2.17]). We thus conclude that our manipulation was successful.

## 4. Results

*Descriptives*

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics. The average intention to apply for the advertised job was 2.9 ($mean_{NWW}$=3.1). The mean values for participants' preferences for new ways of working and leadership development were 4.0 (NWW) and 3.5 (LDO). As Table A5 shows regarding the control descriptives, over a third (37.5%) of participants were job searching. Moreover, mean values for participants in motivation to lead were 3.2 (NWW), 3.2 (LDO), and 3.0 (control group). Thus, motivation to lead was moderate. Perceived P-O fit means were moderate to high with values of 3.4 (NWW), 3.3 (LDO), and 3.3 (control group).

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics

| **Variable** | Overall n=389 | NWW n=131 | LDO n=126 | Control n=132 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) |
| **Intention to apply** | 2.9 (1.2) | 3.1 (1.2) | 2.7 (1.2) | 2.8 (1.2) |
| **Preference for new ways of working** | 4.0 (0.7) | 4.0 (0.7) | 4.1 (0.6) | 3.9 (0.7) |
| *Missings (n=3)* | | *3* | | |
| **Preference for leadership development programs** | 3.5 (0.9) | 3.4 (0.9) | 3.6 (0.9) | 3.4 (0.8) |
| *Missings (n=2)* | | *2* | | |

Note: Measurement on a 5-point Likert scale (1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree"), except sector preference (ranking); n=389.
Abbreviations: NWW=New ways of working; LDO=Leadership development opportunities.

Regarding sector preferences, we found that most participants (47.8%) ranked a job in a for-profit company as most desirable, followed by a job in the public sector (38.6%) (Table A5). 13.6% ranked a job in the nonprofit sector as most appealing. When compared to earlier European studies (such as Santinha et al., 2021), the latter is exceptional. That is, it is significantly higher. An interesting question in this respect is why these statistics differ when compared across Europe. In this study, we argue that it is conditioned to country-specifics in Germany. That is, because the German nonprofit sector is particularly large, due to its long history of providing services on behalf of the German government (Anheier, 2014). The most recent representative data from Germany displays a consistent pattern (Schubert et al., 2023). Given its established nature, working in the German nonprofit sector could appear more appealing to prospective employees. However, our finding should not be overinterpreted. Independent ratings of sector preferences indicate participants paid most attention to individual job descriptions (Table A2) and not individual sectors. In this regard, the mean value of 3.5 for the statement (item) “Professionally, I don't look at the sector, I only look at the description of the job” was the highest.

When looking for jobs, participants primarily searched via job advertisement sites (74.6%), employer websites (63.2%), social media (33.7%), and personal contacts (45.8%) (Table A5). They also expected an average annual salary of EUR 51,355 (approx. USD 55,143); 16.5% would have even accepted up to EUR 20,000, while 15.2% wanted an annual salary between EUR 20,000 and 40,000. Participants’ nonprofit service motivation was moderate across all groups (mean=3.1; SD=0.9). In addition, most participants highly preferred job security (Ballart & Rico, 2018; Kuenzi et al., 2021; 2023) (means between 4.3 and 4.5 across groups).

*Test of hypotheses*

We used generalized linear regression modeling to test our hypotheses, due to the non-normal distribution of residuals in our dependent variable (intention to apply). Generalized linear regression models imply link functions to delineate the mathematical relationship between the predictor and the outcome variables (Nelder & Wedderburn, 1972; Roback & Legler, 2021). As such, rather than transforming a dependent variable itself, corresponding models transform their predictions to better fit the data. Table 3 presents the results of three models. While we include our group variables as independent variables in the first step, baseline model results show a significant positive effect of the new ways of working condition on the intention to apply (control condition=reference category) ($\beta_{NWW}$=.340, p<.05).

**Table 3.** Generalized linear regression models (DV=intention to apply)

| **Predictor** | **Baseline model I** | | | **Controlled model II** | | | **Controlled model III** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | SE | *p* | B | SE | *p* | B | SE | *p* |
| New ways of working | .340* | .149 | .023 | .358* | .146 | .014 | .226* | .101 | .025 |
| Leadership development opportunities | -.054 | .105 | .723 | -.047 | .145 | .748 | -.092 | .100 | .363 |
| Control condition | *– reference category –* | | | *– reference category –* | | | *– reference category –* | | |
| *Controls* | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender (0=male, 1=female) | | | | .072 | .128 | .576 | .074 | .090 | .418 |
| Age | | | | .032* | .012 | .010 | .015 | .008 | .090 |
| Field of study (0=other, 1=ba, sosc, or inter) | | | | .604*** | .124 | .000 | .323*** | .087 | .000 |
| Looking for a job (0=no, 1=yes) | | | | .143 | .124 | .252 | .029 | .086 | .740 |
| Motivation to lead (MTL) | | | | | | | .189*** | .043 | .000 |
| P-O fit | | | | | | | .870*** | .049 | .000 |
| Nonprofit sector preference (NPSP) | | | | | | | .070* | .034 | .043 |
| *Constant* | -.097 | .105 | .357 | -1.506 | .438 | .000 | -.756* | .307 | .014 |
| AIC | | 1260.86 | | | 1209.99 | | | 933.827 | |
| BIC | | 1276.71 | | | 1241.53 | | | 977.198 | |

Note: n=389.
Abbreviations: AIC=Akaike information criterion; BIC=Bayesian information criterion; ba=business administration; sosc=social sciences; inter=interdisciplinary.
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

We interpret this result as follows: The introduction of our new ways of working manipulation increased participants' intention to apply for the job by .34 units (scale points) compared to the control condition. However, the leadership development condition did not significantly affect the intention to apply (control condition=reference category) ($\beta_{LDO}$=-.054, p>.05).

To test our hypotheses, however, we include individual-level characteristics as controls in two models (controlled model II, III). Overall, our data support H1, but not H2. We interpret the individual results (Table 3) of both controlled models II and III as follows: Even when considering individual-level characteristics, model I's results hold true. In controlled model II, the new ways of working manipulation increased participants' intention to apply for the job by .358 units compared to the control condition ($\beta_{NWW}$=.358, p<.05). The leadership development opportunities condition did not affect participants' intention to apply (control condition=reference category) ($\beta_{LDO}$=-.047, p>.05). Out of the covariates of gender, age, field of study, and looking for a job, only age ($\beta_{Age}$=.032, p<.05) and field of study ($\beta_{Fieldofstudy}$=.604, p<.001) have significant influences on our regression results. As such, the data suggest that older participants and those having a study background in business administration, social sciences (or both in an interdisciplinary program) are more likely to apply.

By contrast, the positive and significant effect of the new ways of working manipulation on participants' intention to apply for the job is slightly lower in controlled model III. Moreover, the influence of age diminishes, while the influence of the field of study remains ($\beta_{Age}$=.015, p>.05; $\beta_{Fieldofstudy}$=.323, p<.001). Holding all else equal, model III indicates that the three additionally added controls explain variance in our data ($\beta_{MTL}$=.189, p<.001; $\beta_{NPSP}$=.070, p<.05; $\beta_{POfit}$=.870, p<.001). A unit increase in participants' motivation to lead makes their intention to apply for the job .189 units higher. Likewise, a unit increase in participants' perceived P-O fit intensifies their intention to apply by even .870 units. Finally, a unit increase in participants' nonprofit sector preference slightly strengthens their intention to apply for the job by .07 units.

To gain an even more granular picture of our data, we further explore participants' more general preference for new ways of working and leadership development opportunities (see Table A3) in their vocational life. First, we examine whether participants' preferences differ based on their gender. For this, we perform a Mann-Whitney U test. It reveals that women indicate a significantly higher preference for new ways of working in their jobs than men ($U_{PrefNWW}$=14477.50, p<.05). The effect size is r=>.10, indicating a small effect. We do not

find a similar effect for the leadership development opportunity preference ($U_{PrefLDO}$=15743.50, p>.05). Second, we investigate whether participants' preferences differ in terms of their age. To do this, we dummy-code our age variable and use the sample mean of 32 years as the cut-off value between young and old. Mann-Whitney U tests display no significant group differences ($U_{PrefNWW}$=17034.00, p>.05) ($U_{PrefLDO}$=17789.00, p>.05). Third, we conduct Mann-Whitney U tests to explore whether participants' preferences differ when they favor the nonprofit/public sectors compared to a for-profit sector for jobs. Again, we find no significant differences ($U_{PrefNWW}$=17190.00, p>.05) ($U_{PrefLDO}$=17410.50, p>.05). Lastly, we analyze whether participants' preferences differ based on their field of study (0=other; 1=business administration, social sciences, or both as an interdisciplinary program). While there is no significant effect regarding new ways of working ($U_{PrefNWW}$=16062.00, p>.05), we do find a significant effect related to leadership development opportunities ($U_{PrefLDO}$=15048.50, p<.05). The effect size with r=>.10 is rather small.

**5. Discussion and implications for practice**

Reflecting that our study is among the few presenting recent experimental evidence on nonprofit talent recruitment, our findings demand close interpretation. We find that new ways of working do increase talented recruits' intention to apply for a nonprofit job. Conversely, we find no empirical evidence in our data for leadership development opportunities to be a main motivational factor to apply for a nonprofit job. Below, we suggest possible explanations.

Our findings showed that new ways of working boost participants' intention to apply, echoing Thompson et al. (2015) and Wörtler et al. (2021). However, while signaling new ways of working in nonprofit job advertisements worked best overall, that is not to say that such a job flexible model suits everyone. In fact, some argue that it might also cause drawbacks like work pressure and employee isolation (Demerouti et al., 2014; de Vries et al., 2019). In terms of nonprofit and public or employees, some scholars also note that if organizations do not support and care for employees in flexibilization processes, a so-called "telework divide" might arise and, at worst, mitigate intrinsic service motivation (van der Wal, 2021). Nonetheless, our results in a nonprofit recruitment strategy setting are more encouraging. We contend that indicating new ways of working conditions in nonprofit job descriptions does not provoke negative attitude among potential employees. Indeed, it seems to signal that one's basic need for autonomy will be satisfied. This also links to work by Acheampong (2021), and Guillot-Soulez and Soulez (2014).

Surprisingly, leadership development opportunities did not significantly impact the intention to apply. While Gazley (2016) argued that these opportunities are important for successful nonprofit recruitment, based on our data, we cannot confirm or deny this statement. The results indicate that leadership development signals may have a negative effect, but this finding is insignificant. Strictly speaking, our study thus could not gauge to what extent leadership development opportunities affect the application intentions. However, if we were to cautiously presume, advertising leadership development opportunities in the early recruitment phase of sifting through job advertisements could not be a major job-related motivational factor for today's talent. It might be because it unhelpfully communicates to potential applicants that they have to assume leadership responsibility in the job at some point, which might trigger resentment. As such, signaling leadership development opportunities in nonprofits could place pressure about assuming future leadership and dissuade potential recruits, especially those with moderate leadership motivation, as also indicated by Zhang et al. (2020) and Brink and Zondag (2021).

Regardless, our results could also vary in a different setting, i. e., when utilizing stronger experimental signals, in later recruitment stages, or in a retention context. Regarding the latter, research emphasizes that career advancement opportunities are essential for keeping key staff (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Kang et al., 2015; Kim & Lee, 2007; Pepelko, 2020). While nonprofit recruiters aim to attract suitable employees, comprehensive HRM must retain them by offering career prospects such as leadership development opportunities. Hence, only if nonprofits implement and simultaneously manage recruitment and retention efforts, talent, and succession management systems flourish.

Regarding our controlled models' findings (Table 3), the covariates of field of study, motivation to lead, P-O fit, and sector preference significantly and reliably influence participants intention to apply. Although, we warrant caution in taking their interpretation at face value – since they were not explicitly evident from our experiment – we want to remark the following: A unit increase in participants' motivation to lead, for instance, correlates with higher application intention by .189 scale units (controlled model III). As noted earlier, this could possibly be because the job advertisement shown in the experiment promotes a managing position (across all conditions) that invites some managerial proactiveness. In turn, this may be particularly catchy for participants with default (affective) leadership ambitions (Schuh et al., 2013). Surprisingly, nonprofit sector preference had the weakest influence among the controls added in model III. When compared to P-O fit, for example, its influence suggests that

nonprofits ability to fulfill potential recruits' personal values and requirements is more important. To some degree, our model III's results even indicate not to rely on potential recruits' interest in working in the sector per se when placing a job advertisement; not least considering the intrasectoral aspect of competition for talented workforce. Recruitment success could instead be even more contingent on signaling alignment of values and displaying employee-oriented policies (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Liu & Xie, 2023), supporting the finding of the appeal of new ways of working. It should be noted that our study exposed partial loading issues of intention to apply and P-O fit (see Table A6). This could be since P-O fit can be identified as one precondition of attitudes and behavior (Celani & Singh, 2011; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Verquer et al., 2003). As such, it differs conceptually from the desire to apply construct, as demonstrated empirically by HTMT ratios (.85). The latter confirmed that both were statistically discriminant.

Highlighting our results regarding participants general preferences for new ways of working and leadership development opportunities (Table A3), these imply that granting new ways of working is especially appealing to women. This is in line with former work. For example, scholars continuously stress that the majority of domestic tasks are still maintained by women (Atkinson & Hall, 2009; Lott, 2018). As studies, too, point out that women tend to request more work schedule control than men (Chung, 2019), a commonly shared assumption among researchers is that flexible work arrangement policies do support women; particularly those with greater family responsibilities (Shockley & Allen, 2007). In addition, our findings point towards leadership development opportunities being more compelling to participants across groups, who studied business administration, social sciences, or both interdisciplinary.

To sum up our key (experimental) results, we conclude that indeed the basic need for autonomy (self-determination theory) (Deci & Ryan, 2004) can be triggered and satisfied by signaling new ways of working facets in the early nonprofit recruitment phase (Schmoll & Süß, 2019). Building on this, we now provide three implications for nonprofit HRM practice:

*1. Developing and implementing new ways of working*. Based on our experimental results, we recommend that nonprofit HRM professionals acknowledge the current and future needs of employees (as well as volunteers) regarding new ways of working. We highlight this because new ways of working mean attracting more potential talented applicants for the respective organization. Moreover, the literature indicates that flexible working can positively associate with nonprofit/public service motivation (Caillier, 2016). For nonprofit managers and leaders,

this increases the likelihood of building up and deploying human capital in targeted manners (such as project managers, team lead vacancies, and so on).

As no 'one size fits all' solution exists, professionals should, first, conduct needs analyses. Employee surveys on flexible work arrangement needs are a good place to start. Here, nonprofit management practitioners may use the research items by Gerards et al. (2018) as a guide and, for example, ask employees if it is important for them to be able to (1) determine their working hours, (2) decide where they work (office, home office, workcation, and so on), (3) access work-related information via their own computer and mobile, (4) access their workplace at all times, or (5) adapt their workload to their current situation (such as regarding family responsibilities, health issues, advanced age, and so on.). However, nonprofit leaders should also assess which needs are feasible for the operation of the organization. In addition, leaders should evaluate their existing offers in annual reviews with employees.

*2. Highlighting new ways of working in job descriptions.* Nonprofits should prominently feature implemented new ways of working in job descriptions, as potential employees closely scrutinize these (Kuenzi et al., 2021). However, nonprofits should avoid over-promising, as 'reality shocks' can diminish service motivation, commitment, and increase turnover (Dean et al., 1984; Hur & Bae, 2021; Schott et al., 2019; Miller-Mor-Attias & Vigoda-Gadot, 2022).

*3. Offering leadership development opportunities where they are effective by evidence.* We recommend that nonprofit managers avoid offering everything possible when posting jobs to attract talent. This helps save organizational costs. In this regard, our experimental data does not hint evidence on whether advertising leadership development programs in the early recruitment phase (posting job ads) is effective. Since career development offers, such as leadership development, however, are found to be important for employees (Kang et al., 2015), their influence could be apparent in, for example, later nonprofit recruiting (such as job interviews, salary negotiations, and so on) or retention stages (such as being part of individual career development plans).

## 6. Limitations, future research, and conclusion

Our study has some limitations that suggest future research avenues. First, our scenario-based experiment can only be compared to real job searches to a certain extent. Only a proportion of our participants were actively looking for a job, which is a common limitation in studies that use similar approaches (Sievert et al., 2022). Moreover, the job advertisement and application situation were fictitious, which might have influenced participants' responses (Levitt & List,

2007). To address these issues, field experiments must be carried out in which potential applicants view real job advertisements to observe actual application behavior.

Second, although scholars indicate a positive link between P-O fit and application intentions (such as Wei et al., 2016), we must interpret our corresponding control results with some caution. That is, because a factor analysis exposed factors with loading issues in some cases (see Table A6). However, consulting HTMT ratios (<.85) demonstrates that, P-O fit and intention to apply are not only theoretically but statistically discriminant constructs.

Third, our results are not representative of vocational talent in Germany; rather, they represent a current snapshot that requires further external validation. In addition to enhancing generalizability to talent more comprehensively, future research could explore which new ways of working and leadership development opportunities are effective in certain nonprofit fields of work and with recruitment groups such as volunteers. In terms of the former, a comparative study (such as health subsector vs. cultural subsector) may be a starting point. Regarding the latter, one can assume that volunteers set different conditions than full-time employees, which could even mean including and testing additional job-motivational factors.

Fourth, the data collection for this study took place in cooperation with an external panel service provider. Since the participants were recruited from the provider's contact pool and their participation was monetarily incentivized, data quality is moderate. To obtain even more reliable data on talent, accessing alternative sources is necessary. For instance, scientists could attempt to tap into talent pools through scholarship foundations and generate a sample of up-and-coming young professionals for the job market.

Finally, our study focuses exclusively on nonprofit recruitment processes. To fully assess the motivational potential of new ways of working and leadership development opportunities, related studies on employee retention, linked to perceived organizational support literature (Knapp et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), could provide a more comprehensive view.

*Conclusion*

This study examined the success of offering new ways of working and leadership development opportunities during the early recruitment stage, specifically in a nonprofit job advertisement setting. It theoretically expanded on potential job-related motivational factors in nonprofits. Building on self-determination theory, we conducted an online vignette experiment with potential job talents in Germany, consisting of 389 participants. The effects were tested on participants' job application intentions. The results revealed that only new ways of working significantly increased individuals' intention to apply for the advertised nonprofit job. Despite

the limitations of this study, the findings highlight that nonprofit managers and recruiters should enable and offer flexible working options to attract more talented workers to the sector. The hope is that this can help to keep the nonprofit sector competitive.

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**Table A1.** Fictive job advertisements

| | |
|---|---|
| **Stiftung \| DUH** **Nonprofit-Manager:in (m/w/d): Strategie, Personal & Finanzen**<br>Hier online bewerben<br>**Arbeitgeber:** Stiftung-Deutsche-Unfall-Hilfe<br>**Stellenart:** Stelle für Fachkräfte<br>**Arbeitsfeld:** Strategie / Personal / Finanzen<br>**Stellenumfang:** Vollzeit<br>**Befristung:** unbefristet<br>**Arbeitsort:** auch in deiner Stadt!<br>**Eintrittsdatum:** ab sofort<br>**Bewerbungsfrist:** 30.11.2022<br>Du möchtest aktiv gestalten und wirklich was bewegen? Bei uns geht das – denn wir bieten Dir eine von Freude und Zusammenhalt geprägte Arbeitskultur. Und jede Menge Freiraum, um Deine Ideen zu verwirklichen. **Stiftung \| DUH**: Wir sind eine große Hilfsorganisation und fördern u. a. Rettungs- und Sanitätsdienste, Katastrophenschutz, soziale Dienste sowie die Arbeit mit Kindern und Jugendlichen.<br>Im Sinne der Gleichstellung und Chancengleichheit aller Mitarbeitenden begrüßen wir alle Bewerbungen von Interessierten, unabhängig von deren kultureller, religiöser und sozialer Herkunft, Geschlecht, Alter, Behinderung oder sexueller Identität.<br>  <br>**Wir bieten Dir ein modernes New Work-Jobmodell!**<br>Wir bieten Dir ein einmaliges New Work-Jobmodell, bei dem Du Deine Arbeit flexibel und individuell ausgestalten kannst. Hierzu gehören u.a.:<br>✓ Selbstbestimmte Arbeitszeiten<br>✓ Arbeitspensum-Lebensphase-Fit<br>✓ Vereinbarkeit von Privat-/Familienleben und Job<br>✓ Abrufmöglichkeit aller arbeitsrelevanten Inhalte via eigenem Computer/Tablet/Smartphone<br>✓ Homeoffice-Möglichkeit<br>**Deine Aufgabe bei uns**<br>• Unterstützung des Leitungsteams im operativen und strategischen Tagesgeschäft<br>• Vor-, Nachbereitung und Durchführung von Tagungen und Sitzungen des Leitungsteams<br>• Betreuung und Koordination von eigenen, bereichsübergreifenden Projekten<br>• Themen- und projektbezogene Kommunikation mit internen und externen Partnern<br>**Was Du mitbringen solltest**<br>• abgeschlossenes betriebswirtschaftliches oder sozialwissenschaftliches Studium (wünschenswert)<br>• Teamfähigkeit und hohes Engagement<br>• einen selbstständigen Arbeitsstil und Organisationsgeschick<br>• Moderations- und Kommunikationsstärke<br>**Unsere Leistungen an Dich**<br>• ein sinnstiftender Job<br>• leistungsgerechte, attraktive Vergütung<br>• 30 Urlaubstage<br>• eine offene und inklusive Organisationskultur | Group 1: New ways of working condition |
| | |
| **Stiftung \| DUH** **Nonprofit-Manager:in (m/w/d): Strategie, Personal & Finanzen**<br>Hier online bewerben<br>**Arbeitgeber:** Stiftung-Deutsche-Unfall-Hilfe<br>**Stellenart:** Stelle für Fachkräfte<br>**Arbeitsfeld:** Strategie / Personal / Finanzen<br>**Stellenumfang:** Vollzeit<br>**Befristung:** unbefristet<br>**Arbeitsort:** auch in deiner Stadt!<br>**Eintrittsdatum:** ab sofort<br>**Bewerbungsfrist:** 30.11.2022<br>Du möchtest aktiv gestalten und wirklich was bewegen? Bei uns geht das – denn wir bieten Dir eine von Freude und Zusammenhalt geprägte Arbeitskultur. Und jede Menge Freiraum, um Deine Ideen zu verwirklichen. **Stiftung \| DUH**: Wir sind eine große Hilfsorganisation und fördern u. a. Rettungs- und Sanitätsdienste, Katastrophenschutz, soziale Dienste sowie die Arbeit mit Kindern und Jugendlichen.<br>Im Sinne der Gleichstellung und Chancengleichheit aller Mitarbeitenden begrüßen wir alle Bewerbungen von Interessierten, unabhängig von deren kultureller, religiöser und sozialer Herkunft, Geschlecht, Alter, Behinderung oder sexueller Identität.<br>  <br>**Wir bieten Dir ein modernes Leadership-Programm!**<br>Wir bieten Dir ein einmaliges Leadership-Programm, in dem Du Dich für höhere Führungspositionen weiterbilden kannst. Hierzu gehören u.a.:<br>✓ Praktische (Team-)Übungen zu Führungssituationen<br>✓ Coachings durch Geschäftsführung & Vorstand<br>✓ Mentoring-Begleitung & 360-Grad Feedback<br>✓ Gute Netzwerkmöglichkeiten mit Nachwuchsführungskräften<br>✓ Leadership-Zertifikat.<br>**Deine Aufgabe bei uns**<br>• Unterstützung des Leitungsteams im operativen und strategischen Tagesgeschäft<br>• Vor-, Nachbereitung und Durchführung von Tagungen und Sitzungen des Leitungsteams<br>• Betreuung und Koordination von eigenen, bereichsübergreifenden Projekten<br>• Themen- und projektbezogene Kommunikation mit internen und externen Partnern<br>**Was Du mitbringen solltest**<br>• abgeschlossenes betriebswirtschaftliches oder sozialwissenschaftliches Studium (wünschenswert)<br>• Teamfähigkeit und hohes Engagement<br>• einen selbstständigen Arbeitsstil und Organisationsgeschick<br>• Moderations- und Kommunikationsstärke<br>**Unsere Leistungen an Dich**<br>• ein sinnstiftender Job<br>• leistungsgerechte, attraktive Vergütung<br>• 30 Urlaubstage<br>• eine offene und inklusive Organisationskultur | Group 2: Leadership development opportunities condition |
| | |
| **Stiftung \| DUH** **Nonprofit-Manager:in (m/w/d): Strategie, Personal & Finanzen**<br>Hier online bewerben<br>**Arbeitgeber:** Stiftung-Deutsche-Unfall-Hilfe<br>**Stellenart:** Stelle für Fachkräfte<br>**Arbeitsfeld:** Strategie / Personal / Finanzen<br>**Stellenumfang:** Vollzeit<br>**Befristung:** unbefristet<br>**Arbeitsort:** auch in deiner Stadt!<br>**Eintrittsdatum:** ab sofort<br>**Bewerbungsfrist:** 30.11.2022<br>Du möchtest aktiv gestalten und wirklich was bewegen? Bei uns geht das – denn wir bieten Dir eine von Freude und Zusammenhalt geprägte Arbeitskultur. Und jede Menge Freiraum, um Deine Ideen zu verwirklichen. **Stiftung \| DUH**: Wir sind eine große Hilfsorganisation und fördern u. a. Rettungs- und Sanitätsdienste, Katastrophenschutz, soziale Dienste sowie die Arbeit mit Kindern und Jugendlichen.<br>Im Sinne der Gleichstellung und Chancengleichheit aller Mitarbeitenden begrüßen wir alle Bewerbungen von Interessierten, unabhängig von deren kultureller, religiöser und sozialer Herkunft, Geschlecht, Alter, Behinderung oder sexueller Identität.<br>  <br>**Deine Aufgabe bei uns**<br>• Unterstützung des Leitungsteams im operativen und strategischen Tagesgeschäft<br>• Vor-, Nachbereitung und Durchführung von Tagungen und Sitzungen des Leitungsteams<br>• Betreuung und Koordination von eigenen, bereichsübergreifenden Projekten<br>• Themen- und projektbezogene Kommunikation mit internen und externen Partnern<br>**Was Du mitbringen solltest**<br>• abgeschlossenes betriebswirtschaftliches oder sozialwissenschaftliches Studium (wünschenswert)<br>• Teamfähigkeit und hohes Engagement<br>• einen selbstständigen Arbeitsstil und Organisationsgeschick<br>• Moderations- und Kommunikationsstärke<br>**Unsere Leistungen an Dich**<br>• ein sinnstiftender Job<br>• leistungsgerechte, attraktive Vergütung<br>• 30 Urlaubstage<br>• eine offene und inklusive Organisationskultur | Group 3: Control condition |

**Table A2.** Measurement quality report

| Variable | Mean (SD) | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|
| *Dependent variable* | | |
| **Intention to apply** (Gomes & Neves, 2011)[a] | | **.944** |
| If I were looking for a job, I would most likely apply for this job. | 2.9 (1.26) | |
| If I were looking for a job, applying for this job would be very appealing to me. | 2.9 (1.25) | |
| If I were looking for a job, I could very well imagine myself working in this job. | 3.0 (1.25) | |
| *Independent variable (experimental conditions)* | | |
| **Condition 1** (new ways of working) | | |
| We offer you modern new ways of working! We offer you unique new ways of working in which you can flexibly and individually design your work. This includes self-determined working hours, a close fit between your workload and phase of life, work-life balance, the ability to retrieve all work-related content via your own computer/tablet/smartphone, and the option to work from home. | | |
| **Condition 2** (leadership development opportunities) | | |
| We offer you a modern leadership program! We offer you a unique leadership program in which you can train for higher management positions. This includes practical (team) exercises on leadership situations, coaching by management and board members, mentoring support and 360-degree feedback, good networking opportunities with peers, and a leadership certificate. | | |
| *Control variables* | | |
| **Gender** | | |
| You are…? (Please select female, male, or non-binary.) | | |
| **Age** | | |
| How old are you? (Specify in digits in the blank field.) | 32.1 (4.88) | |
| **Field of study** | | |
| Are you currently studying in or have a degree in any of the following fields? (Please select social sciences, business administration, or both as an interdisciplinary program.) | | |
| **Looking for a job** (job search status) | | |
| Are you currently looking for jobs? (Please select yes or no.) | | |
| **Motivation to lead** (Elprana et al., 2015)[a] | | **.940** |
| I do enjoy performing executive functions. | 3.4 (1.10) | |
| I like to take over a leading role. | 3.3 (1.16) | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I like taking over the leadership function better than working in a supporting role for others. | 3.0 (1.17) | |
| When I can give guidance to others, I am in my element. | 3.2 (1.13) | |
| I like to assume responsibility for others. | 3.4 (1.13) | |
| I normally want to lead the group in which I am working. | 3.1 (1.14) | |
| I tend to assume the leadership of most groups and teams I work in. | 3.1 (1.18) | |
| I rarely hesitate to assume the leadership of a group. | 3.0 (1.19) | |
| When I am part of a working group, I usually prefer leading it rather than just being a member. | 3.0 (1.16) | |
| **P-O fit** (Saks & Ashforth, 2002)[a] | | **.877** |
| My own values are similar to the values of the organization in the job advertisement. | 3.6 (0.97) | |
| My personality matches the image of the organization conveyed to me in the job advertisement. | 3.4 (0.99) | |
| The organization in the job advertisement satisfies my needs. | 3.2 (1.05) | |
| The organization of the job advertisement is a good fit for me. | 3.2 (1.10) | |
| **[Nonprofit] sector preference**[b] | | |
| Professionally, I prefer a job in the for-profit sector (company). | 3.4 (1.15) | |
| Professionally, I prefer a job in the public sector (e.g., public administration, public company) | 3.4 (1.13) | |
| Professionally, I prefer a job in a nonprofit organization (e.g., association, foundation, nonprofit LCC., federation). | 2.6 (1.27) | |
| Professionally, I don't look at the sector, I only look at the description of the job. | 3.5 (1.16) | |

Note: n=389.
[a]Multi-item scale (5-point Likert scale (1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree")).
[b]Single-item scale (5-point Likert scale (1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree")).

**Table A3.** Measurement quality report (supplementary)

| Variable | Mean (SD) | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|
| **Preference for leadership development programs**[1] | | **.860** |
| Mentoring support and 360-degree feedback on-the-job are important to me. | 3.3 (1.12) | |
| Coaching from experienced leaders on-the-job are important to me. | 3.6 (1.05) | |
| Practical exercises on leadership situations skills on-the-job are important to me. | 3.5 (1.08) | |
| Overall, programs to develop my leadership skills on-the-job are important to me. | 3.5 (1.09) | |
| **Preference for new ways of working** (Gerards et al., 2018)[a] | | **.807** |
| It is important to me that I can determine my own working hours. | 4.0 (1.02) | |
| It is important to me that I can determine where I work (office, home office, and so on.). | 4.0 (1.04) | |
| It is important to me that I can access all work-related information via my computer, cell phone, and/or tablet. | 3.8 (1.07) | |
| It is important to me that I can adapt my workload to my current life phase or situation. | 4.1 (0.92) | |
| It is important to me that I have access to my workplace at all times. | 3.4 (1.15) | |
| It is important to me that I can balance the demands of my job with the needs of my personal and family lives. | 4.2 (0.93) | |
| **Nonprofit service motivation** (Word & Carpenter, 2013)[a] | | **.733** |
| I volunteer for social causes. | 2.9 (1.29) | |
| I value carrying out meaningful work. | 3.6 (1.07) | |
| I consider working for a social mission as my civic duty. | 2.9 (1.22) | |
| **Preference for a sustainable employer**[a] | | **.892** |
| It is important to me that my employer attaches importance to social sustainability in its operations. | 3.6 (1.05) | |
| It is important to me that my employer attaches importance to environmental sustainability in its operations. | 3.5 (1.06) | |
| It is important to me that my employer attaches importance to being economically positioned to act sustainably. | 3.6 (1.04) | |
| **Preference for job security** | | |
| It is important to me that my employer offers me a secure job. | 4.3 (0.89) | |
| **Preference for employer reputation** | | |
| It is important to me that my employer enjoys a high social standing. | 3.1 (1.04) | |
| **Preference for team work** (Kiffin-Petersen & Cordery, 2003)[a] | | **.883** |
| I generally prefer to work as part of a team. | 3.6 (1.09) | |
| I am eager to be working with other employees in a team. | 3.6 (1.08) | |

Note: n=389.
[a]Multi-item scale (5-point Likert scales (1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree")).

**Table A4.** Randomization, attention, and manipulation checks

| *Randomization checks* | Overall n=389 | NWW n=131 | LDO n=126 | Control n=132 | $\chi^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) | a. Sig. (2-sided) |
| **Gender** | | | | | .772 |
| Female | 254 (65.3) | 81 (61.8) | 82 (65.1) | 91 (68.9) | |
| Non-binary | 2 (0.5) | 47 (35.9) | | 1 (0.8) | |
| Male | 130 (33.4) | 1 (0.8) | 43 (34.1) | 40 (30.3) | |
| *Missings* | *3 (0.8)* | 2 (1.5) | *1 (0.8)* | | |
| **Age** (years) | | | | | .802 |
| 20-24 | 27 (6.9) | 8 (6.1) | 8 (6.3) | 11 (8.3) | |
| 25-29 | 94 (24.2) | 31 (23.7) | 31 (24.6) | 32 (24.2) | |
| 30-34 | 124 (31.9) | 47 (35.9) | 42 (33.3) | 35 (26.5) | |
| 35-39 | 123 (31.6) | 39 (29.8) | 37 (29.4) | 47 (35.6) | |
| 40-45 | 18 (4.6) | 4 (3.1) | 7 (5.6) | 7 (5.3) | |
| *Missings* | 3 (0.8) | 2 (1.5) | 1 (0.8) | | |
| **Academic background** | | | | | .204 |
| Yes | 357 (91.8) | 124 (94.7) | 116 (92.1) | 117 (88.6) | |
| No | 32 (8.2) | 7 (5.3) | 10 (7.9) | 15 (11.4) | |
| **Field of study** | | | | | .501 |
| Social sciences | 49 (12.6) | 22 (16.8) | 14 (11.1) | 13 (9.8) | |
| Business administration | 90 (23.1) | 25 (19.1) | 29 (23.0) | 36 (27.6) | |
| Interdisciplinary | 17 (4.4) | 7 (5.3) | 5 (4.0) | 5 (3.8) | |
| Other | 230 (59.1) | 75 (57.3) | 77 (61.1) | 78 (59.1) | |
| *Missings* | *3 (0.8)* | *2 (1.5)* | *1 (0.8)* | | |
| **Looking for a job** | | | | | .137 |
| Yes | 146 (37.5) | 54 (41.2) | 51 (40.5) | 41 (31.1) | |
| No | 240 (61.7) | 74 (56.5) | 75 (59.5) | 91 (68.9) | |
| *Missings* | *3 (0.8)* | *3 (2.3)* | | | |
| **Educational degree** (highest) | | | | | .332 |
| High school diploma | 35 (9.0) | 11 (8.4) | 10 (7.4) | 14 (10.6) | |
| Bachelor's (B.A./B.Sc.) | 172 (44.2) | 57 (43.5) | 57 (45.2) | 58 (43.9) | |
| Master's (M.A./M.Sc.) | 148 (38.0) | 48 (36.6) | 52 (41.3) | 48 (36.4) | |
| Ph.D. | 18 (4.6) | 9 (6.9) | 3 (2.4) | 6 (4.5) | |
| Other | 11 (2.8) | 2 (1.5) | 3 (2.4) | 6 (4.5) | |
| *Missings* | *3 (0.8)* | *2 (1.5)* | *1 (0.8)* | | |
| **Work experiences**[a] | | | | | |
| Internship | 195 (50.1) | 65 (49.6) | 68 (54.0) | 62 (47.0) | .526 |
| Marginal job (≤EUR 450/month) | 157 (40.4) | 54 (41.2) | 50 (39.7) | 53 (40.2) | .967 |
| Student job (≤ 20 h/week) | 70 (18.0) | 23 (17.6) | 25 (19.8) | 22 (16.7) | .792 |
| ≤ 1 year (full-time/part-time) | 36 (9.3) | 10 (7.6) | 13 (10.3) | 13 (9.8) | .728 |
| > 1 year (full-time/part-time) | 290 (74.6) | 94 (71.8) | 94 (74.6) | 102 (77.3) | .590 |
| *Attention check* | 379 (97.4) | 127 (96.9) | 122 (96.8) | 130 (98.5) | |
| *Manipulation checks* | | NWW | LDO | Control group | ANOVA |
| **Variable**[b] | | n=131 | n=126 | n=132 | F (p) |
| **Perception of NWW in advertisement** | | | | | 83.44 (.000) |
| Mean | | 4.10 | 2.40 | 2.42 | |
| SD | | 1.15 | 1.22 | 1.26 | |
| Post-hoc Scheffé test Mean difference to NWW group | | | 1.69** | 1.67** | |
| SE | | | .152 | .150 | |
| *p* | | | .000 | .000 | |
| **Perception of LDO in advertisement** | | | | | 98.96 (.000) |
| Mean | | 2.51 | 4.19 | 2.37 | |
| SD | | 1.23 | 1.00 | 1.19 | |
| Post-hoc Scheffé test Mean difference to LDO group | | 1.68** | | 1.82** | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SE | .144 | | .143 | |
| *p* | .000 | | .000 | |
| **No perception of LDO or NWW in advertisement** | | | | 62.06 (.000) |
| Mean | 2.17 | 2.27 | 3.72 | |
| SD | 1.31 | 1.28 | 1.18 | |
| Post-hoc Scheffé test Mean difference to CG | 1.55** | 1.45** | | |
| SE | .156 | .157 | | |
| *p* | .000 | .000 | | |

Note: n=389.
[a]Does not amount to n=389 (100%) because the participants were allowed to select multiple answers.
[b]Single-item scale (5-point Likert scale (1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree")).
Abbreviations: LDO=leadership development opportunities; NWW=new ways of working; CG=control group.
**p<.001.

**Table A5.** Descriptive statistics (supplementary)

| **Variable** | Overall n=389 | NWW n=131 | LDO n=126 | Control n=132 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) |
| **Looking for a job** (job search status) (yes) | 146 (37.5) | 54 (41.2) | 51 (40.0) | 41 (31.1) |
| *Missings (n=3)* | | *3 (2.3)* | | |
| **Motivation to lead** | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) |
| | 3.1 (0.9) | 3.2 (0.9) | 3.2 (1.0) | 3.0 (0.9) |
| **P-O fit** | 3.3 (0.8) | 3.4 (1.0) | 3.3 (0.8) | 3.3 (0.8) |
| *Missings (n=2)* | | *2* | | |
| *Sector preference (sector ranking)* | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) |
| **Nonprofit sector preference** | 53 (13.6) | 18 (13.7) | 19 (15.1) | 16 (12.1) |
| For-profit sector preference | 186 (47.8) | 58 (44.3) | 60 (47.6) | 68 (51.5) |
| Public sector preference | 150 (38.6) | 55 (42.0) | 47 (37.3) | 48 (36.4) |
| **Job search platform**[a] | | | | |
| Job advertisement websites | 290 (74.6) | 95 (72.5) | 97 (77.0) | 98 (74.2) |
| Employer websites | 246 (63.3) | 79 (60.3) | 85 (67.5) | 82 (62.1) |
| Social media | 131 (33.7) | 53 (40.5) | 43 (34.1) | 35 (26.5) |
| Newspapers, magazines, posters | 84 (21.6) | 25 (19.1) | 30 (23.8) | 29 (22.0) |
| Personal contacts | 178 (45.8) | 67 (51.1) | 52 (41.3) | 59 (44.7) |
| Employment office | 59 (15.2) | 17 (13.0) | 17 (13.5) | 25 (18.9) |
| *Other* | *73 (18.8)* | *30 (22.9)* | *24 (19.0)* | *19 (14.4)* |
| **Annual salary expectations** (EUR) | | | | |
| ≤ 20,000 | 64 (16.5) | 21 (16.0) | 22 (17.5) | 21 (15.9) |
| 20,001-40,000 | 59 (15.2) | 19 (14.5) | 16 (12.7) | 24 (18.2) |
| 40,001-60,000 | 155 (39.8) | 52 (39.7) | 49 (38.9) | 54 (40.9) |
| 60,001-80,000 | 59 (15.2) | 17 (13.0) | 22 (17.5) | 20 (15.2) |
| > 80,000 | 41 (10.5) | 17 (13.0) | 14 (11.1) | 10 (7.6) |
| *Missings (n=11)* | *11 (2.8)* | *5 (3.8)* | *3 (2.4)* | *3 (2.3)* |
| **Nonprofit service motivation**[b] | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) |
| | 3.1 (0.9) | 3.1 (1.0) | 3.2 (0.9) | 3.0 (0.9) |
| **Preference for job security**[b] | 4.4 (0.8) | 4.3 (0.8) | 4.3 (0.8) | 4.5 (0.6) |

Note: n=389.
[a]Does not amount to n=389 (100%) because the participants were allowed to select multiple answers.
[b]Measurement on a 5-point Likert scale (1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree").

**Table A6.** Factor scores (CFA) and discriminant validity (HTMT ratio)

| Variable | Overall n=389 | NWW n=131 | LDO n=126 | Control n=132 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Intention to apply** (Gomes & Neves, 2011) | HTMT <.85 | | | |
| If I were looking for a job, I would most likely apply for this job. | .910 | .871 | .913 | .928 |
| If I were looking for a job, applying for this job would be very appealing to me. | .920 | .901 | .939 | .929 |
| If I were looking for a job, I could very well imagine myself working in this job. | .921 | .902 | .912 | .927 |
| **Motivation to lead** (Elprana et al., 2015) | HTMT <.85 | | | |
| I do enjoy performing executive functions. | .853 | .850 | .884 | .878 |
| I like to take over a leading role. | .874 | .847 | .852 | .851 |
| I like taking over the leadership function better than working in a supporting role for others. | .801 | .749 | .831 | .810 |
| When I can give guidance to others, I am in my element. | .781 | .738 | .773 | .835 |
| I like to assume responsibility for others. | .756 | .688 | .709 | .832 |
| I normally want to lead the group in which I am working. | .885 | .915 | .890 | .855 |
| I tend to assume the leadership of most groups and teams I work in. | .836 | .857 | .853 | .805 |
| I rarely hesitate to assume the leadership of a group. | .770 | .786 | .820 | .718 |
| When I am part of a working group, I usually prefer leading it rather than just being a member. | .848 | .846 | .859 | .840 |
| **P-O fit** (Saks & Ashforth, 2002)[a] | HTMT <.85 | | | |
| My own values are similar to the values of the organization in the job advertisement. | .837 | .446 | .901 | .882 |
| My personality matches the image of the organization conveyed to me in the job advertisement. | .751 | .401 | .708 | .757 |
| The organization in the job advertisement satisfies my needs. | .498 | | .473 | .519 |
| The organization of the job advertisement is a good fit for me. | .449 | | .494 | .440 |

Note: HTMT=confidence intervals (bias corrected) for all 3 constructs do not include the value 1.

[a]Although CFA exposes some loading issues, we refrain from scale purification (for Table 3, controlled model III). From a judgmental standpoint, we hinge on scholars like Wieland et al. (2017) and argue that all four P-O fit items derived from theory contribute reflectively to the construct's overall assessment.

# Kapitel 4: Offer to remain? Examining HRM practices in nonprofit employee retention

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# Offer to remain? Examining HRM practices in nonprofit employee retention

Nils Geib

## Abstract

Retaining competent employees is a major challenge for nonprofit organizations. Specifically, they must compete with for-profit companies and public organizations by providing appealing workplaces and jobs to effectively secure human resources. In this study, social exchange theory was applied to nonprofit human resource management (HRM) to test a broad set of HRM practices for retention success. In an online survey with nonprofit employees (n=229) conducted in Germany, respondents rated whether they benefitted from HRM practices (e.g., pay, new ways of working opportunities, career development, leadership). The respondents then assessed perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to stay with their employers. PLS-SEM (mediation) results and importance-performance metrics indicate that work-conditional (e.g., flexible work arrangements), developmental (e.g., career path development), and relational practices (e.g., leadership) are HRM practices that can significantly increase perceived organizational support. Moreover, perceived organizational support is a crucial predictor of employee intentions to stay, mainly through job satisfaction. In summary, this study contextualizes today's nonprofit HRM practice and highlights how nonprofit managers can ensure retention.

**Keywords:** retention, nonprofit HRM, social exchange theory, PLS-SEM, perceived organizational support

## 1. Introduction

Nonprofit organizations depend on adequate staff to pursue their complex missions (Kang et al., 2015; Walk et al., 2014; Wang, 2022). Competing with the public and for-profit sectors for competent employees requires nonprofits to provide workplaces and jobs that are *au courant* and appealing. Only then can they sustain human capital effectively and continue to provide critical societal services during volatile times (e.g., Ukraine/Middle East conflicts, refugee movements, climate crisis, post-pandemic aftermath, rise of extremism and disinformation). However, this is a key challenge for these organizations (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016; Ihm & Baek, 2021). Whereas nonprofit human resources (HR) undergo rebranding (e.g., to "people & culture") to emphasize employee needs, over 70% of nonprofits still have no formal retention plans (Nonprofit HR, 2022).

Employee retention can be defined as "a process in which the employees are encouraged to remain with the organization for the maximum period of time […]" (Das & Baruah, 2013, p. 8). From an organizational perspective, it covers the maintenance of work relations, competition for staff, and turnover reduction. As such, including this issue on strategic agendas is particularly crucial for nonprofit human resource management (HRM) initiatives, like succession management (Geib & Boenigk, 2022; Gothard & Austin, 2013; Lim et al., 2021).

While many nonprofit organizations have no formal retention plans, there is a growing trend to consider this issue to ensure organizational operations. In fact, a recent Nonprofit HR (2023) report suggests that nonprofit organizations plan to consolidate their HRM practices to support their staff. Given this dynamic, this study explores how nonprofit employees perceive retention-related practices. This adds to the literature on the broad set of HRM practices that may be relevant to nonprofit employee retention efforts.

Retention scholars root their ideas in economic, socio-emotional, and motivational theories (Kang et al., 2015). However, all these theories indicate that retention rates depend on "the extent to which an employee regards and interprets rewards of holding the job" (Kang et al., 2015, p. 645). Therefore, organizations achieve employee retention by rewarding (i.e., tangible/intangible) exchange processes for labor. As such, this study draws from social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), which posits that employees place expectations on employers in exchange for the cost of their work. Today, this could imply HRM practices such as pay, new ways of working conditions, convenient workplace facilities, good supervision and socialization, and career development (Akingbola et

al., 2023). According to SET, meeting employee expectations builds high-quality relationships and promotes retention (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In other words, nonprofits that put effort into HRM practices accumulate human capital (Memon et al., 2020) and facilitate staff resiliency (Searing et al., 2021).

To date, research on nonprofit HRM practices and their link to retention has been limited. Therefore, this study tests HRM practices in the context of nonprofit employee retention efforts. Using empirical structural equation modelling (SEM), this study also reflects on the employee-employer perspective to answer the following research question: *which HRM practices should nonprofits prioritize in their retention efforts?*

This study contributes to the literature in two ways. First, it extends the theory by identifying a broad set of HRM practices for nonprofit retention. In doing so, it reinforces the theoretical sensitivity of the interrelations in SET, psychological contract theory, and the HRM-performance causal chain in the nonprofit HRM research debate. Second, it addresses the empirical call for more nonprofit data in this area (Prysmakova & Lallatin, 2023). It also provides practical guidance for nonprofit decision-makers. Most importantly, it analyzes the current practices that may guarantee the long-term availability of nonprofit employees. This sets the stage for nonprofit personnel investment and future staff deployment.

## 2. Theoretical background and hypotheses development

Retaining employees is a nonprofit's key challenge (Ronquillo et al., 2017). Scholars have differentiated between involuntary and voluntary turnover. While the former concerns layoffs (Kang et al., 2015), most strategic retention efforts seek to prevent voluntary turnover. Although low voluntary turnover rates may be crucial to a variety of organizations, it is a distinct aim of nonprofits. For example, in many cases, nonprofits may offer less competitive pay than the for-profit and public sectors (Brown & Yashioka, 2003; Faulk et al., 2013; McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016), not least due to overhead restrictions (Schubert & Boenigk, 2019; Slatten et al., 2020).

Successful retention efforts imply an employee-oriented approach of strategic HRM (Baluch & Ridder, 2021; Piening et al., 2014). This refers to seeing employees as vital for organizational success (Boenigk et al., 2020), treating them well, and being sensitive to their needs (Walk et al., 2019). Consistent with this, employees voluntarily stay with a nonprofit organization if the cost of their work equals (or falls short of) the employer exchanges they receive in return (Akingbola et al., 2023). This argument relates to the conceptual realm of SET.

Accordingly, when entity A (e.g., an organization) operates in a reciprocal setting (e.g., in the workplace) in a way that benefits entity B (e.g., an employee), it emulates (Blau, 1964; Kotey & Sharma, 2019). Emerson (1976) points out that, in a social exchange, bargained resources are only defined by the value that one entity attributes to them. He also explains that it is called "social exchange" to emphasize that the process is socially administered. Addressing SET in the workplace, Kotey and Sharma (2019, p. 734) contend that "when employees are satisfied with favourable work environments and other benefits from their employers, they feel obligated to […] eliminate turnover intentions."

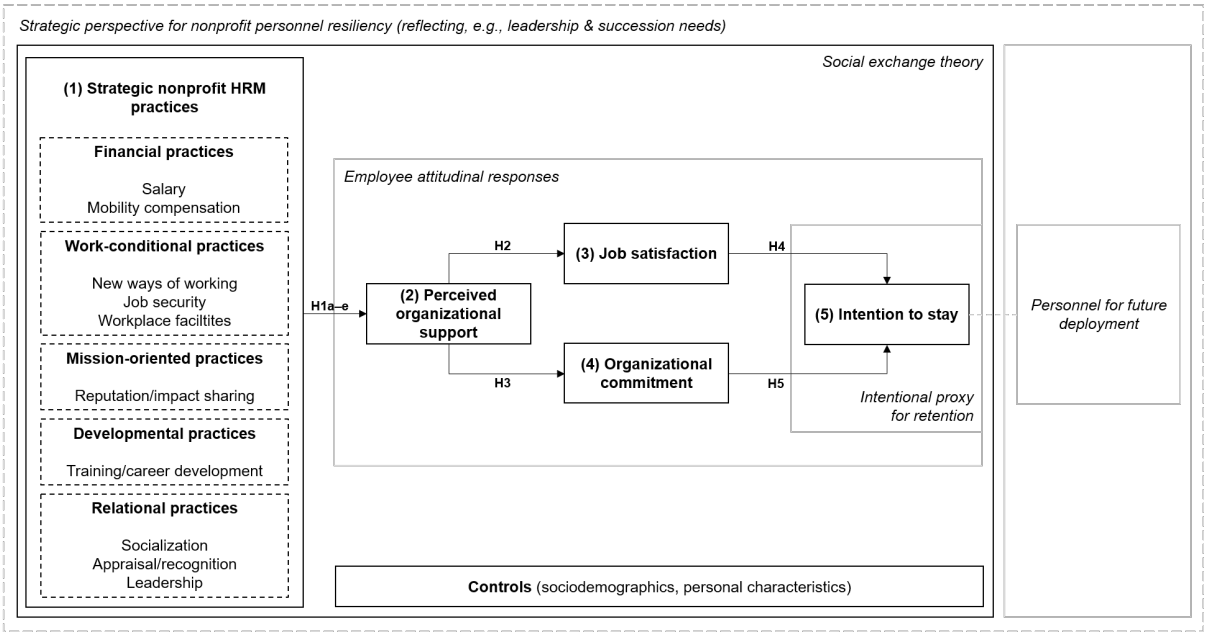
Rooted in SET, scholars such as Walker et al. (2016) also refer to the concept of psychological contracts (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Rousseau, 1989) in nonprofit employer-employee settings. Accordingly, employers and staff perceive non-formalized "obligations to each other" (Herriot et al., 1997, p. 151). For nonprofits, for example, those working with volunteers, Walker et al. (2016) stress that it is critical for these organizations to comply with staff's non-formalized (e.g., non-monetary) exchange expectations, especially regarding recognition. Beyond SET and its psychological contract extension, this study further complements Purcell and Hutchinson's (2007) HRM-performance causal chain. Among other things, the authors' concept underscores that, in HRM efforts, practices must be appreciated by employees. Only then can they causally form attitudinal and behavioral responses (perceived organizational support [POS], job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to stay).

Building on the above, Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study, which includes HRM practices from the retention literature that can be offered and perceived in exchange for nonprofit employees' labor. The framework takes a strategic nonprofit HRM perspective and aims at high retention rates to ensure nonprofit staff for future deployment (e.g., succession). In addition to the broad set of (1) HRM practices, it comprises four additional components. These refer to practices' potential attitudinal responses (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) and include: (2) POS, (3) job satisfaction, (4) organizational commitment, and (5) intention to stay. The latter is a proxy of actual retention behavior.

First, HRM practices encompass five subcomponents: financial, work-conditional, mission-oriented, developmental, and relational. Financial practices entail employee benefits such as pay and mobility compensation. Work-conditional practices consist of work environmental benefits, such as new ways of working, job security, and convenient workplace facilities. Mission-oriented practices strategically share organizational reputation and social

impact (i.e., success narratives) with employees. Developmental practices include systematic career development within nonprofits. Relational practices signify the proactive facilitation of socialization among co-workers and supervisors, appraisal/recognition, and leadership.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework




Second, POS is closely related to social exchange theory and has the potential to be a centerpiece for retention success (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). It gauges employees' interpretations of how employers value their contributions and wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Knapp et al., 2017). POS is still underexamined in nonprofit studies. As Prysmakova and Lallatin (2023, p. 478) recently remarked, "The POS literature in the public and nonprofit sectors clearly welcomes more research."

Third, job satisfaction is defined as a "positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). This is a well-researched construct that can be enhanced through employment conditions and sophisticated HRM efforts (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019).

Fourth, the literature defines organizational commitment as the intensity of an employee's level of identification and involvement with an employer (Allen et al., 2018). Figure 1 explicitly stresses affective organizational commitment (Mercurio, 2015), which is the commitment facet most typically assessed (Wang, 2022). It captures an employer's emotional identification and attachment (Meyer et al., 1993).

Finally, the intention to stay revolves around employees' plans to remain with their employers and is opposed to the intention to exit the organization. The framework's last four components map nonprofit employees' attitudinal responses to HRM practices.

*Hypotheses development*

The following section derives this study's hypotheses (H1-H5).

*(H1a) Financial practices and organizational support*

Previous research indicates that employees interpret HRM practices as expressing their employers' appreciation (Aubé et al., 2007). Moreover, studies suggest that HRM practices should focus on POS (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2017). As such, financial HRM practices in terms of perceived fair wages are reflected empirically (de la Torre-Ruiz et al., 2019; Jolly et al., 2021). In nonprofit settings, however, pay, to date, is more commonly investigated as a driver of retention. Regarding full-time employees, for example, Brown and Yoshioka (2003, p. 14) noticed that "[m]any specified that their propensity to stay was contingent on adequate compensation." Johnson and Ng (2016) and Walk et al. (2020) report similar findings. Beyond salary, this study also considers financial HRM practices in terms of mobility compensation and posits:

**H1a:** Financial practices relate positively to nonprofit employees' POS.

*(H1b) Work-conditional practices and organizational support*

Related to SET, meta-analytical results show that work conditions foster POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). For example, scholars identify supportive work-life practices (Casper & Harris, 2008; Kröll et al., 2021), which are also reflected in the so-called five facets of new ways of working (Gerards et al., 2017). Similarly, job security focuses on POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Wang et al., 2014). Moreover, research contends that physical work-conditional aspects, such as workplace facilities (e.g., office ergonomics), can serve employees' needs (Ronda & Gracia, 2022). Against this backdrop, it is hypothesized:

**H1b:** Work-conditional practices relate positively to nonprofit employees' POS.

*(H1c) Mission-oriented practices and organizational support*

Stressing a nonprofit organization's mission and its impact on its employees could also have an effect on POS. Brown and Yoshioka (2003, p. 8) emphasize that, for example, nonprofit "employees must perceive a connection between their work and the fulfillment of [the] mission" to feel a sense of organizational belonging. Moreover, Helm (2013) argues that when

organizations communicate their operation-based societal impact to employees, this triggers perceived employer reputation and pride in their work. This is associated with increased self-esteem (Cable & Turban, 2003) and other work outcomes (Lee, 2016; Silva et al., 2022; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Given that nonprofits prioritize societal causes as their *raison d'être*, this study suggests that sharing mission, impact, and reputational narratives with employees is associated with POS. The corresponding hypothesis is as follows:

**H1c:** Mission-oriented practices relate positively to POS among nonprofit employees.

*(H1d) Developmental practices and organizational support*

Extant research indicates that developmental HRM practices are positively related to POS (Kraimer et al., 2011; Tan, 2008; Tansky & Cohen, 2001). Occasionally, scholars even define it as "organizational support for career development" (Barnett & Bradley, 2007; Ng et al., 2005). Hinging on similar premises while theoretically differentiating them, researchers such as Jehanzeb (2020) and Hirschi and Spurk (2021) conclude that organizations aid employees in their careers by offering developmental HRM practices. Therefore, this study posits:

**H1d:** Developmental practices relate positively to nonprofit employees' POS.

*(H1e) Relational practices and organizational support*

Relational practices are prominently associated with POS in the retention literature. Wayne et al. (2002) find that POS fosters when employers are inclusive of their employees' voices and provide recognition. Stinglhamber et al. (2020) demonstrate that POS depends on employees' co-workers. Allen and Rhoades Shanock (2013) show that engaging in socialization tactics helps employers increase their POS. In another vein, Hutchison and Garstka (1996) point to positive associations between supervisory feedback and POS. In addition, nonprofit leadership boosts POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017) and leader-follower relationships (Rowold et al., 2014). Hence, it is proposed:

**H1e:** Relational practices relate positively to nonprofit employees' POS.

*(H2, H3) Perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment*

Employees' POS is linked to their job satisfaction (Cullen et al., 2014; Eisenberger et al., 1997; Riggle et al., 2009; To & Huang, 2022). Cullen et al. (2014, p. 270) remark that, if staff feels that it is supported by the organization, it is "likely to report more positive job attitudes, including job satisfaction." This is proven by first empirical research on nonprofits. Knapp et al. (2017, p. 657) link POS with social exchange theory and show that POS positively associates

with job satisfaction "[b]ecause POS fulfills socio-emotional needs." Moreover, Stater and Stater (2019) find that work rewards are positively related to job satisfaction. Based on this, this study assumes that this relationship exists mainly via POS and posits:

**H2:** POS relates positively to nonprofit employees' job satisfaction.

POS also affects employees' organizational commitment (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019; Aubé et al., 2007; McBey et al., 2017). Scholars such as Aubé et al. (2007) refer to SET when noting that employer support develops organizational commitment. Similar empirical evidence has been found in initial nonprofit research. For instance, Salim et al. (2012) refer to Eisenberger et al. (1986) when explaining that nonprofit staff develop emotional commitment to their organization if they perceive their employer as committed towards them (again, this echoes social exchange theory). In addition, Wang (2022) recommends that organizations support employees in increasing their commitment to nonprofit employees. In line with this view, this study hypothesizes:

**H3:** POS relates positively to nonprofit employees' organizational commitment.

*(H4, H5) Job satisfaction and organizational commitment on employees' intention to stay*

Several studies have stressed the positive link between job satisfaction and the intention to stay (Ababneh, 2020; Bang, 2015; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Moreover, Wan and Duffy (2022) recently reported negative links between job satisfaction and employees' intention to leave. Investigating the link of nonprofit volunteers' job satisfaction and intention to stay, Bang (2011, p. 99) refers to SET in noting that the former "might be associated with motivation factors." In a follow-up study, he showed that older volunteers' job satisfaction was especially related to staying intentions (Bang, 2015). Benevene et al. (2018) also concluded that volunteer satisfaction was positively related to intention to stay. Marmo et al. (2021) reported similar results in a social service context. Hence, this study hypothesizes:

**H4:** Job satisfaction relates positively to nonprofit employees' intention to stay.

Additionally, academia has found that organizational commitment is positively linked to employees' intention to stay (Agus & Salvaraj, 2020). Accordingly, the emotional appeal and sympathy associated with an employer go hand-in-hand with the desire to continue the work relationship. This has also been studied in a few nonprofit contexts. In a volunteering setting, for example, Vecina et al. (2013, p. 292) define commitment to an organization as being "manifested by a belief and acceptance of its goals and values, a willingness to make efforts for

the organization, and a desire to continue as a member." Moreover, Vincent and Marmo (2018) find a positive association between organizational commitment and nonprofit middle managers' intention to stay. Against this background, this study's final hypothesis is:

**H5:** Organizational commitment relates positively to nonprofit employees' intention to stay.

## 3. Methods

*Data collection and sample*

Data were collected from June to August 2023 using an online survey. A questionnaire was sent to paid nonprofit employees in Germany. The survey was distributed through the panel provider Bilendi ($n_{completes}$=100) and German nonprofit occupational groups on LinkedIn ($n_{completes}$=129). The respondents were financially incentivized. Making partly use of snowball sampling (non-probability sample), the response rate could not be determined. A total of 229 questionnaires were completed. Table 1 presents participants' sociodemographic characteristics.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographics

| **Variable** | n=229<br>n (%) |
|---|---|
| **Gender** | |
| Female | 139 (60.7) |
| Male | 85 (37.1) |
| Diverse | 1 (0.4) |
| *Missing* | *4 (1.7)* |
| **Age** (years) | |
| 20-29 | 35 (15.3) |
| 30-39 | 70 (30.6) |
| 40-49 | 52 (22.7) |
| 50-59 | 58 (25.3) |
| 60-67 | 14 (6.1) |
| **Academic background** | |
| Yes | 133 (58.1) |
| No | 96 (41.9) |
| **Field of study** | *n=133* |
| Social sciences (ss) | 28 (21.1) |
| Business administration (ba) | 15 (11.3) |
| Interdisciplinary (ss, ba) | 31 (23.3) |
| Cultural sciences | 12 (9.0) |
| Other | 47 (35.3) |
| **Paid staff** | |
| Paid employee | 221 (96.5) |
| Full-time | 191 (83.4) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Part-time | 23 (10.0) |
| Marginal | 7 (3.1) |
| Unpaid employee (e.g., board) | 8 (3.5) |
| **Working field**[a] | |
| Education | 105 (45.9) |
| Social services | 93 (40.6) |
| Health | 47 (20.5) |
| Religion | 45 (19.7) |
| International solidarity | 40 (17.5) |
| Research and sciences | 38 (16.6) |
| Arts and culture | 37 (16.2) |
| Business and professional associations | 4 (1.7) |
| **Legal form** | |
| Association | 113 (49.3) |
| Foundation | 50 (21.9) |
| Nonprofit limited liability company (gGmbH) | 41 (17.9) |
| Cooperative | 4 (1.7) |
| *Missing* | *21 (9.2)* |

Note: n=229
[a]Only a selection of possible answers.

Of the respondents, 139 identified as female (60.7%) and 85 as male (37.1%), while 35 (15.3%) were 20-29 years old, 70 (30.6%) 30-39 years old, 52 (22.7%) 40-49 years old, 58 (25.3%) 50-59 years old, and 14 (6.1%) 60-69 years old. A total of 58.1% (n=133) had an academic background (i.e., they received higher education). Most respondents studied either social sciences (n=28, 21.1%), business administration (n=15, 11.3%), or both in interdisciplinary programs (n=31, 23.3%). 12 (9.0%) studied cultural sciences and 47 (35.3%) other disciplines (e.g., medicine, psychology, education, or religion).

A total of 221 (96.5%) respondents were regularly paid by their nonprofits. Of these, 191 (83.4%) were fully paid, 23 (10.0%) were paid part-time, and seven (3.1%) were paid marginally. Most worked in associations (n=113, 49.3%), whereas 50 (21.9%) worked in foundations. Further, 41 (17.9%) worked in nonprofit limited liability companies (gGmbH) and 4 respondents (1.7%) worked in cooperatives.

*Measurement*

The questionnaire for this study included measures of (1) nonprofit HRM practices (financial, work-conditional, mission-oriented, developmental, and relational practices), (2) POS, (3) job satisfaction, (4) organizational commitment, and (5) intention to stay. All constructs were assessed on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). The

operationalization was based on established studies. Validated psychometric instruments were primarily used. English items were translated into German to fit the context. For applicability, some modifications were made. All items were then back-translated into English to check for translation errors.

The measurement encompasses formative and reflective operationalizations. It refers to Sarstedt et al. (2019) and formatively conceptualizes mission-oriented and developmental practices. Moreover, it captures work-conditional practices as a formative-formative higher-order construct (f-f HOC) (Becker et al., 2023). Financial and relational practices are treated as reflective-formative higher-order constructs (r-f HOCs). All other constructs were assessed reflectively. See Table A1 for an overview of all measures (and items). For measurement quality, see the measurement model evaluation and Table A2.

*Data analysis*

To analyze the data and test the hypotheses, partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM) was applied (Bayonne et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2012). The analytical approach facilitated the simultaneous verification of significant relationships between constructs (Figure 1) and their indicators. The tested framework included both reflective and formative measures. It also added HRM practice constructs to more established model paths. Hence, PLS-SEM was particularly applicable (Hair et al., 2019; Ringle et al., 2020). PLS-SEM typically proceeds in two steps: first, the evaluation of a measurement model, and second, the assessment of a structural model (Sarstedt et al., 2017). The SmartPLS software package (version 4.0.9) (Ringle et al., 2022) was used.

## 4. Results

*Descriptive results*

Table 2 presents the descriptive results. Most importantly, employees' average intention to stay was 3.6. Accordingly, the respondents were willing to stay in their organizations. However, the ratings exhibit potential for improvement. Concerning the HRM practices accessible to the respondents, the mean value of financial practices was 3.5. This value does not suggest that German nonprofit employees have overly precarious financial contracts, as is sometimes the case (Wang, 2022). However, it still shows a latent risk of social decline in the sector, especially given the recent inflation in Europe. Whereas the mean for work-conditional practices was 3.8, it was 3.7 for new ways of working conditions, 3.9 for job security, and 3.7 for workplace facilities. These values indicate, among other things, that even in the absence of explicit

retention plans (Nonprofit HR, 2022), there have been attempts to make work more flexible, possibly due to the digitalization push (not least during COVID-19).

Table 2 further shows that the mean values for mission-oriented practices and developmental practices were 3.7 and 3.0. Both are somewhat striking. First, due to mission focus in their strategic considerations, one may consider nonprofits to be extremely concerned with the success narratives of their work, but also with regard to their staff. However, this is not perceived by this study's sample. Second, nonprofits seem to underinvest time and money in their employees. Relational practices' mean value was 3.7, but the values were 3.9 for socialization, 4.0 for coworkers' appraisal/recognition, 3.7 for supervisor's/executive director's appraisal/recognition, and 3.2 for leadership. On average, this shows that social contact is encouraged in nonprofits. However, leadership in nonprofits is rated as mediocre. Altogether, the mean value for POS was 3.4. Hence, nonprofit employees do not feel substantially supported by their employers. The mean for respondents' job satisfaction was 3.5, whereas it was 3.7 for organizational commitment, both of which correspond to the mean of POS.

When respondents were asked to state whether they would switch sectors if they looked for another job, only 26 (11.4%) would have entered the for-profit sector. Conversely, a fifth (n=46, 20.0%) chose the public sector. However, a vast majority (n=157, 68.6 %) would have stayed in the nonprofit sector. When turnover is apparent in a nonprofit organization, it thus may most likely be due to competition from other nonprofit organizations.

**Table 2.** Descriptive results

| Variable | n=229 |
|---|---|
| | Mean (SD) |
| **Financial practices** | 3.54 (0.8) |
| Pay | 3.31 (1.1) |
| Mobility compensation | 3.76 (1.1) |
| **Work-conditional practices** | 3.80 (0.6) |
| New ways of working conditions | 3.79 (0.8) |
| Job security | 3.99 (1.1) |
| Workplace facilities | 3.70 (0.8) |
| **Mission-oriented practices** | 3.70 (0.8) |
| **Developmental practices** | 3.08 (1.0) |
| **Relational practices** | 3.71 (0.7) |
| Socialization | 3.96 (0.9) |
| Appraisal/recognition (w/coworkers) | 4.01 (0.8) |
| Appraisal/recognition (w/supervisor, executive director) | 3.78 (0.9) |
| Leadership | 3.22 (0.9) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Perceived organizational support (POS)** | 3.43 (0.8) |
| **Job satisfaction** | 3.59 (0.9) |
| **Organizational commitment** | 3.71 (0.7) |
| **Intention to stay** | 3.66 (1.2) |
| **Sector (switching) preference** | n (%) |
| Nonprofit sector | 157 (68.6) |
| For-profit sector | 26 (11.4) |
| Public sector | 46 (20.0) |

Note: Measurement on a 5-point Likert scale (1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree") consisting of composite scores, except sector (switching) preference; for a complete list of all single HRM practices, see Table A1.

*PLS results*

Table 3 presents the PLS results. The measurement model comprised formative and reflective constructs. For an overview of all operationalizations, see Table A2. The evaluation of both types of constructs requires an assessment of different quality criteria (Hair et al., 2019).

*Measurement model evaluation*

By applying the disjoint two-step approach, financial and relational practices were treated as reflective-formative HOCs (Sarstedt et al., 2019). Thus, both were conceptualized as entailing two (financial practices) to four (relational practices) dimensions as lower-order constructs (LOCs). Based on their latent variable scores, these LOCs formatively compute their corresponding HOCs. By contrast, work-conditional practices were treated as formative-formative HOC (Becker et al., 2023). Hence, not only the HOC but also its three LOCs (Table A2) were formatively assessed. While mission-oriented and developmental practices were conceptualized as first-order formative constructs, POS, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to stay were reflectively captured as first-order constructs.

First, the quality of formative measures is reported (Table A2). Redundancy analyses were performed to test convergent validity. The constructs signified path coefficients above the suggested threshold of 0.7 and $R^2$ values above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). Only mission-oriented practices were just below (0.669, $R^2$=.45). The variance inflation factor (VIF) values were checked for collinearity. The data showed no collinearity. The VIF values of all the HOCs and formative constructs (mission-oriented practices, developmental practices) were below 5 (Hair et al., 2019). The statistical significance of all indicator weights was also assessed, and some values were not statistically significant. However, as most indicators' outer loadings (bootstrapping technique) were above values of 0.5 and showed significance (Ramayah et al., 2018), all but two indicators of new ways of working were kept because of their absolute contributions to their construct (Hair et al., 2019).

For the quality of reflective measurements, item and construct reliability were examined. Convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019) were also gauged. The results revealed the good quality of the constructs. Factor loadings for the LOCs of financial and relational practices, job satisfaction, and intention to stay were above the recommended threshold of 0.7. This indicates high item reliability (Chin, 1998). However, two indicators of POS and two of organizational commitment did not exceed the threshold. As recommended, these were excluded from further analyses. To test construct reliability, Cronbach's alpha values were determined. Values indicated good to excellent quality: $\alpha$=0.79 for pay, LOC; $\alpha$=0.78 for socialization, LOC; $\alpha$=0.93 for appraisal/recognition by supervisor/executives, LOC; $\alpha$=0.94 for appraisal/recognition by coworkers, LOC; $\alpha$=0.89 for leadership, LOC; $\alpha$=0.93 for POS; $\alpha$=0.92 for job satisfaction; $\alpha$=0.79 for organizational commitment; and $\alpha$=0.91 for intention to stay (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012). Mobility compensation (LOC) performed borderline ($\alpha$=0.53). Regarding convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) metrics were estimated; all constructs exceeded the suggested threshold of 0.5. Finally, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios were calculated to show discriminant validity. All values were below the threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015).

*Structural model evaluation*

Table 3 presents the evaluation of the structural model. The model tested all hypotheses (H1-H5). The path coefficients of the model can be interpreted as the standardized beta coefficients of an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. No inner VIF values of the model constructs indicated collinearity (VIF<5). The analysis supported all but two hypotheses.

First, H1a was rejected (0.037, p=0.390). The relationship between financial practices and POS was insignificant. Second, H1b was supported. The path coefficient (0.172, p=0.000) indicates that work-conditioning practices are positively related to POS. Third, H1c was rejected with an insignificant path coefficient (0.007, p=0.913), indicating that mission-oriented practices do not determine POS. Fourth, H1d was supported. Developmental practices had a significantly positive relationship with POS. Fifth, H1e was supported. The path coefficient was positive and significant (0.558, p=0.000). Moreover, H2, H3, H4, and H5 were supported. POS was positively related to job satisfaction (H2, 0.722, p=0.000) and organizational commitment (H3, 0.553, p=0.000). Job satisfaction (H4, 0.574, p=0.000) and organizational commitment (H5, 0.139 | p=0.035) were positively related to the intention to stay.

**Table 3.** Results of the structural model

| **Hypotheses** | **Path coefficients** | **p-values** | **Standard deviation** | **H supported** | **$f^2$** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_{1a}$: Financial practices → POS | 0.037 | 0.390 | 0.043 | No | 0.004 |
| $H_{1b}$: Work-conditional practices → POS | 0.172*** | 0.000 | 0.048 | Yes | 0.071 |
| $H_{1c}$: Mission-oriented practices → POS | 0.007 | 0.913 | 0.061 | No | 0.000 |
| $H_{1d}$: Developmental practices → POS | 0.234*** | 0.000 | 0.046 | Yes | 0.118 |
| $H_{1e}$: Relational practices → POS | 0.558*** | 0.000 | 0.069 | Yes | 0.478 |
| $H_2$: POS → Job satisfaction | 0.722*** | 0.000 | 0.033 | Yes | |
| $H_3$: POS → Organizational commitment | 0.553*** | 0.000 | 0.044 | Yes | |
| $H_4$: Job satisfaction → Intention to stay | 0.574*** | 0.000 | 0.066 | Yes | |
| $H_5$: Organizational commitment → Intention to stay | 0.139* | 0.035 | 0.066 | Yes | |
| *Controls* | | | | | |
| Gender (0=male \| 1=female) → Intention to stay | 0.086 | 0.411 | 0.104 | | |
| Age → Intention to stay | 0.053 | 0.595 | 0.099 | | |
| Academic background (0=no \| 1=yes) → Intention to stay | -0.341* | 0.012 | 0.135 | | |
| **Endogenous constructs** | **$R^2$** | **$Q^2$** | | | |
| POS | 0.720 | 0.691 | | | |
| Job satisfaction | 0.521 | 0.553 | | | |
| Organizational commitment | 0.306 | 0.342 | | | |
| Intention to stay | 0.505 | 0.258 | | | |
| **Parallel mediation analysis** | | | | | **Mediation type** |
| POS → Job satisfaction → Intention to stay | 0.401 | 0.000 | 0.065 | | Full mediation |
| POS → Organizational commitment → Intention to stay | 0.087 | 0.053 | 0.045 | | |

Note: SmartPLS bootstrapping settings: 5000 iterations; for mediation analysis results of the HRM practices, see Table A3; n=229.
Abbreviations: ns=not significant; POS=Perceived organizational support.
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Regarding model fit, $R^2$ (goodness of fit) values for the endogenous constructs were gauged (Table 3): POS ($R^2$=0.720), job satisfaction ($R^2$=0.521), organizational commitment ($R^2$=0.306), and intention to stay ($R^2$=0.505). These values can be interpreted as moderate to substantial (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2019). They indicated that 72.0% of the variance in POS and 50.5% of the intention to stay could be explained by HRM practices. To determine which of the exogenous constructs (HRM practices) had the greatest effect on the $R^2$ of POS, $f^2$ values were estimated (Table 3). While financial and mission-oriented practices did not significantly affect $R^2$, work-conditional and developmental practices did so to a small to moderate extent ($f^2$=0.071; $f^2$=0.118). However, the effect size of relational practices on the $R^2$ of POS was considered large ($f^2$=0.478) (Cohen, 2013). Finally, making use of PLSPredict, $Q^2$ values for the endogenous constructs were calculated to check the model's predictive power. All values exceed the threshold of zero. The path model showed predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019).

Including gender, age, and academic background as control variables in the structural analysis, only academic background (0=no, 1=yes) had a significant (negative) relation with the intention to stay (-0.341, p=0.012).

*Mediation analyses*

Two mediation analyses were performed beyond hypotheses testing. First, a (parallel) mediation analysis was performed to check the mediating role of (1) job satisfaction and (2) organizational commitment in the relationship between POS and the intention to stay (Table 3). The results showed a significant indirect effect of POS and the intention to stay on job satisfaction (0.401, p=0.000). The direct effect was insignificant, indicating full mediation (Hair et al., 2021). Moreover, the indirect effect of POS on nonprofit employees' intention to stay via organizational commitment (0.087, p=0.053) was slightly insignificant, and so was the direct effect. Therefore, no parallel mediation was observed.

Second, serial mediation was performed to examine the mediating roles of (1) POS, (2) job satisfaction, and (3) organizational commitment in the relationship between HRM practices and the intention to stay (Table A3). Consistent with Table 3, the results revealed significant indirect effects of work-conditional (0.025, p=0.011), developmental (0.032, p=0.010), and relational HRM practices (0.081, p=0.003) on the intention to stay via POS and job satisfaction. The insignificant direct effects indicated full (serial) mediation (Hair et al., 2021), meaning that these three practices indirectly impacted nonprofit employees' intentions to stay.

*Mapping importance-performance metrics*

Two importance-performance maps (IPMAs) for POS were created (Figures 2 and 3) on the construct and item/LOC levels. An IPMA "contrasts the total effects, representing the predecessor constructs' importance in shaping a certain target construct, with their average latent variable scores indicating their performance" (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016, p. 1866). As explained by Höck et al. (2010), the values were calculated by rescaling the latent variable scores to a range between zero and 100. IPMA typically presents in a quadrant form. It can be conducted at the latent construct or indicator/item level (Streukens et al., 2017). Its goal is to highlight driving constructs (e.g., HRM practices), which imply the importance of a specific endogenous construct (e.g., POS) while lacking performance. Thus, IPMAs have clear practical implications (Hair et al., 2018; Schloderer et al., 2014).

Regarding the construct level, Figure 2 shows that developmental practices were relatively important but scored relatively low in terms of performance. However, a one-point increase in performance would lead to an increase in the performance of POS by the size of the total effect of developmental practices, namely, 0.234. Furthermore, as Figure 3 shows, for the item/LOC level, leadership was relatively important for POS whilst performing somewhat poorly. However, a one-point increase in leadership performance would lead to a substantial increase in POS performance of 0.237.

**Figure 2.** Importance-performance map for HRM practices (construct level)

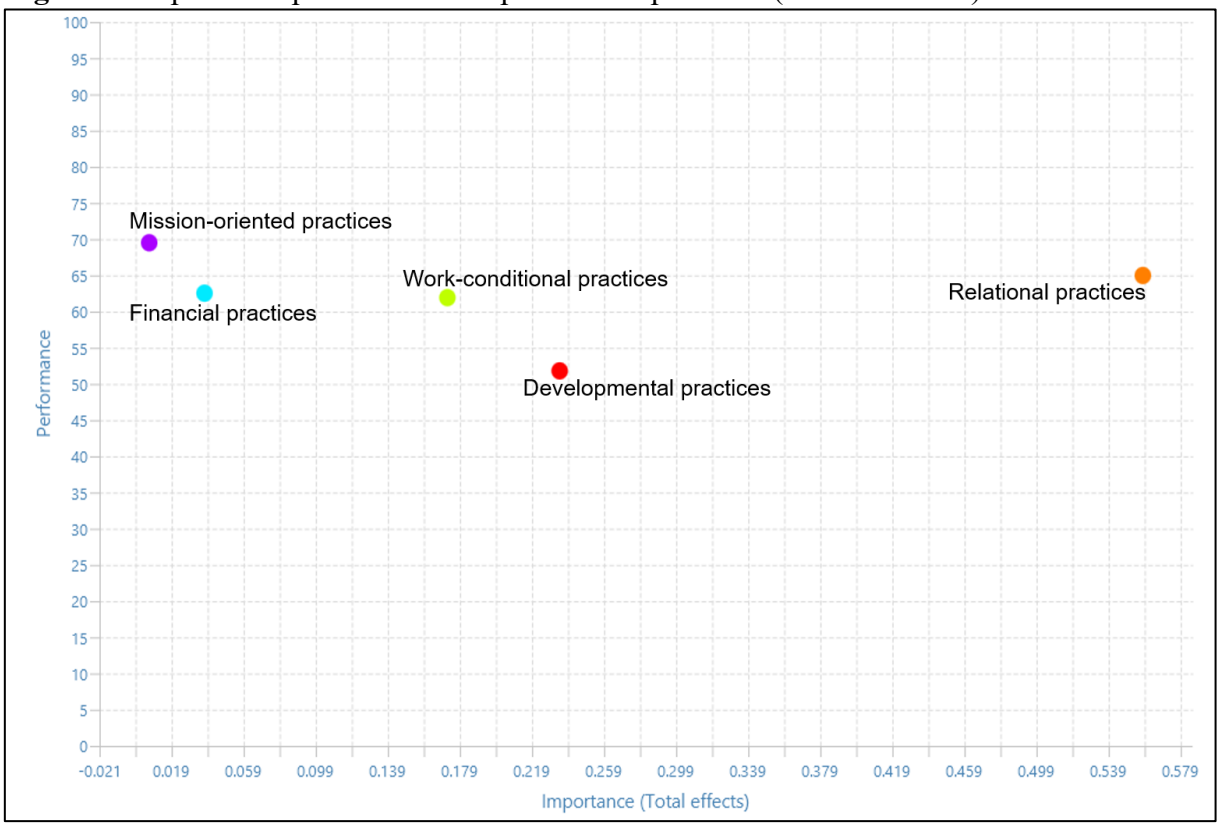
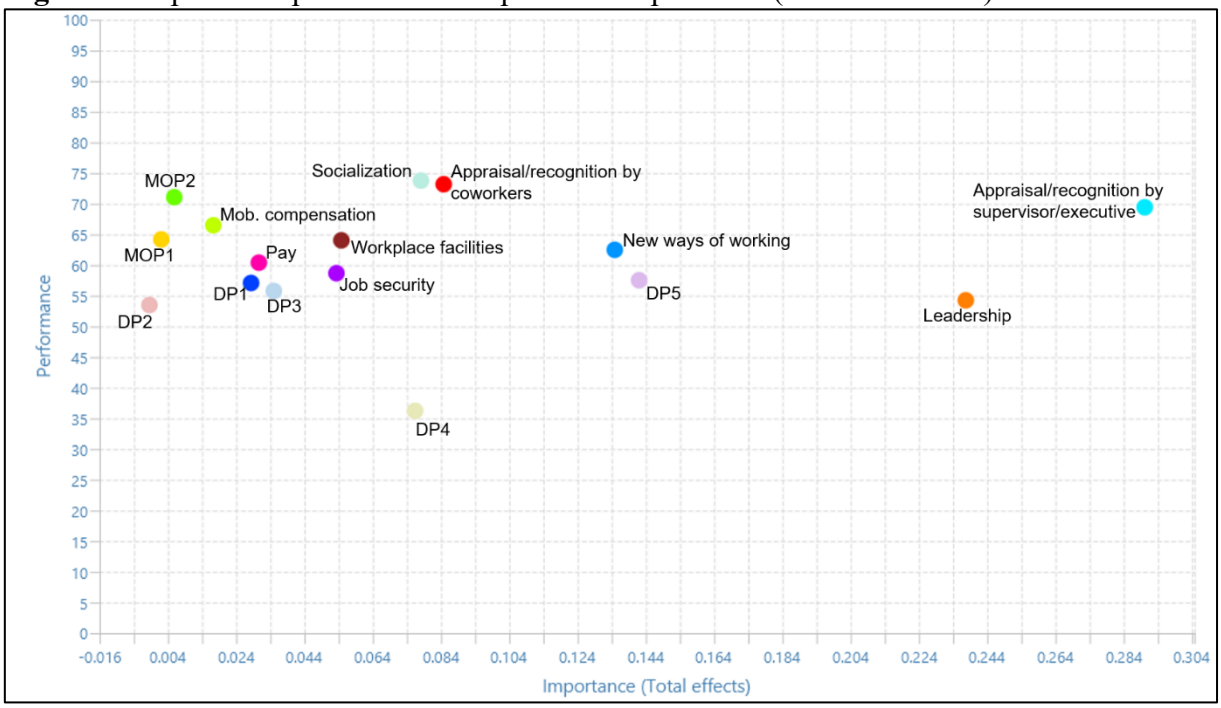


**Figure 3.** Importance-performance map for HRM practices (item/LOC level)




Note: The abbreviations for individual items (e.g., DP1) refer to the order in the respective scale (see Table A1).
Abbreviations: MOP=mission-oriented practices; DP=developmental practices; Mob. compensation=mobility compensation.

## 5. Discussion and implications for practice

To retain employees and provide for their future strategic deployment, nonprofit managers must consider their employees' needs. This can be done by offering them HRM practices that are perceived as such in the social exchange processes for labor. However, the PLS results (Table 3) indicate that financial and mission-oriented practices are not significantly related to the POS (H1a, H1c) of nonprofit employees. By contrast, work-conditional (H1b), developmental (H1d), and relational practices (H1e) are related to POS. POS is further related to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment, leading to a stronger intention to stay with nonprofit organizations. The results can be interpreted as follows.

First, the path of financial practices to POS (H1a) is linked to Williams et al. (2008). These authors suggest that the level of compensation may not be a relevant exchange factor in assessing POS. This insignificant relationship could be because employees assume fair pay, but do not explicitly associate it with POS (Tan, 2008), especially in the nonprofit domain. Nonprofit employees could be aware of their employer's scarce resources and neglect the salary parameter (as opposed to others) from their social exchange considerations and evaluation of POS. As such, de la Torre-Ruiz et al.'s (2019, p. 2113) notion that "[…] the amount of

compensation received is not an antecedent of POS because employees do not perceive that it is based on voluntary decisions taken by the organization" may apply.

Moreover, the insignificant path of mission-oriented practices with POS (H1c) may be due to nonprofit employees. As Prysmakova (2021, p. 525) stereotypes them, they are "a special caste of individuals." Most are assumed to have an inherently high motivation for nonprofit services (Einolf, 2022; Word & Park, 2015), which, by default, could make them confident about the magnitude of their work's social importance. Often, this may be prominent and dispense the employer's mission-oriented HRM efforts. Alternate explanations could, however, be that mission-oriented practices are not perceived as such or are only linked to nonprofit service motivation. Following the latter, it would have to (a) be anchored at the same conceptual level as POS and (b) be tested as an independent successor.

Second, the significant path of work-conditional practices to POS (H1b) echoes that of previous research. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) note that work schedule flexibility is related to POS. Kröll et al. (2021, p. 566) stress that flexible work arrangements serve as "a signal of potential appreciation and care provided by the organization." This study provides similar results (Table 3, Table A3, and Figures 2 and 3). It also shares an overlap with the early qualitative research of Hohl (1996) and indicates that, among work-conditional practices, new ways of working opportunities are the most important practice in social exchange for labor (Kröll & Nüesch, 2019; Figure 3). Moreover, Wang et al. (2014) and Ronda and Gracia (2022) show that job security and workplace design support employees. Table 3 validates these results.

Third, the significant path of developmental practices to POS is linked to that of Tansky and Cohen (2001). While they argue for providing employees with specific development plans, this study empirically emphasized this issue (Figure 3). Tan (2008, p. 20) attempts to explain this effect as: "Organisations that offer career development […] are showing interest in providing a career path to employees and upgrading their skills in-house."

Fourth, the significant path of relational practices with POS shares commonalities with that of Allen and Rhoades Shanock (2013). The authors concluded that organizations should evoke social encounters to increase POS. Consistent with SET and psychological contracts, Wayne et al. (2002) show that recognizing employees boosts POS. While links of relational practices by supervisors and coworkers with POS are commonly stressed, the impact of supervisors/executives is more important in this study (Figure 3). This is consistent with Kurtessis et al. (2017, p. 1860), who claim that "[s]upervisors and others in leadership roles

play a key role in providing organizational rewards and resources to employees, and thus should be viewed as a greater source of organizational support than coworkers." This is vital, as nonprofit leaders themselves necessitate POS (e.g., by boards) (Thomas, 2023).

Fifth, the significant relationships among POS, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment resemble those in the few previous studies. As Knapp et al. (2017, p. 657) note: "Despite a lack of POS research among nonprofit workers, we believe that POS is likely to be a highly salient issue […]." Consistent with Table 3, POS is associated with job satisfaction in nonprofits. Moreover, the positive relationship between POS and organizational commitment is also linked to nonprofit work (Salim et al., 2012; Wang, 2022). In fact, Figures 2 and 3 highlight that exchanging "intangible" (Wang, 2022, p. 543) HRM practices are indeed most important.

Sixth, the significant relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the intention to stay (Table 3) is consistent with Benevene et al. (2018). They suggested a positive relationship between work satisfaction and intention to stay in a volunteer setting. In a social services' setting, Marmo et al. (2021, p. 194) also found that "workers seem […] less likely to leave, when they feel job satisfaction." By contrast, Agus and Salvaraj (2020) present evidence that, when employees are committed to their jobs, they are unlikely to leave. This finding is comparable to that of this study (Table 3).

Finally, the mediation results show that exchanging specific HRM practices (Table 3, Table A3), POS, and job satisfaction (sometimes indirectly) relate to nonprofit employees' intentions to stay. This builds on initial hints that stress POS. Aboramadan et al. (2022, p. 1799), for example, claim that the link of HRM practices and behavioral employee responses imply POS as an intermediate of a "social process governing the effect." Again, this is only the case if practices are perceived (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Moreover, the results of leadership practices (Figure 3) correspond to the phenomenon "to quit one's boss" (Reina et al., 2018), but in the nonprofit sector. This is notable, as nonprofits may still be less aware of the leadership's vital role (Stater & Stater, 2019), a lack of which might not be compensated for by meaningful work. These findings echo those of Ngah et al. (2021) and Knapp et al. (2017), the latter of which forecast that POS "appears to be an overlooked but critical predictor" (p. 665) of the intention to stay.

*Practical implications*

From the above, the following implications for practice can be derived:

*1. Formalizing a retention plan.* Nonprofit managers should create retention plans by professionalizing their HR management systems. First, the current state needs to be analyzed. Second, retention targets must be formulated. Their achievements are controlled later. Targets should be related to specific fluctuation rates, better ratings on job portals, and satisfaction scores in employee surveys. Operational retention practices include the following:

*2. Improving leadership.* Nonprofit managers must be aware of the impact of (inspiring/visionary) leadership as well as attentive appraisal/recognition on POS and, indirectly, on employees' intention to stay. An anonymous leadership assessment can be conducted by nonprofit employees. The results can be evaluated by the leader and/or an ombudsperson appointed by HRM. Then, advice could be given on what leadership training/coaching (in regard to nonprofit characteristics), mentorship (Hopkins et al., 2022), and team workshops could be taken to grease the wheels of "retentional leadership behavior."

*3. Developing staff.* Nonprofit managers should bolster employees' personal development plans and work to expand their skills. For example, individual career paths should be outlined in the semi-annual meetings of leaders, HR professionals, and employees. Along with granting employees degrees of autonomy in the way they work, they may be entrusted with tasks that promote their skills intermittently beyond their daily job duties (but without perceived additional workload). For example, a project team member could take the lead. However, training offers along with employees' interests (in impact and conflict management, third-party funding applications, etc.) are also alternatives.

*4. Enabling flexible work arrangements.* Nonprofit managers must emphasize new ways of working opportunities. To achieve this, employees should ensure that they can adapt their workload to their situation by offering the possibility of recurrent agreements on worktimes, duties, and payments. In this way, nonprofits signal to their employees that they are attentive to their individual agendas (child and elderly care, health issues, moving, etc.).

## 6. Limitations and future research

This study has some limitations. First, a survey-based (intentional) proxy for retention was used. Moreover, this was a cross-sectional study. Future studies should conduct field experiments to omit potential biases and create more causal links between HRM practices and retention. Scholars could cooperate with professionalized nonprofits and randomly create employee groups, only one of which would enjoy specific HRM practices. This could meet approval

among staff when framed as a pilot program. After six months, the retention rates would be evaluated. A questionnaire can be used to control for confounding effects (e.g., parental leave).

Second, this study builds on a nonprobability German sample. The findings are not representative. Future research should aim for further validation by using an even more rigorous sample. It is promising to attempt this while focusing on (a) the same or a specific country context, (b) a single nonprofit field of work, and/or (c) educational background (e.g., academic vs. non-academic). The influences of culture, work characteristics, and individual backgrounds should also be considered.

Third, mission-oriented practices lacked convergent validity. The results should thus be interpreted with some caution. Beyond that, they could be due to parallel mediators other than POS, such as nonprofit service motivation. Future studies relating robust mission-oriented practice measures to constructs other than POS are needed.

Fourth, this study could not rule out whether specific HRM practices can compensate for the absence of others. In fact, it is conceivable that a perceived lack of leadership or a specific practice (Figure 3) could be offset by, for example, intensive appraisal/recognition from coworkers. Future nonprofit research should use conjoint analyses to identify possible tradeoffs.

Finally, different hierarchical job levels and tenures were not the focus of this study. Follow-up studies should control for both potential influencing factors.

Overall, however, this study presents insights on promising HRM practices for retaining nonprofit personnel. Nonprofit organizations are attractors of common good, set the stage for cohesion, and critically aid society by providing civic services. This study provides results for a broad set of HRM practices that nonprofit organizations could possibly exchange to support employees. As such, it contributes to future management strategies that target the retention of nonprofit staff and, in turn, help them cope with societal challenges.

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**Table A1.** Scale means and standard deviations

| **Constructs** (5-point Likert scale, 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree") | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Formative LOCs** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| **New ways of working** (adopted by Gerards et al., 2017) | **3.79** | **0.8** |
| *In my job, I…* | | |
| …can determine my own working hours. | 3.82 | 1.1 |
| …can determine where I work (office, home office, and so on). | 3.38 | 1.3 |
| …can access all work-related information via my computer, cell phone, and/or tablet. (*removed from the analysis*) | 4.10 | 1.1 |
| …can adjust my workload to my current phase of life or situation. | 3.52 | 1.0 |
| …have access to my workplace at all times. (*removed from the analysis*) | 4.17 | 1.1 |
| **Job security** | **3.99** | **1.1** |
| *My nonprofit employer provides me with…* | | |
| …a safe job. | 3.93 | 1.1 |
| …a stable employment relationship. | 4.05 | 1.0 |
| **Workplace facilities** | **3.70** | **0.8** |
| *My nonprofit employer provides me with…* | | |
| …an accessible workplace (e.g., good public transport connections, parking spaces). | 4.35 | 0.8 |
| …satisfactory food service (e.g., fruit, complimentary beverages, cafeteria). | 2.91 | 1.3 |
| …a work-promoting environment (e.g. ergonomic office chairs, modern IT infrastructure, standing desks, daylight in the office). | 3.86 | 1.1 |
| **Formative constructs** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| **Mission-oriented practices** (*My nonprofit employer…*) | **3.70** | **0.8** |
| *My nonprofit employer…* | | |
| …informs its staff about its reputation. | 3.57 | 1.0 |
| …emphasizes to its staff the gained societal impact by means of their work. | 3.84 | 0.9 |
| **Developmental practices** (Barnett & Bradley, 2007) | **3.08** | **1.0** |
| *My nonprofit employer…* | | |
| …provides me with training to help develop my career. | 3.28 | 1.2 |
| …makes sure I get the training I need for my career. | 3.14 | 1.2 |
| …teaches me things I need to know to get on in this organization. | 3.23 | 1.1 |
| …provides me with a personal development plan. | 2.45 | 1.2 |
| …provides me with work that develops my skills for the future. | 3.30 | 1.1 |
| **Reflective LOCs** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| **Pay** (Buttner & Lowe, 2017) | **3.31** | **1.1** |
| *I feel that my salary is fair…* | | |
| …given my qualifications for my position. | 3.31 | 1.1 |
| …in relation to all employees in my organization. | 3.76 | 1.1 |
| …in relation to employees with comparable qualifications at other organizations. | 3.30 | 1.1 |
| **Mobility compensation** | **3.76** | **1.1** |
| *I feel that my nonprofit employer…* | | |
| …does not leave me alone with costs for my commute (e.g., job ticket, gas costs). | 3.25 | 1.4 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| …compensates my work-related travel expenses. | 4.12 | 1.2 |
| **Socialization** | **3.96** | **0.9** |
| *I feel that my nonprofit employer provides me with opportunities to interact with…* | | |
| …superiors (jour fixe meetings, buddy programs, kitchen chats, coffee breaks, team trips, etc.). | 3.65 | 1.1 |
| …coworkers (jour fixe meetings, buddy programs, kitchen chats, coffee breaks, team trips, etc.). | 4.29 | 0.9 |
| **Appraisal/recognition \| supervisors/executives** (Montani et al., 2020) | **3.78** | **0.9** |
| *I feel that my supervisor/executive director…* | | |
| …shows appreciation form my contributions. | 3.93 | 1.0 |
| …acknowledges my performance. | 3.99 | 1.0 |
| …appreciates my efforts. | 3.91 | 1.0 |
| …congratulates me for my achievements. | 3.41 | 1.2 |
| …takes an interest in what I'm doing. | 3.69 | 1.1 |
| **Appraisal/recognition \| coworkers** (Montani et al., 2020) | **4.01** | **0.8** |
| *I feel that my coworkers…* | | |
| …appreciate my efforts. | 4.14 | 0.8 |
| …congratulate me for my achievements. | 3.67 | 1.0 |
| …value my contributions in the workplace. | 4.11 | 0.8 |
| …acknowledge my performance. | 4.08 | 0.8 |
| …recognize my efforts. | 4.09 | 0.8 |
| **Leadership** (Peng et al., 2020) | **3.22** | **0.9** |
| *I feel that my executive director/supervisor…* | | |
| …clearly articulates his/her vision of the future. | 3.20 | 1.1 |
| …leads by setting a good example. | 3.34 | 1.1 |
| …challenges employees to think about old problems in new ways. | 3.24 | 1.1 |
| …says things that make employees proud to be part of the organization. | 3.29 | 1.1 |
| …has a clear sense of where our organization should be in five years. | 3.07 | 1.2 |
| **Reflective constructs** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| **Perceived organizational support (POS)** (adopted by Eisenberger et al., 1986) | **3.43** | **0.8** |
| *My nonprofit employer…* | | |
| …really cares about my well-being. | 3.20 | 1.0 |
| …cares about my opinions. | 3.45 | 1.1 |
| …shows very little concern for me. (*removed from the analysis*) | 2.43 | 1.3 |
| …cares about my general satisfaction at work. | 3.42 | 1.0 |
| …would fail to notice, even if I did the best job possible. (*removed from the analysis*) | 2.14 | 1.2 |
| …takes pride in my accomplishments at work. | 3.26 | 1.0 |
| …strongly considers my goals and values. | 3.10 | 1.0 |
| …helps me when I have a problem. | 3.60 | 1.0 |
| **Job satisfaction** (Knapp et al., 2017) | **3.59** | **0.9** |
| I am satisfied with my present job when I compare it to jobs in other organizations. | 3.72 | 1.0 |
| I am satisfied with the progress I am making toward the goals set for myself in my present position. | 3.50 | 1.0 |
| I am satisfied with the chance my job gives me to do what I am best at. | 3.54 | 1.1 |
| I am satisfied with my present job when I consider the expectations I had when I took the job. | 3.66 | 1.1 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I am satisfied with my present job, in light of my career expectations. | 3.34 | 1.1 |
| All in all, I am satisfied with my present job. | 3.79 | 1.0 |
| **Organizational commitment** (adopted by de Leede & Heuver, 2017) | **3.71** | **0.7** |
| I am quite proud to be able to tell people who it is I work for. | 3.77 | 1.0 |
| I am willing to put myself out just to help the organization. (*removed from the analysis*) | 2.80 | 1.2 |
| I feel myself to be part of the organization. | 3.93 | 0.9 |
| In my work, I like to feel I am making some effort, not just for myself but for the organization as well. | 4.02 | 0.8 |
| I would not recommend a close friend to join our staff. (*removed from the analysis*) | 2.37 | 1.3 |
| To know that my own work had made a contribution to the good of the organization would please me. (*removed from the analysis*) | 4.15 | 0.8 |
| **Intention to stay** (Agus & Selvaraj, 2020) | **3.66** | **1.2** |
| I probably will stay in this organization for some time to come. | 3.87 | 1.2 |
| I plan to hang on to this organization. | 3.73 | 1.3 |
| I am certain I will continue working here. | 3.39 | 1.3 |

Note: n=229.
Abbreviations: LOC=lower-order construct; SD=standard deviation.

**Table A2.** Measurement quality report

| Constructs (5-point Likert scale, 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree") | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Formative HOCs** | **VIF** | **Indicator weights** | **Outer loadings** | |
| **Financial practices** | | | | |
| Pay | 1.035 | 0.812*** | 0.895*** | |
| Mobility compensation | 1.035 | 0.454** | 0.603*** | |
| **Work-conditional practices** | | | | |
| New ways of working | 1.051 | 0.782*** | 0.886*** | |
| Job security | 1.043 | 0.308** | 0.478*** | |
| Workplace facilities | 1.053 | 0.316** | 0.507*** | |
| **Relational practices** | | | | |
| Socialization | 1.592 | 0.139** | 0.671*** | |
| Appraisal/recognition (supervisor/executive) | 2.009 | 0.519*** | 0.908*** | |
| Appraisal/recognition (coworkers) | 1.403 | 0.151** | 0.601*** | |
| Leadership | 1.445 | 0.425*** | 0.809*** | |
| **Formative LOCs** | **VIF** | **Indicator weights** | **Outer loadings** | **Redundancy analysis** |
| **New ways of working** (adopted by Gerards et al., 2017) | | | | ✓ |
| *In my job, I…* | | | | |
| …can determine my own working hours. | 1.761 | 0.016 | 0.600*** | |
| …can determine where I work (office, home office, and so on.). | 1.679 | 0.278 | 0.670*** | |
| …can adjust my workload to my current phase of life or situation. | 1.404 | 0.832*** | 0.967*** | |
| **Job security** | | | | ✓ |
| *My nonprofit employer provides me with…* | | | | |
| …a safe job. | 4.516 | -0.824** | 0.631*** | |
| …a stable employment relationship. | 4.516 | 1.649*** | 0.922*** | |
| **Workplace facilities** | | | | ✓ |
| *My nonprofit employer provides me with…* | | | | |
| …an accessible workplace (e.g., good public transport connections, parking spaces). | 1.104 | 0.357 | 0.520** | |
| …satisfactory food service (e.g., fruit, complimentary beverages, cafeteria). | 1.414 | 0.354 | 0.767*** | |
| …a work-promoting environment (e.g. ergonomic office chairs, modern IT infrastructure, standing desks, daylight in the office). | 1.296 | 0.644*** | 0.844*** | |
| **Formative constructs** | **VIF** | **Indicator weights** | **Outer loadings** | **Redundancy analysis** |
| **Mission-oriented practices** | | | | (0.669; $R^2$=.45) |
| *My nonprofit employer…* | | | | |
| …informs its staff about its reputation. | 1.490 | 0.256** | 0.732*** | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| …emphasizes to its staff the gained societal impact by means of their work. | 1.490 | 0.831*** | 0.978*** | |
| **Developmental practices** (Barnett & Bradley, 2007) | | | | ✓ |
| *My nonprofit employer…* | | | | |
| …provides me with training to help develop my career. | 3.201 | 0.119 | 0.652*** | |
| …makes sure I get the training I need for my career. | 3.611 | -0.007 | 0.687*** | |
| …teaches me things I need to know to get on in this organization. | 2.378 | 0.148 | 0.749*** | |
| …provides me with a personal development plan. | 1.928 | 0.324*** | 0.812*** | |
| …provides me with work that develops my skills for the future. | 1.652 | 0.605*** | 0.915*** | |
| **Reflective LOCs** | **Factor loadings** | **Cronbach's alpha** | **AVE** | **HTMT ratio** |
| **Pay** (Buttner & Lowe, 2017) | | 0.793 | 0.708 | <.085 |
| *I feel that my salary is fair…* | | | | |
| …given my qualifications for my position. | 0.849 | | | |
| …in relation to all employees in my organization. | 0.798 | | | |
| …in relation to employees with comparable qualifications at other organizations. | 0.874 | | | |
| **Mobility compensation** | | 0.536 | 0.681 | <.085 |
| *I feel that my nonprofit employer…* | | | | |
| …does not leave me alone with costs for my commute (e.g., job ticket, gas costs). | 0.864 | | | |
| …compensates my work-related travel expenses. | 0.785 | | | |
| **Socialization** | | 0.781 | 0.819 | <.085 |
| *I feel that my nonprofit employer provides me with opportunities to interact with…* | | | | |
| …superiors (jour fixe meetings, buddy programs, kitchen chats, coffee breaks, team trips, etc.). | 0.918 | | | |
| …coworkers (jour fixe meetings, buddy programs, kitchen chats, coffee breaks, team trips, etc.). | 0.892 | | | |
| **Appraisal/recognition \| supervisors/executives** (Montani et al., 2020) | | 0.939 | 0.805 | <.085 |
| *I feel that my supervisor/executive director…* | 0.917 | | | |
| …shows appreciation form my contributions. | 0.908 | | | |
| …acknowledges my performance. | 0.950 | | | |
| …appreciates my efforts. | 0.848 | | | |
| …congratulates me for my achievements. | 0.858 | | | |
| …takes an interest in what I'm doing. | 0.917 | | | |
| **Appraisal/recognition \| coworkers** (Montani et al., 2020) | | 0.947 | 0.828 | <.085 |
| *I feel that my coworkers…* | | | | |
| …appreciate my efforts. | 0.900 | | | |
| …congratulate me for my achievements. | 0.794 | | | |
| …value my contributions in the workplace. | 0.937 | | | |
| …acknowledge my performance. | 0.952 | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| …recognize my efforts. | 0.957 | | | |
| **Leadership** (Peng et al., 2020) | | 0.892 | 0.699 | <.085 |
| *I feel that my executive director/supervisor…* | | | | |
| …clearly articulates his/her vision of the future. | 0.774 | | | |
| …leads by setting a good example. | 0.852 | | | |
| …challenges employees to think about old problems in new ways. | 0.837 | | | |
| …says things that make employees proud to be part of the organization. | 0.856 | | | |
| …has a clear sense of where our organization should be in five years. | 0.858 | | | |
| **Reflective constructs** | **Factor loadings** | **Cronbach's alpha** | **AVE** | **HTMT ratio** |
| **Perceived organizational support (POS)** (adopted by Eisenberger et al., 1986) | | 0.932 | 0.746 | <.085 |
| *My nonprofit employer…* | | | | |
| …really cares about my well-being. | 0.852 | | | |
| …cares about my opinions. | 0.887 | | | |
| …cares about my general satisfaction at work. | 0.893 | | | |
| …takes pride in my accomplishments at work. | 0.869 | | | |
| …strongly considers my goals and values. | 0.869 | | | |
| …helps me when I have a problem. | 0.812 | | | |
| **Job Satisfaction** (Knapp et al., 2017) | | 0.925 | 0.730 | <.085 |
| I am satisfied with my present job when I compare it to jobs in other organizations. | 0.808 | | | |
| I am satisfied with the progress I am making toward the goals set for myself in my present position. | 0.838 | | | |
| I am satisfied with the chance my job gives me to do what I am best at. | 0.888 | | | |
| I am satisfied with my present job when I consider the expectations I had when I took the job. | 0.874 | | | |
| I am satisfied with my present job, in light of my career expectations. | 0.802 | | | |
| All in all, I am satisfied with my present job. | 0.910 | | | |
| **Organizational commitment** (adopted by de Leede & Heuver, 2017) | | 0.795 | 0.615 | <.085 |
| I am quite proud to be able to tell people who it is I work for. | 0.785 | | | |
| I feel myself to be part of the organization. | 0.850 | | | |
| In my work, I like to feel I am making some effort, not just for myself but for the organization as well. | 0.754 | | | |
| To know that my own work had made a contribution to the good of the organization would please me. | 0.744 | | | |
| **Intention to stay** (Agus & Selvaraj, 2020) | | 0.918 | 0.860 | <.085 |
| I probably will stay in this organization for some time to come. | 0.933 | | | |
| I plan to hang on to this organization. | 0.935 | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| I am certain I will continue working here. | 0.912 |

Note: SmartPLS bootstrapping settings: 5000 iterations; deleted items: items 3 and 5 (new ways of working), items 2 and 5 (organizational commitment), items 3 and 5 (perceived organizational support); n=229.
Abbreviations: HOC=higher-order construct; LOC=lower-order construct.
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

**Table A3.** Serial mediation analysis results (HRM practices on intention to stay)

| Mediation analysis | Path coefficients | p-values | Standard deviation | Mediation type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work-conditional practices → POS → Job satisfaction → Intention to stay | 0.025* | 0.011 | 0.010 | Full mediation |
| Work-conditional practices → POS → Organizational commitment → Intention to stay | 0.003 | 0.375 | 0.003 | |
| Developmental practices → POS → Job satisfaction → Intention to stay | 0.032* | 0.010 | 0.012 | Full mediation |
| Developmental practices → POS → Organizational commitment → Intention to stay | 0.003 | 0.392 | 0.004 | |
| Relational practices → POS → Job satisfaction → Intention to stay | 0.081** | 0.003 | 0.028 | Full mediation |
| Relational practices → POS → Organizational commitment → Intention to stay | 0.009 | 0.344 | 0.009 | |

Note: SmartPLS bootstrapping settings: 5000 iterations; n=229.
Abbreviations: ns=not significant; POS=perceived organizational support.
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

# Kapitel 5: Preparing for the next chapter: Reviewing and advancing research and practice on nonprofit leadership continuity

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# Preparing for the next chapter: Reviewing and advancing research and practice on nonprofit leadership continuity

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## Abstract

While many studies recognize the pivotal role of paid leadership, there is still much to understand about how nonprofit leadership capacity is sustained. A review of the literature finds widespread agreement about the importance of succession planning but little empirical-based guidance on how to do it. Scholars and practitioners tend to frame succession planning narrowly in terms of leadership transitions, and we propose a succession management approach that extends the focus beyond the transition itself to the development of leadership capacity and the evaluation of transition outcomes. This approach frames nonprofit leadership development through a sustainability lens and connects succession management to values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Future research should focus on testing hypotheses generated through small sample qualitative research with large sample survey research, as well as evaluating how different succession management strategies lead to different outcomes.

**Keywords**: leadership continuity, succession management, executive, nonprofit, leadership development

## Introduction

The nonprofit sector was once known as the voluntary sector, but according to recent reporting from the Urban Institute, 70% of nonprofit organizations registered in the United States are of a sufficient size to employ a paid staff person (Faulk et al., 2021). For many of these organizations, staffing structures are sufficiently complex to include a paid executive, who is described as central to a nonprofit's functioning and mission performance (Herman, 2016). To equip its paid leadership, the nonprofit sector has compiled practical guidance and evidence yielded from research. As scholars who have benefitted from, as well as contributed to, this body of knowledge, we are startled by how much is still to be uncovered. This research, which we capture under a broad banner of *leadership continuity*, considers the continuum of nonprofit leadership from its development, to transitions between leaders, to outcomes of leadership changes. Other realms of research have benefitted from periodic assessments of their respective research domains, providing an assessment of what is already known, as well as identifying prospects for future research to address (for examples, see: Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2014; Maier et al., 2016). We see such reviews as helpful in catalyzing future research that advances practice and knowledge about particular topics. Thus, we sought to assess what we already know about nonprofit leadership continuity, as well as share insights for future research.

Our approach to the existing literature on nonprofit leadership continuity is akin to the meta-narrative review described by Pandey (2021, p. 2) in his review of bureaucratic red tape literature, who paid "attention to guiding principles of pragmatism, historicity, and reflexivity." Similarly, our approach attempts to sift through this existing research, while also tending to our own individual and collective engagement with this field of research. As compared to a systematic literature review, a meta-narrative review is attentive to evolution of a topic and seeks to understand different perspectives on a topic, rather than synthesizing quantitative data or producing unbiased results. Moreover, we are familiar with the terrain of this research, and have given significant consideration to the state of knowledge, as well as directions for future research. As coauthors, we have all individually published and presented on these topics, as well as co-organized a colloquium panel at the 2023 Conference of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Thus, our review is organized in two primary sections. First, we look back, assessing by comparison and contrast, how prior nonprofit research has addressed leadership continuity. When this research about nonprofit leadership is particularly thin, specifically pertaining to the

outcomes of transitions, we point to research from outside our nonprofit field that has relevance to how we understand transitions within the nonprofit sector. The second portion of our manuscript looks ahead by anticipating how the need to strategically manage human resources and the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion influence our viewpoints on nonprofit leadership. We conclude by identifying specific areas that research should address in order to advance our knowledge and practice of nonprofit succession management.

**A retrospective of leadership continuity research**

Organizational survival relies upon successful transitions of leadership (Gabarro, 1988), and as a core element of organizational sustainability, leadership must be framed not as a singular dimension, such as what prepares leader, or how are transitions managed, but from a comprehensive perspective of leadership continuity. To organize our review of what the existing literature describes about these elements, we draw upon the metaphor of leadership transitions a relay race, implying that there is a preparation phase, the hand-off between runners, and the aftermath with the new runner carrying the baton (Dyck et al., 2002). Following this metaphor, we first review literature on nonprofit executive career development. We then address the research that has given insights to the actual transition events, and we then conclude with our assessment by examining the scant literature on outcomes of nonprofit executive transitions. As a composite, this review depicts the current knowledge of research, and we acknowledge that any unevenness between these sections is not a reflection of an incomplete review of this relevant literature, but instead a reflection of where research attention has been paid in the study of nonprofit leadership continuity.

**Career development**

Research on the career development of nonprofit executives have formulated a variety of models that explain a worker's ascent to a nonprofit executive role (Harrow & Mole, 2005; Norris-Tirrell et al., 2018). This research has generated predictive typologies that can guide practitioners career development, as well as be useful for studying related outcomes of various paths. Executive directors may have steady state careers in which they hold a single position for a long time, linear careers of positions of increasing responsibility, spiral careers where new positions require different skills and responsibilities, and transitory careers of continuous change (Stewart & Kuenzi, 2018). A different typology (Suarez, 2010; Stewart & Kuenzi, 2018) sorts executive directors' careers along the axes of nonprofit experience and management experience into nonprofit lifers (high nonprofit experience, low management experience),

social entrepreneurs (high nonprofit, high management), substantive experts (low nonprofit, low management), and professional administrators (low nonprofit, high management). Nonprofit leaders can also be divided into founders who started their own nonprofit, fillers from the board or a volunteer position, planners who consciously pursued an executive position, and risers who worked their way up through the ranks and found that executive director was the next step (Einolf, 2022).

Beyond these typologies, research has accumulated evidence about the sector's limited attention to career development (Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Tierney, 2006), implying that the sector has underinvested in its leadership capacity as existing executives retire or leave for other opportunities. Evidence implies that some nonprofit career paths are quietly, even unintentionally, developed. For example, many executive directors reach the highest position without having planned to do so (Einolf, 2022; Harrow & Mole, 2005; Stewart & Kuenzi, 2018), and some do so without any formal management education (Einolf, 2022; Suarez, 2010). Yet, despite this lack of training, most executive directors considered themselves well-prepared for the job when they first assumed it (Einolf, 2022). A study of executives and young professionals found that executives who were near their retirement were not openly developing their replacement, and that young professionals were seeking professional development opportunities but not feeling supported by their nonprofits in these endeavors (Carman et al., 2010).

**Preparing and managing transitions**

Over the past decades, research has formed in management science that focuses on succession phenomena (Austin & Gilmore, 1993; Charan et al., 2011; Kesner & Sebora, 1994; Rothwell, 2005). This interest has also sprouted across the nonprofit research domain (Allison, 2002; Landles-Cobb et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2020; Tierney, 2006; Wolfred, 2008). So far, three complementary research themes can be identified in the academic discussion of nonprofit transition management. First, there are seminal studies specifically concerned with the factual relevance of transition management. Second, there is an accumulation of continuous empirical work on inadequate transition management practices. Lastly, there is prescriptive practical guidance on how to cover transition management demands best.

The first theme explores why nonprofit scholars ongoingly and increasingly care about succession phenomena in the first place. In this regard, early work by Tierney (2006) predicted that nonprofits will need to find some 640,000 new executives over the next decade. This

pending leadership deficit, however, was later critically updated by Johnson (2009). In her study, she argued that trends like older employees working longer, faster skill development of younger employees, and recruiting from the public and for-profit sectors would mitigate the deficit. Yet, after her making a case for more optimism, work by Santora et al. (2007), Cornelius et al. (2011) or Carman et al. (2010) revealed that up to two-thirds of executives planned to leave their organization. Moreover, few organizations were concerned with the disruptiveness of coming turnover events and that these recent dynamics were further flanked by the fact that few young workers aspired to leadership positions (Carman et al., 2010).

As for the second theme, studies going back three decades repeatedly highlight the inadequate nature of current succession management practices (Santora & Sarros, 1995). Many studies since then have replicated this finding (Allison, 2002; Cornelius et al., 2011; Froelich et al., 2011, Santora et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2021). Allison (2002) hinged on his consultancy experiences to uncover that nonprofit boards oftentimes struggle to treat successions strategically, that is, with enough rigor. Consistent with a later publication by Tebbe et al. (2017), he concluded that nonprofits underestimated the challenge of short leadership tenures and oftentimes let transition opportunities (e.g., for organizational renewal) go to waste. In fact, the uncommon practice of strategic succession efforts by nonprofits has been documented continuously until recently (Cornelius et al., 2011; Geib & Boenigk, 2022; Santora et al., 2015). In line with Allison (2002), e.g., Cornelius et al. (2011) reported a lack of nonprofit board expertise to approach successions strategically. On the contrary, using multiple survey data, Santora et al. (2015) compared results from Australia, Brazil, Israel, Italy, Russia, and the United States to not only find a lack of strategic planning (i.e., formal succession plans), but also that nonprofits preferred outsiders as heirs. This, too, reconfirmed one of Santora et al. 's (2007) earlier findings from qualitative data that internal candidates in nonprofits were less likely to get promoted and thus seek leading positions elsewhere.

In contrast to scholars like Allison (2002), however, a seminal study by Froelich et al. (2011) indicated a new perspective on succession management practice in nonprofits. By surveying 266 nonprofit executives, the authors found that cognizant concerns about the importance of succession events and their planning had increased. Yet, only few proactive steps were taken. The authors provided two possible explanations: Nonprofits may be sluggish as they do not want to see the endangered stability caused by the pending loss of a departing leader. Nonprofits may also face a dilemma because they prefer internal successors, but do not

grow/develop them enough for needed deployment (Landles-Cobb et al., 2015) Moreover, nonprofits have been noted as more inclined to manage transitions as they happen, rather than proactively preparing for them as succession planning would entail (McKee & Froelich, 2016).

Emphasizing more the key role of boards in the succession management process, Stewart (2016) highlighted how board composition and board-executive fit contributes to how boards navigate a transition, as well as their influence on how a new executive is welcomed to the organization. Boards experience conflict between personal and collective interests, as well as between general governance duties and succession tasks (e.g., balancing out interests of stakeholders) (Stewart & Twumasi, 2020). To support boards in the succession management implementation process, Geib and Boenigk (2022) recently stressed that involving (outgoing) executives and human resource professionals can increase the implementation probability and thus leadership continuity. Boards that seek external consultancy in succession affairs are more likely to involve executives in their considerations (Stewart et al., 2021).

The third theme aims to provide practical guidance in the transition process, and several toolboxes, guidelines, and empirical studies have been prepared (Adams, 2006; Gothard & Austin, 2013; Hunter & Decker Pierce, 2020; Kramer & Nayak, 2013; Wolfred, 2008). Key transition tasks identified include: (1) clarifying formal task responsibilities, (2) installing communication plans, (3) assessing leadership needs, and (4) securing financial resources for the process (Adams, 2006; Wolfred, 2008). Subsequent work by Gothard and Austin (2013) explained the potential to consolidate information from across the for-profit, public, and nonprofit management disciplines and was among the first to prominently spotlight the critical relationship between nonprofit boards and executives in the pursuit of smooth succession efforts. The authors also advocated moving away from the term succession planning toward the use of succession management in order to more accurately capture the comprehensive nature of a transition. Within the same year, a practical guide from Kramer and Nayak (2013) coupled succession efforts and leadership development by suggesting nonprofits (1) evaluate development activities they would already have implemented, (2) understand their future leadership needs, (3) develop their staff, (4) hire externally to fill identified gaps, and (5) monitor the results to improve.

Although this third theme offers guidance on how to be proactive in succession management, Stewart et al. (2021) attest that nonprofits still do not complete all the tasks referred to as “best practices.” Recognizing this limitation, some scholars have appealed for

even more low-threshold tools, such as assessment tools and board training materials, as well as encouraging funders to invest more in leadership development (Tebbe et al., 2017).

**Outcomes of executive transitions**

Given the attention on the transition event, the impact of leadership transition on nonprofit organizations has received surprisingly little scholarly attention. One notable exception is Li (2019) – a qualitative comparative analysis of 15 succession events in environmental nonprofits in China. Li (2019) argued that, it is not the succession event itself, but contextual factors of succession that matter more in shaping post-succession performance. The study found that less founder's control and a favorable political environment were key to nonprofit performance in the post-succession era as measured by internal employee morale, organizational funding, and organizational influence (Li, 2019). Additionally, strategies adopted by successors and the extent to which a nonprofit is professionalized also play important roles (Li, 2019). Other than this study, emerging research has begun to use large and longitudinal datasets to assess the impact of succession events on nonprofit financial performance and strategic change (Peng et al., 2022a, 2022b).

In light of the limited nonprofit research on the outcomes of leadership transitions, the remaining portion of this subsection contains an abbreviated review of public and business management studies that may shed some light on nonprofit research. The purpose of the review is not to be comprehensive, and we acknowledge that public or business management research may not provide a complete explanation of nonprofit executive transition outcomes. After all, nonprofits operate very differently from public and for-profit organizations. The aim is to introduce fundamental theoretical perspectives, emphasize the complex nature of executive transitions and the wide range of factors influencing transition outcomes, and encourage more research into the outcomes of nonprofit executive transition taking into account nonprofits' unique characteristics and leadership environments.

The majority of leadership transition and succession research in public and business management has focused on two broad outcomes: organizational performance and strategic change (Berns & Klarner, 2017; Giambatista et al., 2005). Three theoretical perspectives have emerged on how leadership transitions impact organizational performance: the disruption perspective, the adaptation perspective, and the inconsequential event perspective (Friedman & Singh, 1989). The disruption perspective views leadership transition as a disruptive event, which causes instability and changes that ultimately lead to deteriorating organizational

performance (Ballinger & Marcel, 2010; Grusky, 1963). The adaptation perspective views executive transition as an opportunity for an organization to adapt and better align its resources with changing external environments, thus improving its performance (Friedman & Singh, 1989; Virany et al. 1992). The inconsequential event perspective is consistent with ritual scapegoating theory (Friedman & Singh, 1989). According to the theory, leadership changes are purely symbolic in nature, intended to change public perceptions of an organization rather than affecting its actual performance (Gamson & Scotch, 1964). In other words, the inconsequential event perspective asserts that leadership transition event does not have a significant impact on organizations, but with limited evidence to support this perspective, it seems less consequential.

Following these three perspectives, research has documented that leadership transitions affect organizational performance in a complex manner. A successor's ability to lead an organization to perform better or worse is contingent upon various factors, such as the nature of succession, successor characteristics, board characteristics, and organizational and environmental factors (for a review: see Berns & Klarner, 2017). Hence, the relationship between succession and organizational performance is far from conclusive due to these various contingencies and different study contexts. For instance, many studies have focused on the debate about whether outsider or insider successors improve post-succession organizational performance. In general, inside successors are preferred because of their organization-specific knowledge, familiarity with board of directors and senior executive teams, and the likelihood to maintain strategic continuity (Shen & Cannella, 2002; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2004). Haque et al. (2022) found support that organizations with inside successors outperformed those with outside successors during the COVID-19 Pandemic. They argue that in times of crisis, insider CEOs have an advantage over outsider CEOs due to their firm-specific knowledge and skills (Haque et al., 2022).

By contrast, outside successors are brought in for their external knowledge, fresh perspectives, and new networks and resources that can potentially break the status quo of an organization (Georgakakis & Ruigrok, 2017; Herrmann & Datta, 2002). From the adaptation perspective, an outside successor serves as an opportunity for an organization to adapt and perform better (Georgakakis & Ruigrok, 2017). Hospitals with outside successors had a higher level of financial performance measured by operation efficiency than hospitals with inside successors. According to the authors, outsiders have an advantage over insiders due to their

lack of ties to internal political factions, inertia, or status quo (Ford et al., 2018). And these advantages enabled outsiders to initiate changes that improve organizational performance.

Meanwhile, from the disruption perspective, outside successors are also criticized for creating turbulence and instability. In Texas, Hill (2005) found that the performance of schools immediately plummeted after outside successors were hired. A similar finding was made by Shen and Cannella (2002) regarding outside successions negatively affecting post-succession productivity. Several factors can contribute to the negative impact of outside successors on performance. First, outside successors may lack organization-specific knowledge, making the transfer of external knowledge difficult (Shen & Cannella, 2002). They may lack support from internal executive teams that could result in executive teams leaving the organization (Shen & Cannella, 2002), or they may not have existing external ties essential for organizational success (Hill, 2005).

In addition to these two perspectives, other studies have argued that whether outside successors can have a positive impact on organizational performance is contingent on many factors. For example, Karavli (2007) found successor outsideness or insideness by itself did not make a difference in post-succession firm performance. But outside successors were positively related to organizational performance when pre-succession firm performance was low and there were fewer swift strategic changes but greater senior executive team change (Karaevli, 2007).

The second set of outcomes focuses on the strategic changes that organizations undergo after transition. In general, executive leaders have an influence on strategic change because they are intended to lead changes and steer the organization toward a better direction. The empirical findings for succession-strategic change are mixed, similar to those for succession-performance. Boeker (1997) and Sakano and Lewin (1999) found that executive succession had no significant impact on strategic change in organizations. According to Boeker (1997), executive tenure rather than succession was associated with strategic change in semiconductor producers. Sakano and Lewin (1999) noted the importance of country effects when considering whether new CEOs initiated strategic change immediately. In contrast to the U.S. context which called for immediate strategic changes in the early tenure of the new successors, the Japanese context emphasizes incremental changes. In other studies, succession was linked to strategic change in post-succession years. Barker III et al. (2001), for example, showed a direct association between top management team change and post-succession strategic change in business-level strategy and structure.

Most of the studies in this group indicate that strategic change depends on whether the successor is an insider or an outsider. Chiu et al. (2016) found that both insider and outsider successors led strategic change but in different ways as outsiders were more likely to focus an organization's portfolio. Karaevli and Zajac (2013) demonstrated that the extent to which successor outsideness had an impact on strategic change was contingent on the nature of succession, predecessor tenure, and pre-succession firm performance. Specifically, outsider successors tended to generate strategic change when succession was ordinary (i.e. due to a retirement rather than dismissal), predecessor tenure was long, or the company had good financial resources. Bigley and Wiersema (2002) showed that insider successors who had heir apparent experience were less likely to engage in organizational strategic refocusing when they were compensated more, had more functional expertise or elite education. But the same group of successors were more likely to engage in strategic refocusing as the number of outside boards increased (Bigley & Wiersema, 2002). Villadsen (2012) found that Danish local governments were more prone to undergo organizational change after executive succession. However, insider successors were more likely to create comprehensive changes once change practices were endorsed elsewhere (Villadsen, 2012).

Looking across this retrospective, we find research has emphasized more about nonprofit transitions themselves than what came before (i.e. leadership development) or after (i.e. transition outcomes). In simple terms, we have not been as attentive to the inputs or outputs, and given our view of leadership continuity, research must expand its vantage point to account for all dimensions of how leadership capacity is sustained.

**Advancing leadership continuity research and practice**

To shift towards a prospective viewpoint, we first orient our understanding and approach to nonprofit leadership. First, the sector faces an imperative to think more strategically about operational decisions, and accordingly, leadership needs must be thought of in a broader context of the organization and other staff. Thus, leadership continuity should be a nonprofit's objective, and to that end, we steer future research and practice away from the episodic framing of succession planning to a long-term frame of succession management. Second, since the context of leadership in a nonprofit sector is closely coupled with mission and values, a nonprofit's approach to their staffing must also emphasize diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice dimensions (DEIJ). Yet, our review of the literature yielded limited evidence that these DEIJ values were infused or explicit to research on nonprofit leadership. As our attention now

turns to prospects for future research and practice to adopt, we first engage these two dimensions, succession management and an equity lens, and then turn more broadly to considerations emerging from our current base of nonprofit leadership continuity research and practice.

**Shifting the paradigm from succession planning to succession management**

Traditional approaches to nonprofit leadership transitions are contained in the conventional concept of "succession planning," which refers to organizational action in the event of a leadership void due to executive turnover, dismissal, resignation or (early) retirement. Succession planning, also referred to as replacement planning, sources a successor and merely includes advance notice of job tenders and a selection based on performance and/or superiors' suggestions, instead of comprehensive measures addressing the organization's leadership (Gothard & Austin, 2013; Leibman et al., 1996). Consequently, the approach has been criticized as insufficient, recognized as neither being forward-looking nor as anticipatory of labor market changes (Gandossy & Verma, 2006; Rothwell, 2005). Whereas this approach is pragmatic, a replacement will need to be identified again as an executive vacancy occurs. To align succession activities and make them more effective, comprehensive management concepts have emerged (e.g., Adams, 2006; Greer & Virick, 2008; Wolfred, 2008), including a synthesizing framework of comprehensive, strategic succession activities that nonprofits can utilize (Gothard and Austin 2013). This framework distinguishes *succession management* from *succession planning* and features two primary approaches, emergency-based and departure-based succession management, which are both characterized by the degree to which an executive's departure is planned (Geib & Boenigk, 2022).

Gothard and Austin (2013) assert that succession management must be coherent with constantly updated organizational plans. To that end, emergency-based succession management is about strategic planning for an unexpected leadership departure. This approach is more feasible for small nonprofits (Wolfred, 2008) and assumes that nonprofits keep job roles (e.g., leading/executive functions) and realms of responsibility (in particular regarding the board-executive relationship) up-to-date. At its core, it entails determining current workload coverage, developing emergency communication plans, and considering interim solutions. Departure-based succession management, in contrast, commits to a "more gradual and purposeful process and timeline to drive" (Gothard & Austin, 2013, p. 277) succession needs, anticipating them years before they become visible (Adams, 2006; Wolfred, 2008). In doing so, pre-planned

succession management entails that boards and executives work together closely to first assess and align future leadership competency needs with the nonprofit's mission. Departure-based succession management emphasizes searching for leadership potential to be recruited and developing internal leadership capacity while also considering leader's on-and off-boarding processes. Analogously to emergency-based succession management, however, it also relies on formally established communication guidelines and initiatives that foster a successor's acceptance among key stakeholders, such as employees, volunteers, and funders.

Rather than focused singularly on the transition event as succession planning emphasizes, succession management places the leadership needs within the broader context of the organization. Similar to how financial resources have been studied as a driver of nonprofit sustainability, we see opportunity to adopt a similar perspective to understand how succession management approaches sustain nonprofits and equip their resilience. Research could investigate antecedents for organizations that assume this approach to their staffing, as well as the related outcomes so that causal links, even organizational behavior dimensions, could be uncovered that spur on adoption of these approaches. We also encourage that the practical literature, even practitioners, such as executive search consultants, adopt this succession management paradigm so that their efforts are more clearly connected as a strategy that equips a nonprofit's sustainability. An optimistic view is that this strategic framing of succession practices might spur on wider adoption of such practices since it places leadership continuity as a proactive aim, rather than a reactive undertaking.

**Assuming an equity lens for succession management**

Many nonprofit organizations are grappling with what diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) means for them. With nonprofits often reliant upon their human resources (Walk, Schinnenburg, & Handy, 2014), organizations seek to address equity as they manage their leadership capacity needs. Prior research has explained the general rationale for DEIJ in a nonprofit context (for example, see Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010), and we see evidence of DEIJ initiatives from across the field, such as the assorted leadership development programs hosted by associations and affiliative nonprofits that target diverse professionals or the "Race to Lead" initiative hosted by the Building Movement Project (2024). Yet, we see limited consideration in the nonprofit research literature about DEIJ and succession management in terms of what explains it, what it looks like, and what it yields.

Practically speaking, an equity perspective of succession management focuses on people while they are in the organization, rather than imagining how they will be replaced. This approach entails assessing from an equity lens how much staff are compensated, the development opportunities they are offered, and how people are promoted. Succession management encourages people to grow within the organization and within the larger mission subfield. Nonprofits all too often lack an equity of opportunity, often preferring to hire externally or contract managerial skills rather than training their own. Career development is also almost always presented as a vertical move, ascending "higher" in an organization, rather than an opportunity to move into a different area without a hierarchical ranking. Succession management instead recognizes that growth *across organizations* may be just as valuable when a well-trained person stays within the same mission. A succession management emphasis de-emphasizes hierarchical leadership, recognizing that all people have value, regardless of their positional power. Thus, longevity and retention are emphasized in equitable organizations. Succession management also embraces transition as a process. Rather than promoting someone into a new role without preparation, nonprofits provide development opportunities that strengthen existing staff. These opportunities might include stretch projects, ensuring that staff at all levels understand the overall finances and how each person contributes to the organization's performance, and coaching and supporting promoted staff. Further, succession management engages a critical equity lens to question an organization's in-grained culture and decision-making norms. A lens of gender, race, sexual orientation, and ability is used to revisit policies and practices pertaining to compensation, development opportunities, and promotion. A critical lens would also prompt a reassessment of job requirements, including the role of lived experience and education for hiring and promotion.

Research on the diffusion of DEIJ values across the nonprofit sector would benefit from exploring any of these aforementioned succession management practices. Rather than placing succession management as a distinct effort from DEIJ, this research would place them as inextricably linked. This research would be motivated to understand what leads to the adoption, as well as where barriers exist that prevent the embedding of DEIJ values into succession management practices. Research should engage the perspectives of both who initiate and implement these practices, as well as who they are directed to and who benefits, to ensure that practices yield their intended outcomes. We also see merit in engaging insightful case studies to elucidate succession management examples that elevate these DEIJ values, and provide insights for application more broadly.

**Prospects to advance nonprofit leadership continuity research**

In addition to highlighting the contribution succession management and DEIJ make to our research and practice, we also outline a research agenda to illuminate and advance our knowledge of nonprofit leadership continuity. Following the retrospective's structure along the preparation, transition, and outcome phases, we formulate research inquiries that would help fill in existing gaps in knowledge.

*Leadership development*

Future research on leadership development should focus on career paths, preparedness, and leadership training, and should incorporate quantitative methods working with large-n samples for generalizability. Existing research has identified a number of ways to classify career paths, but these studies have only used qualitative methods with a small number of respondents. Expanding this research to a large sample, representative survey would enable us to see whether these paths apply to the population of executive directors.

Even though executives are essential in nonprofits operating with paid staff, we know very little about how they are prepared for the role, or even how best to prepare them. For example, investigating best practices of how organizations prepare lower-level managers for the executive role would be an important first step. Further, given the large field of nonprofit education and training programs (Mirabella, 2022), research should endeavor to understand if and how these programs equip leadership, as well as training gaps that remain. Finally, research has documented generational differences for work motivations (Walk et al., 2021), evidence should be compiled about how upcoming generational cohorts view the opportunity of nonprofit leadership positions, as well as how to design and posture the position so that it appeals to these emerging nonprofit leaders.

*Succession events*

With nonprofit boards responsible for hiring and supervising executives, the decision-making process of boards in succession efforts remains a blackbox. Research should elucidate how the various roles – including boards, executives, top management, and search firms or consultants support, work together, or even conflict as they fulfill their succession duties. Given the multiple vantage points in the process, including the perspectives of the board, board chair, exiting executive, entering executive, employees, and other involved stakeholders (funders, partnering nonprofits, etc.) would be fruitful to understanding the comprehensiveness of the succession process. This would also provide a fuller picture of individual interest, position-

based challenges, and stakes in the process. To that end, longitudinal data tracking a cohort of organizations and their leadership over time and transitions might be both innovative and valuable.

Since the (power) relationship between the board and executives has been identified as critical to smooth successions, assessing this dynamic during succession events would be meritorious. More research is also called for to analyze how a nonprofit's succession management relates to critical human resource management infrastructure as broader staffing issues intermingle with nonprofit leadership succession concerns. This would help clarify the ripple effects of transitions and their impact on leadership and staffing continuity.

Nonprofit scholars should also investigate how workforce composition, current labor market dynamics and generational differences about work expectations affect succession management efforts, including recruiting, employee development, and retention. Special attention should also be paid to diversity-enhancing succession management in nonprofits. Here, studies are needed to understand the development, promotion, and selection of under-represented leaders, identifying structural barriers and root causes and making recommendations to practitioners regarding personnel structures that integrate DEIJ into succession management.

*Outcomes of transitions*

In light of the dearth of existing research, research on the consequences of nonprofit executive transition has great potential. Even though findings from public and business organizations may provide some insight, nonprofit organizations have unique characteristics that may prevent these findings from providing nuanced predictions of nonprofit transition outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative studies set in a nonprofit context will help us better understand the consequences of executive transitions.

Using quantitative studies, future studies should examine transition outcomes in terms of financial performance and achieving social outcomes, organizational strategic direction, to employee outcomes such as morale, motivation, and job attitudes. Additionally, contingency factors such as characteristics of nonprofit boards, the characteristics and experience of internal and external successors, and pre-transition organizational characteristics should be considered when analyzing the impact of transition. Moreover, examining the experience of leaders, according to their own demographic profiles, may be useful for understanding the role of bias and equity in the leadership function. By using qualitative approaches, future studies can

explain in depth how executive transitions impact organizational performance and why some transitions lead to better performance while others do not.

**Conclusion**

This article reviewed the literature on leadership development, succession management, and the outcomes of leadership transitions, and provided recommendations for future research. In regards to leadership development, it found that nonprofits do not do much to train and promote from within, and that only a few of those who eventually become executive directors had made long-term plans to train for the position. Research on succession management finds that many nonprofits do this poorly, despite the existence of articles providing best practice advice on how to do this. Finally, surprisingly little research has examined the outcomes of leadership transitions, casting doubt on the empirical support for the current conventional wisdom on best practices.

In regards to future research and practice, we recommend a transition from succession planning, which focuses only on the transition event itself, to succession management, which assumes a sustainability perspective that includes how nonprofits develop leaders and the outcomes that occur after the succession event. We also argue for more attention to diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice (DEIJ) in succession management. Despite a large literature arguing for the importance of DEIJ, little research currently exists on how best to do it in terms of nonprofit leadership. Developing employees from within not only makes a broader and better leadership pool available, but also contributes to DEIJ goals by valuing and developing all employees.

Most of the extant research on nonprofit succession management uses qualitative methods on small, nonrepresentative samples. We have reached the point where the research has generated many hypotheses that need to be tested using large-n survey research. Other avenues for future research include the role of various stakeholders, besides just the board of directors, in succession management, as well as how different succession management strategies lead to various outcomes.

Leadership continuity cuts across dimensions of nonprofit management, including board, human resource management, and performance management and merges with more personal factors, including career development and interpersonal dynamics. Thus, neither the research nor practice of leadership continuity is an isolated endeavor, and we find these interconnections to add to the intrigue of engaging this field of inquiry. Our hope in preparing this synthesis is

not simply to pose a statement of what is known and what could be added to our research and practice, but to also extend an invitation for others to join us in adding to this body of knowledge and field of practice so as to equip nonprofits for their work and missions.

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# Anhang

## A. Kurzzusammenfassung der Ergebnisse

*Zusammenfassung in deutscher Sprache*

Die vorliegende Dissertation ist an der wissenschaftlichen Schnittstelle der Personalmanagement-, der Führungs- und Arbeitsmotivationsforschung in Nonprofit-Organisationen angesiedelt. Explizit behandelt sie das Forschungsgebiet des Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagements. Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement bezieht sich dabei auf systematisch-geplante und implementierte Anstrengungen einer Nonprofit-Organisation, Führungskontinuität an zentralen Stellen langfristig sicherzustellen. Das Bemühen dieses zu führenden Managementprozesses beginnt in der Personalakquise und erstreckt sich über die Entwicklung und Bindung von potentialtragenden Nonprofit-Arbeitskräften. Die Dissertation besteht aus vier wissenschaftlichen Beiträgen, welche die Forschung theoretisch und praktisch entwickeln.

Studienbeitrag 1 untersucht grundsätzlich, wie Nachfolgemanagement in Nonprofit-Organisationen verbessert werden kann. Während erste, vorhandene Studien sich mit den Nachfolgeaufgaben von Vorständen oder Geschäftsführenden auseinandergesetzt haben, widmet sich Studie 1 anhand einer Online-Umfrage (n=1020) einem breiteren, dreigliedrigen Führungsansatz in der Verantwortungsteilung von Nachfolgemanagement. Sie geht im Sinne der geteilten Führungstheorie (engl.: shared leadership theory) der Frage nach, inwiefern gemeinsame Führung von Vorstand, Geschäftsführenden/Abteilungsleitenden und Personalmanager:innen den Nachfolgemanagementprozess positiv beeinflusst. Die Ergebnisse der Studie validieren, dass eine Minderheit an Nonprofit-Organisationen (in Deutschland) Nachfolgemanagement umfassend betreibt. Eine PLS-SEM-Analyse zeigt ferner, dass ein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen (a) gemeinsamer Führung von Vorständen, Geschäftsführenden/Abteilungsleitenden und Personalmanager:innen und (b) einem umfassendem Nachfolgemanagementprozess sowie Führungskontinuität besteht.

Studienbeitrag 2 analysiert, inwieweit sich Signale der Möglichkeiten neuer (flexibler) Arbeitsmodelle und Führungsentwicklung positiv auf die Bewerbungsabsicht von potentiellen Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden auswirken. Die Studie baut auf Grundannahmen der Self-Determination Theory (SDT) auf und testet den angenommenen Zusammenhang anhand eines Online-Experiments (n=389) in Deutschland. Die Studie findet dabei mittels Regressionsanalysen primär heraus, dass Nonprofit-Organisationen im Wettbewerb um

kompetentes Personal neue Arbeitsmodelle in Stellenausschreibungen kommunizieren sollte, um Bewerbungsabsichten zu erhöhen.

Studienbeitrag 3 prüft auf Grundlage der Social Exchange Theory (SET), via Online-Umfrage (n=229), den Einfluss eines breiten Bündels an Personalpraktiken auf den Bindungserfolg bei Nonprofit-Mitarbeitenden in Deutschland. U.a. werden Personalpraktiken hinsichtlich Salärs, neuen (flexiblen) Arbeitsmodellen, Karriereentwicklung und Supervision in konzeptionell und empirisch reflektiert. Der Bindungserfolg wird über psychologische Einstellungskonstrukte (primär die individuelle Bleibeabsicht) erfasst. PLS-SEM-Ergebnisse weisen darauf hin, dass allgemeinere, arbeitskontextuelle sowie entwicklungsbezogene und relationale Personalpraktiken die Bleibeabsicht von Nonprofit-Personal über wahrgenommene Organisationsunterstützung und Jobzufriedenheit erhöhen.

Studienbeitrag 4 ist eine konzeptionelle Zusatzstudie der Dissertation. Sie impliziert einen meta-narrativen Literaturüberblick über den aktuellen Stand der Forschung zu Nonprofit-Nachfolgemanagement und Führungskontinuität. Der Beitrag plädiert gegen ein enges Verständnis von Nachfolgebemühungen nur in Bezug auf unmittelbare Führungswechsel. Gleichzeitig appelliert er für eine direktere Verschränkung strategisch-implementierter, wertebasierter Nachfolgeanstrengungen mit der organisationalen Erfolgsgröße der Führungskontinuität.

Alles in allem liefern die vier Studien der Dissertation wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse hinsichtlich effektiver Teilstrategien zur organisationalen Navigation in der Begegnung herausfordernder Nachfolgenöte in Nonprofit-Organisationen. Damit unterstützt die Dissertation formalisierte Attraktoren des Gemeinwohls, insbesondere potentialtragendes Personal nachhaltig sicherzustellen und ihren Missionen wirkungsvoll nachzukommen.

*English summary*

This dissertation is situated between the research domains of nonprofit human resource management (HRM), work motivation and leadership. It explicitly deals with the topic of nonprofit succession management. Nonprofit succession management refers to the systematically planned and implemented efforts of a nonprofit organization to ensure long-term leadership continuity in key positions. The endeavor of this management process begins with staff recruitment and extends to the development and retention of potential nonprofit personnel. The dissertation consists of four papers that develop the research on nonprofit succession management theoretically and practically.

Study 1 examines how succession management can be improved in nonprofit organizations. While first existing studies primarily dealt with the succession tasks of boards or executive directors, study 1 of this dissertation is dedicated to a broader, tripartite leadership approach in the division of responsibility for succession management based on an online survey (n=1020). In terms of shared leadership theory, it examines the question of whether shared leadership between boards, executive directors/division executives and HR professionals has a positive influence on the succession management process. The results of study 1 validate that a minority of nonprofit organizations (in Germany) practice succession management comprehensively. A PLS-SEM analysis also shows that there is a positive relationship between (a) shared leadership of boards, executive directors/division executives and HR professionals and (b) a comprehensive succession management process as well as leadership continuity.

Study 2 analyzes whether signals of the opportunities of new ways of working and leadership development have a positive effect on the application intention of potential nonprofit employees. The study builds on self-determination theory (SDT) and tests the hypothesized relationships via an online experiment (n=389) in Germany. Primarily through regression analyses, study 2 finds that nonprofit organizations should signal new ways of working in job advertisements to increase application intentions in the competition for personnel with leadership potential.

Based on social exchange theory (SET), study 3 uses an online survey (n=229) to examine the influence of a broad bundle of HRM practices on the retention success of nonprofit employees in Germany. Among other things, HRM practices with regard to salary, new ways of working, career development and supervision are reflected upon both conceptually and empirically. Retention success is measured via psychological attitudes. PLS-SEM results indicate that work-conditional, developmental and relational HRM practices increase nonprofit staff's intention to stay via perceived organizational support and job satisfaction.

Study 4 is a supplementary study to the dissertation. It implies a meta-narrative literature review of the current state of research on nonprofit succession management and leadership continuity. The paper argues against a narrow understanding of succession efforts only in relation to immediate leadership transitions. At the same time, it particularly calls for a more direct link between strategic-implemented and value-based succession efforts and the organizational outcome of leadership continuity.

Overall, the four studies in this dissertation provide scientific contributions to effective strategies for organizational navigation in the face of challenging succession tasks in nonprofit organizations. In this way, the dissertation supports formalized attractors of common good to ensure qualified staff and leadership in the long-term to successfully pursue their missions.

## B. Konferenzbeiträge und zusätzliche Ausarbeitungen

Neben den einzelnen Forschungsstudien der vorliegenden Dissertation wurden Zwischenstände auf internationalen und nationalen Fachkonferenzen präsentiert. Überdies wurde ein praxisorientierter Artikel in einer Fachzeitschrift veröffentlicht, welche zu Führungs-, Strategie- sowie globalen Wirtschaftsthemen informiert.

**Akademische Konferenzen (peer-reviewed)**

1. Geib, N. (2023). *Support to retain? Strategic HR practices in nonprofit retention management*, präsentiert auf der 11. Jahrestagung des European Research Network on Philantropy (ERNOP), 29.-30. Juni 2023, Zagreb, Kroatien.
2. Burns, J., Einolf, C., Geib, N., Li, H., & Peng, S. (2022). *The centrality of the executive: Preparing nonprofits for the next generation of leadership*, präsentiert auf der 51. Internationalen Konferenz der Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), 17.-19. November 2022, Raleigh (North Carolina), Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika.
3. Geib, N., & Boenigk, S. (2022). *The role of leadership development in nonprofit talent recruitment – An experiment*, präsentiert auf der 51. Internationalen Konferenz der Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), 17.-19. November 2022, Raleigh (North Carolina), Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika.
4. Boenigk, S., Saltzmann, C., Hesse, L., & Geib, N. (2022). *Transformative service initiatives in the public sector: work and wellbeing for refugees and internationals*, präsentiert auf der 12. Internationalen Konferenz der Service Special Interest Group of the American Marketing Association (SERVSIG), 16.-18. Juni 2022, Glasgow, Schottland.
5. Geib, N., & Boenigk, S. (2021). *Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach*, präsentiert auf der 10. Jahrestagung des European Research Network on Philantropy (ERNOP), 02.-03. Dezember 2021, Dublin, Irland.
6. Geib, N., & Boenigk, S. (2021). *Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach*, präsentiert auf der 50. Internationalen Konferenz der Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), 18.-20. November 2021, Atlanta (Georgia), Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika.

**Weitere Konferenzen (nicht peer-reviewed)**

1. Geib, N. (2023). *Support to retain? Strategic HR practices in nonprofit retention management*, präsentiert auf dem 20. Doktoranden- und Habilitandenkolloquium – „Management Science", 05.-07. Juli 2023, Bayreuth, Deutschland.

2. Geib, N., (2023). *Offer to retain? Employee benefit practices in nonprofit retention management,* präsentiert auf dem Nachwuchsworkshop der Wissenschaftlichen Kommission ÖBWL im VHB, 10.-11. Mai 2023, München, Deutschland.
3. Geib, N., & Boenigk, S. (2022). *Recruiting nonprofit talent: The role of leadership development in job entrance decisions*, präsentiert auf dem 19. Doktoranden- und Habilitandenkolloquium – „Management Science", 27.-29. Juli 2022, Köln, Deutschland.
4. Geib, N., & Boenigk, S. (2021). *Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach*, präsentiert auf dem Nachwuchsworkshop der Wissenschaftlichen Kommission ÖBWL im VHB, 15.-16. September 2021, Freiburg, Deutschland.

**Zusätzliche schriftliche Ausarbeitungen & Praxisartikel**

1. Geib (2022). Sustaining nonprofits: HR development, succession management, and leadership continuity. *The European Business Review, 2022*(September/October), 36–40.

**Sustaining nonprofits: HR development, succession management, and leadership continuity**

2022, Geib, N., in: *The European Business Review* (veröffentlicht). Eigenleistung: 100%

# Sustaining nonprofits: HR development, succession management, and leadership continuity

Nils Geib

Nonprofits are at a loss in their quest for professionalization without competent leadership personnel and their ongoing development. This article draws on recent research findings on the strategic actions of nonprofits with respect to talent and leadership staff development. It specifically discusses the benefits such an approach brings to nonprofits. In the interests of operational sustainability, the author appeals for a proactive, strategic approach to leadership continuity through the implementation of key HR development as a shared responsibility of boards, executives, and HR professionals – especially regarding succession management.

Nonprofits cannot get by without volunteers, honorary personnel, and professional staff. The last of these are particularly relevant in nonprofits' pursuit of professionalization. From front line workers, administrative and division executives to executive directors, employment and areas of responsibility in nonprofits can be as manifold as those in, for example, the private sector. Yet, recruiting and retaining professional staff in nonprofits is a multi-coined challenge of its own kind (Ban et al., 2003), especially in the case of nonprofit key employees, namely leadership personnel. Hence, the ongoing retirement of boomers (Russel et al., 2020), and increased competition for skilled workforce with other (nonprofit) organisations and among sectors (AbouAssi et al., 2021) makes it difficult for nonprofits to fill their leadership needs. This is exacerbated by nonprofits' challenge to offer competitive incentive systems (Froelich et al., 2011) for taking and keeping a nonprofit job when compared to private or public employers (Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2020). Thus, nonprofits' *leadership continuity* is at stake.

*Addressing nonprofits' leadership HR investment deficit*

In a complementary vein, many nonprofits struggle with addressing their specific leadership needs strategically. Often times, they have neither the expertise nor operational measures at hand to effectively provide their organisation with a "leaderful" pipeline that enriches their human capital (Brown et al., 2016). In fact, nonprofits are at constant risk of underinvesting, for example, time and overhead (also due to external restrictions (Berret, 2022)) into covering their current and future leadership needs and demanded competencies (Carman et al., 2010). This, in turn, is crucial for effective nonprofit recruitment and retention strategies (including

HR development-targeting initiatives). To build and maintain professional and collaborative structures in nonprofits, to establish and uphold service quality, and to make strategic organisational decisions in relation to societal dynamics, leadership must be ensured in nonprofits on a permanent basis, to keep the organisation on track. To do this best, nonprofits can initiate strategically based HR development programs, especially talent and succession management systems (Carpenter, 2017). These systems offer benefits to both nonprofit employees and their employer organisations. From an employee's perspective, they offer resources in terms of opportunities to grow and develop (Park et al., 2018). Employees may thus feel valued by their nonprofit employer while increasing their employment eligibility. Conversely, nonprofit organisations benefit from implementing these employee-focused HR development systems, too, even though their implementation does not come easy.

*Leadership HR development implementation – recent research insights*

Fundamentally, implementing talent and succession-management systems in nonprofits starts with putting (key) HR development on the board's agenda (Allison, 2002). However, that alone can be challenging (Gothard & Austin, 2013). It brings about further corresponding "to dos", such as the necessity, for example, to reflect on organisation-specific needs, to define career path opportunities, and to come up with actual developmental programs. It also pushes nonprofits to implement managerial assessment measures to review talent or the outcomes of succession-management systems (Gothard & Austin, 2013). To distribute workloads, division of labour is called for. While in nonprofits the organization's strategic agenda is set mainly by the board, it is executive directors, division executives, and HR professionals who are responsible for implementing objectives on strategic agendas (such as talent and succession management) at the operational level (Geib & Boenigk, 2022). Hence, a multi-part approach to responsibility lends itself to nonprofits for effective implementation of HR development systems. In fact, one of our latest studies at the Chair of Nonprofit Management at the University of Hamburg finds that shared leadership among boards, executives, and HR professionals favors the implementation of a comprehensive set of succession management activities (Geib & Boenigk, 2022). Out of our study's German sample of more than 1,000 leaders, only about 10% state that the implementation of succession-management HR systems is sufficient in their organization. Indeed, this is alarming (though it reflects international research of the past decades (Carman et al., 2010)). The good news is that this share is more than twice as high (13.8%) for nonprofits that share responsibilities in their succession-management efforts among boards, executives, and HR professionals, when compared to

nonprofits that do not share leadership (5.8%) (Geib & Boenigk, 2022). Having succession management activities implemented, in turn, significantly pays in terms of nonprofits' provision of leadership continuity (Geib & Boenigk, 2022) – a key organisational outcome for nonprofits to pursue.

*Leadership continuity – a strategic goal toward nonprofits' long-term success*

Ultimately, a nonprofit's ability to display leadership continuity certifies that it has sufficient high-flyers and potential leaders at hand. In this regard, it is an organisational outcome which shows "the extent to which a nonprofit is genuinely capable of developing and retaining leadership potential as well as plan ahead for leader deputization, thus ensuring ongoing leadership" (Geib & Boenigk, 2022). Beyond that, however, it is a promising nonprofit objective precisely because it affects the organization's operations. As Kesner and Sebora (1994) remarked in the early 1990s already – though still in the context of firms – organisational survival depends deeply on "how and to whom power and authority are passed". Yet the same holds true for nonprofits in their complex operational environments. In fact, there is a plethora of research that indicates that investment in human capital through HR development initiatives – succession-management initiatives in particular – does relate to higher performance (Ali & Mehreen, 2019), besides ensuring leadership continuity. For instance, HR development that targets leadership continuity could promote nonprofit employees' perceived personal growth (Suh, 2018) in their professional environment. This can reduce turnover among (potential leadership) employees (Kang et al., 2015), while fostering their work commitment (Wang, 2022). In turn, research underlines that committed employees positively affect organisational performance (Kang et al., 2015). Also, there is initial evidence of a positive relationship between employees' desire to advance in professional careers and an innovative work climate in different sectors (Ronquillo et al., 2021). From this perspective, nonprofits could benefit from providing HR development opportunities targeted at leadership continuity because this (a) attracts high-potential staff that – today – seek career advancement opportunities (Brink & Zondag, 2021), (b) promotes employees' commitment, and (c) can boost organisational innovative climate. Meanwhile, this last works to unlock competitive advantages and can link to performance, too (McDonald, 2007). Next to these benefits, however, leadership continuity – provided by, for example, succession management systems – signals reliability of relationships to nonprofits' critical and strategic partners, like funders. Typically, these relationships rely on long-term collaboration approaches in the joint provision or delivery of services. Yet, rapid and disruptive turnover in key staff positions, such as in leadership, convey

uncertainty (Canella & Lubatkin, 1993) and may evoke strategic realignments, which confound the original terms of the relationship. To prevent this from happening, systematically approached HR development may help to maintain smooth collaboration and reduce moments of disruption by involving strategic partners in the development processes at an early stage (Kim, 2012). In addition, they serve to introduce future leadership professionals to a nonprofit's peculiarities and specific leadership duties, and to acquaint them with key stakeholders (for example, boards, front-line staff, funders, cross-industry partners, etc.). Such smooth transition preparations can positively affect nonprofits' long-term success as well.

*The promise: target leadership continuity – there will be a rich harvest!*

Utilizing HR development, such as succession-management systems, not only fosters nonprofits' professionalism by gaining in leadership HR capital on an abstract level. Far more practically, it provides them with competent and committed employees who are able to succeed current leaders or fill future key vacancies in time. Moreover, it feeds into nonprofits' performance. On that note, the strategic management decision to strive for leadership continuity via key (talent and leadership) HR development bodes well for making vital contributions to nonprofits' long-term self-preservation. It belongs (more) on nonprofits' agendas. However, nonprofits should not be held exclusively accountable for the (leadership) development of their human resources. From the findings of our study, we conclude, among other things, that there is an urgent need to build more overhead tolerance for nonprofits on the part of stakeholders (such as funders), which recognizes or even appreciates investments in HR infrastructure as instrumental to sustainable operations (Geib & Boenigk, 2022). This way, nonprofits can operate according to modern HR standards and thus professionally add to the common good in our shared, volatile world.

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## C. Liste der Einzelarbeiten und Selbstdeklaration

Der Verband der Hochschullehrer und Hochschullehrerinnen für Betriebswirtschaftslehre e.V. benennt folgende Kriterien zur Autor:innenreihenfolge einer wissenschaftlichen Studie: Ideengenerierung, Literatursuche, Forschungsdesign, Datenerhebung, Datenauswertung, Schreiben, Konferenzbeiträge, Einreichung und Revisionen.

Die Promotionsordnung der Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften vom 18. Januar 2017 sieht neben dem Gesamttitel und dem verbindenden Kapitel folgende Punkte als elementare Teile einer in kumulativer Form abgefassten Dissertation an. Erstens ist gemäß § 6 Abs. 2b eine Liste der Titel und Ko-Autorinnen bzw. Ko-Autoren der Einzelarbeiten vorzulegen. Zweitens ist gemäß § 6 Abs. 3 im Falle von schriftlichen Promotionsleistungen, die in Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern entstanden sind, der Doktorand verpflichtet, seinen Anteil bei Konzeption, Durchführung und Berichtsabfassung im Einzelnen darzulegen, so dass der Anteil des Doktoranden eindeutig abgrenzbar und bewertbar ist. Diese Punkte finden sich in folgender Übersicht wieder und wurden mit den am Artikel beteiligten Ko-Autorinnen und Ko-Autoren einvernehmlich abgestimmt. Die Einschätzung des geleisteten Anteils erfolgt mittels Punkteinschätzung von 1 – 100 Prozent.

| **Titel der Dissertationsbeiträge** | | **Selbstdeklaration**<br>Geleisteter Beitrag des Doktoranden |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | Geib, N., & Boenigk, S. (2022). Improving nonprofit succession management for leadership continuity: A shared leadership approach. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 33*(1), 59–88.<br><br>Status: Veröffentlicht; VHB JOURQUAL 3: B; Impact Factor: 2.8. | Konzeption 50%<br>Durchführung 50%<br>Berichtsabfassung 50% |
| **2.** | Geib, N., & Boenigk, S. (2024). Nonprofit talent recruitment: An online experiment on new ways of working and leadership development opportunities. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership.*<br><br>Status: Veröffentlicht; VHB JOURQUAL 3: B; Impact Factor: 2.8. | Konzeption 50%<br>Durchführung 50%<br>Berichtsabfassung 50% |
| **3.** | Geib, N. (2024). Offer to remain? Examining HRM practices in nonprofit employee retention. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*.<br><br>Status: im Begutachtungsprozess; VHB JOURQUAL 3: B; Impact Factor: 2.8. | Konzeption 100%<br>Durchführung 100%<br>Berichtsabfassung 100% |
| **4.** | Burns, J., Einolf, C., Geib, N., Peng, S., & Stewart, A. (2024). Preparing for the next chapter: Reviewing and advancing research and practices on nonprofit leadership continuity. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly.*<br><br>Status: im Begutachtungsprozess; VHB JOURQUAL 3: B; Impact Factor: 2.8. | Konzeption 20%<br>Durchführung 20%<br>Berichtsabfassung 20% |

## D. Erklärung und Eidesstattliche Versicherung

*Erklärung*

Hiermit erkläre ich, Nils Geib, dass ich keine kommerzielle Promotionsberatung in Anspruch genommen habe. Die Arbeit wurde nicht schon einmal in einem früheren Promotionsverfahren angenommen oder als ungenügend beurteilt.

Hamburg, den 11. März 2024 Unterschrift

*Eidesstattliche Erklärung*

Ich, Nils Geib, versichere an Eides statt, dass ich die Dissertation mit dem Titel

„Leadership continuity at stake –
Succession management in nonprofit organizations“

selbst und bei einer Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Wissenschaftlerinnen oder Wissenschaftlern gemäß den beigefügten Darlegungen nach § 6 Abs. 3 der Promotionsordnung der Fakultät Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften vom 18. Januar 2017 verfasst habe. Andere als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel habe ich nicht benutzt.

Hamburg, den 11. März 2024 Unterschrift