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Effects of Socially Responsible HRM on Employee Loyalty

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ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ О САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОМ ХАРАКТЕРЕ ВЫПУСКНОЙ КВАЛИФИКАЦИОННОЙ РАБОТЫ

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ABSTRACT

Master Student's Name	Zhu Zixuan
Academic Advisor's Name	Dmitry Gennadevich Kucherov
Master Thesis Title	Effects of socially responsible HRM on employee loyalty
Description of the goal, tasks and main results the research	This study aims to examine the effects of socially responsible HRM on employee loyalty. The main tasks include: 1) to study the concepts of SRHRM, OCB, employee loyalty, as well as the relationship between these constructs. 2) investigating the social exchange theory and how it can potentially explain the underlying mechanism of relationships between SRHRM, OCB and employee loyalty. 3) to examine empirically the relationships between SRHRM and employee loyalty, and the mediating role of OCB in this relationship in the context of China's private sector. This study adopts a quantitative method to empirically examine the impact of SRHRM on employee loyalty and the mediating effect of OCB. Data was collected through a survey structured to the incumbent employees of businesses operating in China's private sector. The collected data was analyzed in the statistical analysis software SPSS 29.0. Main statistical analysis techniques employed include reliability testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, etc. The main results of this research are: a) we confirmed the positive impact of SRHRM on OCB and employee loyalty. b) the mediating role of OCB in the relationship between SRHRM and employee loyalty was identified. c) we proposed managerial recommendations on how to enhance employee loyalty through SRHRM practices
Keywords	Socially responsible HRM, organizational citizenship behavior, employee loyalty

АННОТАЦИЯ

Автор	Чжу Цзысюань
Научный руководитель	Кучеров Дмитрий Геннадьевич
Название ВКР	Влияние социально-ответственного управления человеческими ресурсами на лояльность сотрудников
Описание цели, задач и основных результатов исследования	Цель данного исследования - изучить влияние социально ответственного управления человеческими ресурсами на лояльность сотрудников. Основные задачи включают: 1) изучение понятий социально ответственного управления человеческими ресурсами, организационного гражданского поведения, лояльности сотрудников, а также взаимосвязи между этими конструктами. 2) исследовать теорию социального обмена и то, как она потенциально может объяснить глубинный механизм взаимосвязей между социально ответственным

	управлением человеческими ресурсами, организационным гражданским поведением и лояльностью сотрудников.
	3) эмпирически исследовать взаимосвязь между социально ответственным управлением человеческими ресурсами и лояльностью сотрудников, а также опосредующую роль организационного гражданского поведения в этой взаимосвязи в контексте частного сектора Китая.
	В данном исследовании используется количественный метод для эмпирического изучения влияния социально ответственного управления человеческими ресурсами на лояльность сотрудников и опосредованного эффекта организационного гражданского поведения. Сбор данных осуществлялся с помощью структурированного опроса действующих сотрудников предприятий, работающих в частном секторе Китая. Собранные данные были проанализированы с помощью программы статистического анализа SPSS 29.0. В качестве основных методов статистического анализа использовались проверка надежности, корреляционный анализ, регрессионный анализ и др.
	Основными результатами данного исследования являются:
	а) мы подтвердили положительное влияние социально ответственного управления человеческими ресурсами на организационное гражданское поведение и лояльность сотрудников и выявили опосредующую роль организационного гражданского поведения во взаимосвязи между социально ответственным управлением человеческими ресурсами и лояльностью сотрудников.
	в) мы предложили управленческие рекомендации по повышению лояльности сотрудников с помощью практики социально ответственного управления человеческими ресурсами
Ключевые слова	Социально ответственное управление человеческими ресурсами, организационное гражданское поведение, лояльность сотрудников

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INTRODUCTION

Socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) has become the focal point of the academia and managers of various types of organizations in recent years. The motivation behind this research stems from the increasing significance of the subject matter, namely SRHRM in today's business landscape with literature extensively confirming its potential to improve employee outcomes and contribute to organizational success (Shen and Zhu, 2011; Chanda and Goyal, 2019; Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019). Research has also shown the effectiveness of SRHRM in promoting employee engagement and encouraging voluntary behaviors in the workplace, such as employees' knowledge sharing and their participation in green initiatives (Newman et al., 2016; Jia et al., 2019). In addition, studies have established linkage between SRHRM and positive organizational reputation, OCB, as well as reduced turnover intentions (Sobhani et al., 2021).

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) amounts to a highly regarded concept in the organizational behavior literature, referring to employee's voluntary endeavors that transcends responsibilities outlined in the job description. OCB is of great importance in that they can increase organizational efficiency (Organ et al., 2006). Employee loyalty is another crucial factor for an organization's success for that content and fulfilled employees contribute to growth and prosperity of the organization. Studies show that employee loyalty directly impacts a company's competitiveness, as it is more cost-effective to retain existing employees than hire new ones – even small reductions in employee turnover can lead to significant cost savings and increased profits over time (Pan, 2018).

Studying the relationships between SRHRM, OCB and employee loyalty and to understand the underlying mechanism of these relationships pose significant practical values for HRM academics as well as managers and HR practitioners of various types of organization. By strategically prioritizing SRHRM and implementing SRHRM practices, organizations can effectively create positive work environment where employees are encouraged to participate in OCBs (Newman et al., 2016). This in turn can lead to employee loyalty with reduced turnover rate, subsequently contributing to competitive advantages, and ultimately, organizational success (Sharma et al., 2015). While previous studies have predominantly focused on the direct impact of SRHRM on employee outcomes, there is a gap in researching the underlying mechanisms that explains SRHRM's influence on employee loyalty, particularly through the mediating effect of OCB.

China today is one of the largest economies in the world, second to the US. Over the past decade, China's business and employment environment has undergone a significant transformation with companies implementing various strategies to enhance the efficiency of HRM activities in order to navigate the changes. The combination of an increasingly elderly population and the rising

expectations of China's millennials is compelling companies to reconsider their approach to manage their workforce, especially talents retention as the importance of retaining a skilled workforce cannot be emphasized enough in a country where just 4% of the population has a degree. In this time of change and evolution, China's private sector amounts to an interesting research context due to its political, cultural and economic uniqueness, as well as its significance with PRC President Xi Jinping emphasizing that China's private sector is a key part of the nation's 'socialist market economy' in his 2020 speech.

The goal of this research is to address the observed gaps by examining the effects of SRHRM on employee loyalty. Derived from this research goal, the research question of our study is "what is the relationship between socially responsible HRM and employee loyalty and does organizational citizenship behavior mediate this relationship?" To reach the research goal and answer our research question, the following tasks were accomplished:

1) to study the concepts of SRHRM, OCB, employee loyalty, as well as the relationship between these constructs.

2) investigating the social exchange theory and how it can potentially explain the underlying mechanism of relationships between SRHRM, OCB and employee loyalty.

3) to examine empirically the relationships between SRHRM and employee loyalty, and the mediating role of OCB in this relationship in the context of China's private sector.

This study adopts a quantitative method to empirically examine the impact of SRHRM on employee loyalty and the mediating effect of OCB. Data was collected through a survey structured to the incumbent employees of businesses operating in China's private sector. The collected data was analyzed in the statistical analysis software SPSS 29.0. Main statistical analysis techniques employed include reliability testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, etc.

The theoretical contributions are reflected in three aspects. First, this study amounts to a valuable addition to SRHRM literature, significantly contributing to the understanding of SRHRM practices and OCB's impact. The results of our study are consistent to previous research findings, thereby validating and further confirming the established knowledge. The novelty of this research is examining and identifying OCB as the mediator through which SRHRM lead to employee loyalty, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms.

Secondly, we have attempted to utilize social exchange theory (SET) as the theoretical framework that explains the interactions between SRHRM, OCB and employee loyalty. SET posits that employees that receive benefits from their companies would reciprocate positively through voluntary behaviors (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003). By empirically confirming SRHRM

positively relates to OCB and employee loyalty, this study is consistent with the idea central to SET. That is, employees would engage in discretionary behaviors (engaging in OCBs and being loyal to the organization) as a form of reciprocal exchange as they receive benefits from SRHRM practices (Morrison, 1994; Schaninger and Turnipseed, 2005).

Finally, having identified OCB as a partial mediator in the relationship between SRHRM and employee loyalty, we create a new avenue for explaining the mechanisms through which SRHRM practices influence employee attitudes and behaviors. While previous research has demonstrated the importance of OCB in explaining the effects of certain HRM practices on employee related outcomes, this study provides empirical evidence confirming the mediating role of OCB specifically in the context of SRHRM and employee loyalty (Gond et al., 2010). In addition, the intermediatory nature of OCB suggests that there is potentially other pathway through which SRHRM influences employee loyalty. Therefore, we have pointed possible directions for future research.

This study also offers several managerial implications for organizations operating in China's private sector as well as reference for organizations aiming at enhancing employee loyalty from various cultural settings. For starters, organizations can leverage SRHRM to increase employee loyalty. Specifically, employers can provide CSR training to the employees. They can also link performance appraisals, as well as rewards and compensation to social performance. These practices can collectively create a work environment where employees feel valued and engaged (Shen and Benson, 2016). The positive impact of SRHRM on employee loyalty, partially mediated by OCB, suggests that investing in CSR initiatives can lead to long-term benefits in terms of employee retention and organizational efficiency (Newman et al., 2016; Sobhani et al., 2021).

Furthermore, managers of organizations, especially HR professionals should recognize the importance of OCB among employees and actively promote them through different means as it also positively impact employee loyalty, as our study suggests. Managers can cultivate a positive organizational culture through encouraging employees to engage in OCBs as they see fit, such as helping colleagues, defending the organization, and showing pride in representing the organization (Organ et al., 2006; Lee and Allen, 2002). By fostering a culture of OCB orientation, organizations can effectively achieve the objective of enhancing employee loyalty through SRHRM while increasing organizational efficiency.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The following chapter provides the theoretical background of three core concepts of our study – SRHRM, employee loyalty, and OCB, including their evolution over time, antecedents, practices and outcomes. Relevant literature regarding the relationships between the three concepts is discussed. Additionally, by critically analyzing the research findings of previous literature, the strengths and weaknesses of these studies are articulated, and research gaps are identified. Then, based on the insights gathered from existing literature, a series of hypotheses is developed, justified utilizing findings of these literature.

1.1. Socially responsible human resource management

Integrating CSR into human resource management

Before delving into our main subject matter SRHRM, we need to discuss a broader concept referred to as corporate social responsibility (CSR). The concept of CSR has evolved significantly since it first emerged in the 1950s, followed by extensive development in its conceptualization and understanding of the concept (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1998; Kramer and Porter, 2002). It is increasingly recognized among scholars, as well as practitioners, as a key mechanism for businesses to achieve long-term success and a configuration towards sustainability (Porter and Kramer, 2002). Empirical evidence suggests that CSR contributes to positive corporate reputation, preempts legal sanctions, serves as responses to NGO actions, and influences various organizational performance indicators, including customer loyalty and employee retention (Turban and Greening, 1996; Spar and La Mure, 2003; Fombrun, 2005). Overall, CSR has received extensive acknowledgement as empirical evidence shows it can boost business success as well as sustainability.

Human resource management (HRM) is an integral part of contemporary corporate management, covering a variety of aspects such as employee recruitment, training, performance management, compensation and benefits, and labor relations (Noe et al., 2006). CSR addresses the interests of multiple parties and extends beyond legal requirements so that broader HRM issues are included. Specifically, CSR is immensely associated with both interests of internal (employees) and external stakeholders, such as shareholders, customers, suppliers, communities and governments (Carroll, 1998; Lee, 2008).

While scholars have predominantly focused on employee rights that are specified in labor laws, as well as in international conventions, CSR extends to broader HRM problems that go beyond legal requirements (Pearson et al., 2002). A case in point is that CSR initiatives can involve family leave, health benefits, safety measures, training opportunities, and avoiding layoffs (Waring and Lewer, 2004). These benefits are not mandated by labor laws or other legal requirement of any kind but can

significantly to the positive working experience of employees. In this sense, HRM has undergone significant evolution in past decades, transitioning from its traditional role of securing a skilled and motivated workforce to a more crucial factor influencing organizational effectiveness (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009).

Elaborating on how firms nowadays extend their CSR efforts in HRM, in addition to legal compliance and employee-oriented HRM, firms engage in general CSR-facilitation HRM, which involves social and environmental activities such as taking measures to reduce poverty, promoting AIDS awareness, addressing climate change issues, as well as contributing to environmental protection and disaster relief initiatives (Menestrel and Bettignies, 2002; Basu and Palazzo, 2008). Environmental protection is an important extension. Enterprises have actively responded to environmental problems by reducing pollution emissions, saving energy and recycling resources. For example, technology companies that promote CSR are reducing their reliance on natural resources by developing energy-saving products. These initiatives not only contribute to organizational legitimacy but also serve a community purpose, aligning with a range of broader social values (Winstanley et al., 1996). Likewise, companies' engaging in these CSR activities outside the corporate context are not mandatory according to regulations or laws but contribute to the positive image of the firm and reputation. Moreover, the increased emphasis on CSR has expanded organizations' social responsibilities beyond philanthropy, bordering activities that address environmental impacts, societal welfare, and decent work conditions (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001; Carroll, 2016). Thus, by extending their CSR efforts that transcend legal requirement, modern firms have expanded their responsibilities while achieving various positive outcomes.

SRHRM was first introduced by Orlitzky and Swanson in 2006, and later developed into a concept by Shen and Zhu (Orlitzky and Swanson, 2006; Shen and Zhu, 2011). There is no uniform standard for the definition of SRHRM, and many scholars have given different definitions from different research perspectives according to their own research needs. Newman defines SRHRM from the perspective of employee orientation as a series of human resource management practices that can influence the organizational identity and organizational citizenship behaviors of employees in order to encourage employees to actively participate in CSR (Newman et al., 2016). The author's definition emphasizes the positive impact of SRHRM on positive employee outcomes yet is somewhat narrow, because it primarily focuses on employee orientation without considering the broader aspects of HRM. Moreover, it does not address how HRM practices can align with company's overall strategic goals of CSR beyond employee engagement. Likewise, Shen and Zhu also combine the concepts of CSR and HRM from the employee-oriented perspective, suggesting that SRHRM essentially is "an HRM

approach linked with CSR goals" (Shen and Zhu, 2011). This definition links HRM practices directly with CSR goals thereby provides a more holistic view. Kundu and Gahlawat, also orienting to the employee participation, believe that SRHRM is the implementation of employee-oriented HRM practices to motivate employees to take on the role of CSR practitioners, emphasizing that employees are both participants and communicators of CSR (Kundu and Gahlawat, 2016). The authors offer a definition that recognize the dual role of employees as both implementers and advocates of CSR whereas focuses heavily on emoloyee orientation, potentially overlooking other crucial stakeholders.

Deeply rooted in multiple fields of CSR, ethics, HRM, and organizational behavior, SRHRM is derived from Carroll's CSR pyramid, which provides an understanding of SRHRM in the domains of philanthropy, ethics, legality, and economics (Iqbal et al., 2019; Carroll, 1998; Turker, 2018). This model emphasizes the importance of addressing stakeholders' financial, legal, ethical, and discretional expectations, which subsequently remain at the forefront of SRHRM (Ramos-González et al., 2022; Carroll, 1998). In the early days, literature predominantly focused on how the enhancement of organizational performance, competitiveness and efficiency can be achieved through SRHRM. Over time, research began to explore the impact of SRHRM on employees, clients, and society as a whole (Ramos-González et al., 2022).

The antecedents of SRHRM can be broadly categorized into internal and external factors. Internal factors cover organizational and individual attributes, such as organizational culture, leadership, employee perception whereas external factors encompass external environment landscape including regulatory environment and societal expectations (Pimenta, et al., 2024). Research has shown that workers' perception of SRHRM relates to work engagement (WE) and have explored the potential contribution of perceived organizational support (POS) and affective commitment (AC) in explaining the relationship. Therefore, it can be inferred that POS and AC also amount to antecedents of SRHRM (Pimenta, et al., 2024; Omidi and Zotto, 2022).

SRHRM dimensions, practices, and outcomes

Given today's rapidly industrializing world, SRHRM has gained significant importance. Scholars classified SRHRM into four different types of structure: unidimensional, two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and four-dimensional, depending on the study's focus and research setting. Shen and Benson view SRHRM as a whole (unidimensional), that is, HRM practices that are intended to influence employees' behaviors and attitudes while supporting the implementation of external CSR initiatives (Shen and Benson, 2016). Legal compliance HRM and employee-oriented HRM comprise the two-dimensional framework of SRHRM. Based on these two structures, Shen and Zhu further suggested a three-dimensional structure for SRHRM that separates it into: legal compliance HRM,

employee-oriented HRM, and general CSR facilitation HRM (Shen and Zhu, 2011). Finally, in their four-dimensional framework, Kundu and Gahlawat built upon the three-dimensional framework to contend that corporations have an obligation to carry out general CSR conduct activities. It is recommended by the authors that corporations engage in proactive actions that benefit a broader spectrum of stakeholders in society, in addition to responding to general CSR initiatives (Kundu and Gahlawat, 2016).

The growing importance of SRHRM stems from recognizing employees as stakeholders and the critical roles of CSR and HRM in organizational activities (Sarvaiya et al., 2014). SRHRM requires organizations to integrate the CSR values and practices into their HRM practices and pay attention to the overall development of employees and social impact. Specifically, this integration is mainly reflected in the key HRM aspects. In recruitment and selection, the focus is on fairness and impartiality in the recruitment process by avoiding discrimination, and prioritizing candidates with social responsibility awareness. Regarding training and development, SRHRM aims to improve employees' awareness and ability of conducting social responsibility through training and encourage employees to participate in social welfare activities. In performance management, by including social responsibility KPIs in performance evaluation, employees are motivated to practice social responsibility in their work. As for compensation and reward, organizations are to provide compensation and welfare in line with CSR standards and pay attention to the health and well-being of employees. Concerning labor relations management, SRHRM requires the establishment of harmonious labor relations their employees' legitimate rights and interests are ensured, and career development is promoted (Zhao et al., 2021).

A comprehensive framework of SRHRM policies and practices is proposed by Barrena-Martinez et al, including seven key HRM processes and practices (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019). The concrete processes and practices the author suggests are as follows:

  – Attraction and retention of employees

    In respect of attracting and retaining employees, SRHRM encompasses practices that aim at ensuring transparent and impartial recruitment and selection processes that align candidates with the company's culture, training opportunities, as well as prospects for growth and promotion within the organization (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019). Specifically, the recruitment process is tailored to attract individuals who share the company's socially responsible values (Fernández et al., 2018). Furthermore, SRHRM includes specific adaptation and integration initiatives for new employees, providing them with welcome manuals and training on the company culture. Transparent mechanisms for internal promotions and

communication about future vacancies and career plans are integral parts of SRHRM, ensuring that all employees can have access to these opportunities. Retention of skilled workers is achieved through motivational mechanisms and incentive programs, including awards for meeting certain goals and demonstrating collaborative attitudes (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

- Training and continuous development

Regarding training and development of incumbent employees, SRHRM aims to create a work environment that encourages learning, autonomy, and continuous improvement (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019). Training needs are periodically assessed, and various learning methodologies are established, including face-to-face seminars, online courses, and training via the intranet. Regular performance reviews enhance professional development and job enrichment. Additionally, SRHRM emphasizes promoting the knowledge sharing initiated by employees through various channels and techniques including, group meetings, and brainstorming sessions (Fernández et al., 2018; Jia et al., 2019; Gutiérrez-Broncano et al., 2024).

- Employment relations management

In maintaining positive employee-employer relationship, a comfortable work environment that respects employees' dignity and meets their social needs is a cornerstone of SRHRM (Shen and Benson, 2016). In this respect, SRHRM facilitates interaction between employees, their representatives and employers, promoting dialogue and effective conflict management. Additionally, regular meetings and interaction mechanisms are established to foster an environment where reciprocity, trust, honesty, and commitment are achieved among managers and subordinates. Moreover, early communication of changes affecting employees' contractual relationships is also prioritized maintain transparency and trust (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

- Communication, transparency, and social dialogue

A key aspect of SRHRM practices is ensuring both formal and informal communication among employees through various channels such as group meetings (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019). Transparency is key, with the company providing information on economic, social, and environmental actions and results. A free media environment facilitates social dialogue, where employees of varying statuses can meet and share information. Participation and idea exchange

are promoted through tools such as quality circles, suggestion systems, and discussions (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Diversity and equal opportunities

Implementing diversity and equal opportunity principles across all HRM policies, practices, and processes is a significant aspect of SRHRM (Shen and Benson, 2016). This includes creating and promoting equality and diversity plans, assessing training needs on diversity and equal opportunities, and integrating these principles as criteria for workforce composition and management. Diverse teams are formed to foster creativity, group opinions, and workflows (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Fair remuneration and social benefits

SRHRM ensures justice, fairness, and transparency in employee remuneration both internally and externally. In particular, remuneration is based on skills and daily performance, and additional benefits such as scholarships, life insurance, retirement plans, and medical services are provided to encourage retention and motivate employees. Furthermore, tools and resources that offer economic benefits, such as housing or vehicle assistance are also a part of this approach (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Prevention, health, and security at work

Training programs and actions aimed at improving occupational well-being and safety may go beyond legal mandates under the scheme of SRHRM (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019). Employees are assigned monitoring and control tasks to cultivate a culture focused on prevention and well-being. In addition, certification of safety and health standards, such as OSHAS and ISO is also pursued by employers to ensure appropriate levels of employee safety, along with measures to minimize physical and emotional risks including stress and occupational diseases aiming at protecting employees as well as their families (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Work-family balance

Facilitating a balance between work and family life is an integral part of SRHRM, which includes accommodating modifications in working hours and shifts meeting employees' needs and granting flexibility in paternity and maternity leave, lactation periods, and absences of various causes. SRHRM policy also supports the transfer of employees to other work centers to better meet their personal and professional needs (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

The positive outcomes of SRHRM have been extensively studied by many scholars. Specifically, Kundu et al found that specific SRHRM practices can enhance employees' work attitudes such as trust, motivation, and affective commitment (Kundu et al., 2016). Gahlawat et al further examined and established a connection between SRHRM and organizational citizenship behavior in the Indian context, highlighting that the mediating role of work motivation and job satisfaction (Gahlawat et al., 2018). Different models of SRHRM were examined in Europe, emphasizing the influence of institutional context on the implementation of SRHRM practices (Diaz-Carrion et al., 2018). Based on findings of empirical research, Shen suggested that SRHRM practices in international subsidiaries of multinationals can positively impact HCNs' attitudes and behaviors (Shen et al., 2018). Nakra et al investigated the impact of SRHRM practices on organizational sustainability performance in Indian context, implying a positive link between SRHRM practices and OSP (Nakra et al., 2023). These studies contribute to the insights of SRHRM's impact but do not fully explain the consequences of these effects, showing the full chain of reactions, as well as the holistic picture regarding interactions between employees and the organization in the context of SRHRM.

Despite the level of comprehensiveness and depth existing literature on SRHRM demonstrates, several gaps can be identified, based on which avenues for future research may emerge. For example, the long-term benefits of SRHRM, particularly associated with its impact on employee loyalty and organizational performance need to be examined through empirical studies (Sobhani et al., 2021; Nakra et al., 2023). Furthermore, the influence of contextual factors on the development and implementation of SRHRM strategies, practices as well as the outcomes of SRHRM should be further explored to provide a more nuanced understanding. Some examples of contextual factors are national culture, industry-specific dynamics, and regulatory frameworks (Gahlawat et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2018).

1.2. Concept of organizational citizenship behavior

Definition and dimensions of OCB

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was used to describe employees' behavior within different organizations' social systems when first introduced in 1980s (Organ and Konovsky, 1989; Moorman, 1991). Different versions of definitions of OCB can be found in the literature, central to all of which being that OCBs are discretionary employee actions that, while not being essential to job performance, contribute to organizational efficiency (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993). Examples of OCB include assisting coworkers and attending non-mandatory events. Organ defines OCB as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ,

1988). Organ's definition of OCB has a twofold implication: First, OCBs are essentially discretionary behaviors which means they are required by job description and are based on employees' own choice. Second, OCBs can increase organizational effectiveness.

In recent years, OCB has received significant attention in multiple domains including industrial psychology and organizational behavior and has been considered as a vital aspect for the smooth functioning of organizations (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Initially, OCB was categorized into seven domains (Organ and Konovsky, 1989; Moorman, 1991). However, subsequent researchers downsized these domains for there are similarities between certain dimensions such as civic virtue and courtesy (Husin et al., 2012). The predominant five-domain concept of OCB includes:

- Conscientiousness: employees' fulfilling their in-role behaviors and adhering to prescribed rules.
- Altruism: helping others and demonstrating of helpfulness.
- Civic virtue: employees' responsibly participation in the political or social activities of the organization.
- Courtesy: employees' treating others with respect
- Sportsmanship: not complaining or exhibiting undesirable behaviors and attitudes toward the organization as well as colleagues (Lam et al., 1999; Husin et al., 2012).

Several scholars have looked into the antecedents of OCB. For example, Cardona et al introduced the concept of work exchange as a situational antecedent of OCB expanding on prior research utilizing social exchange theory in explaining OCB antecedents (Cardona et al., 2004). Similarly, Piercy et al recognized perceived organizational support (POS) as a significant factor in fostering OCB and enhancing salesperson performance (Piercy et al., 2006). Torlak et al investigated the influence of materialistic attitudes on OCB, identifying materialism as a dispositional variable that serves as an antecedent (Torlak et al., 2007). Jha explored the roles of transformational leadership and psychological empowerment in explaining the motivations of OCB (Jha, 2014). Randolph-Seng et al through empirical examination confirmed organizational identity as a causal antecedent of OCB and highlighted the impact of visual stimuli on work behavior (Randolph-Seng et al., 2018). Grego-Planer examined the role of organizational commitment as a determinant of OCB in both public and private sectors (Grego-Planer, 2019). Kandlousi et al investigated into the construct of communication satisfaction as a predictor of OCB, focusing on the effects of formal and informal communication within the electrical manufacturing industry in Iran (Kandlousi et al., 2010). Finally, Purba et al

highlighted the contributions of personality traits and organizational commitment to the development of OCB (Purba et al., 2004).

Despite the extensive attention paid to exploring antecedents of OCB, there is a limited OCB research associated with the impact of OCB on various individua and organizational outcomes. A meta-analysis was conducted by Podsakoff et al to examine the relationships between OCB and individual and organizational level outcomes, aimed to summarize the research regarding the consequences of OCBs (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Research indicates that the relationships among OCB, task performance, and individual career outcomes are complex and may have boundary conditions (Bergeron et al., 2013). In addition, Marshall et al highlighted the link between salesperson OCB and performance outcomes in an industrial sales setting (Marshall et al., 2012). Wang et al utilized a system dynamic model to evaluate the dynamic impacts of OCB on the performance of megaprojects (Wang et al., 2018).

The study of OCB has three basic assumptions, first being that OCB is motivated by selflessness or altruism, such as job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, or a sense of responsibility. Secondly, OCB contributes to the effectiveness of the organization's operations, such as acting as a 'lubricant' for the organization's operations. Finally, OCB is ultimately beneficial to the employee, such as creating an attractive working environment. With the development of theoretical research and the accumulation of experimental evidence, these basic assumptions have been gradually challenged. For example, Bolino questioned the three basic assumptions mentioned above and conducted a systematic discussion, followed by many scholars investigating the negative impact of OCB (Bolino, 1999). Nevertheless, these studies allow us to see the other side of OCB by providing a more multidimensional understanding of it.

The traditional view of OCB is that it is a kind of informal selfless altruistic behavior of organizational members, and its established assumption is that organizational members are motivated by a certain personality tendency or sense of responsibility to help others or the organization. Bolino argues that some individuals engage in OCB not out of a desire to give back to the organization, but simply to impress others and thereby achieve some of their own ends (Bolino, 1999). In other words, in addition to social exchange motives, OCB may also arise from impression management motives. Impression management refers to the process by which an individual influences or controls others to form an impression of him or her through a certain way of over a certain way of influencing or controlling others to form an impression of him or her. That is, the individual consciously causes others to form a certain impression of him or her. Impression management researchers have distinguished strategies that people use to reinforce their self-image at work that superficially

resemble OCB. For example, an employee would display OCB in front of his supervisor near the end-of-year evaluation to make a good impression (Bolino, 1999).

The other aspect of OCB's negative effects is the employee related outcomes. As Organ and Ryan pointed out, there has been insufficient research on the potential impact of OCB on employees (Organ and Ryan, 1995). Research suggest OCB can have negative impact on employees in several ways. First, engaging in too much OCB may lead to the blurring of in-role behaviors and cause stress for employees. Tepper et al argue that if employees engage too much in OCB, they may feel role ambiguity and have difficulty distinguishing OCBs from in-role behaviors (Tepper et al, 2001). Perlow's findings also suggest that employees who engage in both in-tole behaviors and OCBs often feel a sense of ambiguity as well as stress. Role ambiguity, in addition to its possible negative effects on employees (e.g., low levels of job satisfaction and high levels of job stress), can lead to conflict between supervisors and employees due to differing definitions of in-role behaviors from both parties (Perlow, 2021). Similarly, Lam et al found that many supervisors tend to view OCB as part of in-role behaviors (Lam et al., 1999).

Moreover, supervisors' endorsement and preference for OCB may have a negative impact on employees' well-being. When conducting performance appraisals, supervisors usually take into account employees' OCB, which leads to complicating the performance appraisal process for employees. That is, because certain OCB are more salient and visible than in-role behaviors, they may affect the reliability and validity of performance appraisal criteria. For example, Podsakoff et al argue that based on the principle of reciprocity, supervisors may give higher ratings to employees who engage in OCBs to help their superiors. In addition, supervisors may mistakenly believe that OCBs are related to performance, which leads them to assign inappropriate weight to OCBs when evaluating employee performance (Podsakoff et al., 2009). In another study by Podsakoff and MacKenzie, it was also found that supervisors may tend to value some forms of OCBs in favor of others. In this case, employees may compete to deliberately demonstrate OCB, resulting in higher levels of work stress and work overload (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1993).

Finally, OCB as an instrumental behavior increases the political behavior in the organization, which is likely to cause dissatisfaction and conflict among employees. For example, as mentioned earlier, some employees may engage in OCB for the purpose of making 'others look bad' by offering help to others, but the recipients may sometimes resent them because their help makes the recipients doubt their own abilities or threatens the recipients' self-esteem. In addition, some employees don't like coworkers who 'suck up' to their supervisors by volunteering to take on work projects, work overtime, etc. This is especially true for those who have family or other personal problems.

Resentment toward coworkers who engage in OCBs is especially strong for those who are unable to do so due to family or other personal issues, or for those who perform well in their roles but are not promoted (Berber and Rofcanin, 2012).

1.3. Employee loyalty

Employee loyalty is a multidimensional concept, with researchers offering diverse definitions to capture its essence. Elegido characterizes it as an employee's deliberate commitment to advancing the employer's best interests, even at the expense of personal sacrifice beyond legal and moral obligations, underscoring the role of commitment and selflessness (Elegido, 2013). Conversely, Masakure defines it as the manifestation of employee's positive attitudes and behaviors towards the employer or workplace (Masakure, 2016). Meschke presents a nuanced understanding by mapping out various dimensions of employee loyalty, including loyalty to the supervisor, working group, and organization (Meschke, 2021). Despite the variations in presented definitions, they collectively demonstrate the significance of commitment, positive attitudes, and behaviors towards the employer in conceptualizing employee loyalty.

The recognition of employee loyalty as an integral element for the success of an organization implies that content and fulfilled employees are determined to contribute to the company's growth and prosperity (Murali et al., 2017). Employees remain loyal to their employers due to their positive affect and feelings toward the organization, which fosters resistance to adopting opportunistic behaviors such as accepting external job offers (Logan, 1984; Mitchell and Lee, 2001). Employee loyalty mainly manifests in a reluctance to leave the current job, and thereby researchers predominantly measure it through the scale of intention to leave (Moore, 2000). High turnover rates pose significant challenges for companies, particularly when skilled employees depart for the cost of skilled employee turnover can be substantial (Wright and Bonett, 2007).

Many studies on loyalty in economics and business administration adopt Hirschman's analytical framework. This framework considers loyalty as either an inclination that promotes the voicing of opinions and discourages individuals from leaving the organization, or as a different approach to behavior that is distinct from both leaving and expressing one's opinions (Hirschman, 1970). Loyalty in the attitudinal approach is characterized by psychological tendencies such as identification with, attachment to or commitment to the organization. These inclinations can have emotional or moral dimensions and are often difficult to observe directly, relying on self-reported, qualitative assessments for measurement (Hirschman, 1970; Allen and Meyer, 1990). In the behavioral approach, on the other hand, loyalty is observable and manifests itself in the constructive behavior of employees despite dissatisfaction.

Another model interpreting loyalty is the EVLN model, which is also based on Hirschman's model, identifies loyalty as one of four possible reactions to dissatisfaction, alongside leaving, voice and neglect, with cynicism being added (Hirschman, 1970; Rusbult et al., 1988). To address the limitations of both attitudinal and behavioral approaches, some authors take a mixed approach in which attitudinal dimensions complement or explain behavioral indicators of loyalty. Loyalty can be defined as a relationship of trust that generates resistance to opportunistic behavior in the face of external job offers, or as considerable tenure coupled with a strong sense of belonging (Dutot, 2004; Peretti, 2005). In addition, concepts related to loyalty such as the psychological contract or trust between employer and employee are explored in the literature (Guest and Conway, 2002; Ashleigh et al, 2012).

Employee loyalty have a profound impact on several aspects of a company's success. First, it significantly impacts the competitiveness of the organization, as retaining current employees is more economically beneficial than recruiting new employees. It can significantly reduce employee turnover and reduce the recruitment, training and adaptation costs associated with employee turnover. Studies have shown that even a small reduction in employee turnover can lead to significant cost savings, while incremental improvements in loyalty can significantly increase company profits over time (Krekel et al., 2019; Meschke, 2021; Pan, 2018; Guillon and Cezanne, 2014). Secondly, loyal employees typically have higher job satisfaction and productivity, and are willing to invest more time and energy to improve the overall effectiveness of the company (Pandey, 2012). Furthermore, loyal employees are more likely to participate actively in teamwork, promoting harmony and cohesion within the company. Finally, employee loyalty also enhances market competitiveness and customer satisfaction, as loyal employees are better able to provide high-quality services and products, earning customers' trust and reputation (Yee et al., 2010).

Employee loyalty is a crucial aspect of business success as it can lead to improved work performance and overall business performance. Various studies have identified several factors that influence employee loyalty. For example, studies show that career development, compensation, and organizational climate significantly impact employee loyalty (Purnamasari et al., 2019). Leadership style also proves to have a positive and significant impact on employee performance and loyalty (Jayanti et al., 2020; Utami et al., 2020). According to Dhir et al., person-job fit, person-organization fit, and perceived supervisor support are influential factors affecting both job satisfaction and employee loyalty (Dhir et al., 2020). It is to be noted that CSR was also examined by scholars as a determinant of employee loyalty in this study (Swanson et al., 2020). Similarly, Stojanovic et al emphasized the importance of CSR for employee loyalty and company performance in their study

(Stojanovic et al., 2020). Furthermore, Chang et al investigated the relationship between CSR performance, employee enthusiasm and financial outcomes and suggested that employee turnover as an indicator of loyalty could mediate this relationship (Chang et al., 2021).

Theoretical perspective of SET

Social exchange theory (SET) was originated in the 1920s and has ever since evolved into a comprehensive framework for understanding social behavior (Homans, 1958; Thibault and Kelley, 1959). The development of SET is primarily credited to behavioral sociologist Homans, who introduced the concept referred to as "social behavior as exchange" and refined it into its foundational forms (Homans, 1958). In the latter half of the 20th century, SET emerged as a theoretical alternative to Parsonian functionalism, offering valuable insights into both utilitarian and sociological perspectives on relationships within social networks, and continued to evolve, addressing the increasing complexity of organizational operations and employee behavior (Homans, 1958; Thibault and Kelley, 1959; Blau, 1964; Sahlins, 1972).

SET plays a significant role in explaining social behavior within both dyadic and collective relationships through a cost-benefit analysis of interactions (Homans, 1958; Thibault and Kelley, 1959). Homans takes a reductionist perspective to describe the relationships between individuals through reinforcement mechanisms, where behavior is influenced by rewards and inhibited by punishments, which an idea rooted in operant conditioning (Homans, 1958). Blau contributed to SET framework by offering a technical-economic perspective on social systems, particularly emphasizing utilitarian principles, in which behavior driven by anticipated benefits rather than actual gains (Blau, 1964). Thibaut and Kelley further developed SET framework by applying it to human decision-making process within various social groups, therefore creating matrices aiming at predicting the outcomes of relationships based on the costs and rewards involved (Thibault and Kelley, 1959). Regardless of divergent approaches applied by these scholars, they collectively viewed social behavior as a form of exchange and have shaped the evolution of SET through their different perspectives and approaches, emphasizing SET's significance in understanding social interactions across various settings, from organizations to personal relationships (Homans, 1958; Thibault and Kelley, 1959; Blau, 1964).

SET has been extensively applied in various fields of social sciences and has served as a tool to understand and explain social behavior across various contexts. For example, in sociology, SET is used to examine social structures, relationships, social dilemmas, power dynamics, and institutional behaviors, and to offer insights into how interactions within social structures shape societal norms and values. Additionally, in the realm of social psychology, SET contributes to interpersonal relationships

analysis, providing explanations for the formation, maintenance, as well as dissolution of friendships, romantic relationships and family ties (O'Brien and Kollock, 1991; Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu, 2018). What is concerned with our research particularly is the application of SET in the domain of organizational behavior, where SET provides a framework for analyzing workplace dynamics, employee behavior, motivation, and job satisfaction and thereby elucidating how employees' actions impact organizational performance (O'Brien and Kollock, 1991).

In business research, as mentioned above, the SET theory is commonly utilized to explain the dynamics of relationships within organizations, including those between employers, managers and subordinates (Jiang et al., 2012). Several studies have applied SET to understand various aspects of employee behavior, including intention to quit. For example, Kramer et al developed a typology of information exchange strategies based on SET (Kramer et al., 1995). Redman et al utilized SET to examine the impact of trust relationships on employees' attitudes and behaviors, most significant among which being intention to quit (Redman et al., 2011).

According to SET, as employees benefit from policies and practices by the organization, they feel the necessity of reciprocity and may be inclined to engage in reciprocal behaviors (Jiang et al., 2012; Newman et al., 2016). Moreover, in sustainable HRM research, scholars have attempted to utilize SET to explain the association between sustainable HRM policies and employee outcomes (Elias et al., 2023). An HRM system that focuses on enhancing employee well-being through supportive practices is likely to strengthen employee affection and subsequently encourage reciprocal behaviors (Kehoe and Wright, 2013). In addition, CSR can effectively facilitate social exchange behaviors between companies and employees, leading to increased organizational commitment (Jones and Kramar, 2010). Similarly, SET was applied to investigating how HRM practices and CSR activities could impact employee loyalty and retention (Sancho et al., 2018).

Similarly, it can be inferred that when employees perceive themselves as the focus of SRHRM activities, they recognize the organization's value for them, which in turn engage in positive work-related behaviors. Our assumption is that, as SET suggests, employee would appreciate benefits brought by SRHRM practices by exhibiting reciprocal behaviors towards both their colleagues and the organization, namely, OCB, and in turn, be less inclined to leave the organization, or in other words, develop loyalty. In this sense, SRHRM strengthens employees' bond with the organization, potentially increasing their intention to stick longer with organization (Rogers and Ashforth, 2017; Jiang et al., 2012; Frangieh and Yaacoub, 2019).

There is a growing body of literature aiming at explaining how SRHRM practices influence employee attitudes, behaviors, and organizational outcomes, drawing on SET to explain the

mechanisms underlying these relationships. For instance, Jones explored how employees respond to volunteerism programs applying a dual theoretical perspective of SET and organizational identification (Jones, 2010). Newman et al examined the impact of SRHRM on employees' organizational citizenship behavior, highlighting the complex role played by SRHRM in eliciting positive work outcomes through SET (Newman et al., 2016). Rawshdeh et al investigated into the relationship between CSR and employee engagement, drawing insights from SET as well (Rawshdeh et al., 2019). Finally, Iqbal et al leveraged insights from SET and social identity theories to study the connection between SRHRM and employee well-being (Iqbal et al., 2019)

1.4. Hypotheses development

SRHRM and employee loyalty

We synthesize insights gathered from findings of previous research and ensure that all hypotheses we develop are inspired and justified by relevant studies. In existing literature, the importance of SRHRM in improving employee outcomes has been highlighted. Previous studies show that SRHRM promotes employee engagement and encourages OCBs (Newman et al., 2016). Additionally, SRHRM effectively motivates employees to adopt OCB, especially towards the environment (Zhao et al., 2021). SRHRM also contributes to the development of intellectual capital, enhancing organizations' competitive advantage (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2017). Finally, SRHRM practices positively impact organizational sustainability performance in Indian businesses (Nakra et al., 2023).

The goal of SRHRM policies is to improve employee well-being and working conditions while encouraging participation in social responsibility initiatives. This helps employees perceive their work as meaningful and feel satisfied (Shen and Benson, 2016). SRHRM enriches employees' emotional responses and maximizes the impact of effective HRM practices (Jia et al., 2019). It aligns individual interests, values, and goals with those of the organization, promoting positive work perspectives, higher commitment, and satisfaction (Shen and Benson, 2016).

Several studies suggest relationships between HRM practices and employees' intention to leave, i.e., employee loyalty. For instance, Li et al argue that the strength of an HR system can affect organizational climate, which can influence the intention to quit, indirectly linking HRM to employee loyalty (Li et al., 2011). Kundu et al. examined the direct impact of SRHRM practices on employees' intention to quit and recognized the mediating role of job satisfaction (Kundu et al., 2015). Similarly, Qablan et al. explored the association between SRHRM and turnover intentions, considering factors like organizational commitment and perceived discrimination (Qablan et al., 2019). Considering gender differences, Nie et al. investigated the effects of SRHRM practices on female employees'

turnover intention, emphasizing the role of the supervisor's gender as a moderating variable (Nie et al., 2018).

From a SET perspective, SRHRM provides psychological benefits and encourages interaction with the organization (Abdelmotaleb and Saha, 2020). By strengthening the sense of identity between the organization and employees, SRHRM fosters greater responsibility and commitment, reducing the intention to leave (Kundu and Gahlawat, 2015). Research has established a connection between an organization's ethical atmosphere and favorable work results, as well as reduced intention to leave the company. This is achieved by addressing employees' developmental and ideological job requirements and actively engaging them in the CSR process. (Du et al., 2010; Heinrich, 2017). Considering all above, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1. Socially responsible HRM positively relates to employee loyalty.

SRHRM and OCB

Previous studies have extensively examined the impact of socially responsible practices on employee behaviors and organizational outcomes, finding mostly positive results. Futa confirmed a positive relationship between CSR and OCB in 5-star hotels (Futa, 2013). Newman et al found SRHRM positively impacts OCB, recognizing the mediating effect of organizational identification (Newman et al., 2016). In India, the effectiveness of socially responsible HRM on OCB was studied while considering job satisfaction as a mediator (Gahlawat et al., 2018). Shao et al found in their study a positive linkage between perceived SRHRM and OCB (Shao et al., 2019). Zhao et al. examined SRHRM's effect on OCB towards the environment, focusing on moral reflectivity and social-cognitive perspectives (Zhao et al., 2020). He et al proposed a proactive motivation model, examining the effect of SRHRM on OCB towards the environment with moral efficacy, perceived obligation, and empathy as mediators (He et al., 2021). In addition, according to Freire and Piete, green HRM, which also amounts to a type of sustainable HRM as SRHRM, positively impact OCB (Freire and Piete, 2022).

Social identity theory suggests employees identify more with organizations perceived as good, boosting self-esteem (Bauman and Skitka, 2012). SRHRM practices enhance the external reputation of the organization (Brammer et al., 2007). This positive perception makes employees proud of their connection, strengthening their self-image and identification with the organization (Turker, 2009). Strong identification leads to cross-role behaviors like OCB, positively impacting the company (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991). Empirical studies confirm this mechanism, showing CSR initiatives positively impact employee identification and OCB (Brammer et al., 2007; Turker, 2009).

SET assumes employees feel obligated to reciprocate positive treatment from organizations. Certain SRHRM practices, like legal compliance HRM and employee-oriented HRM, lead to higher

identification through reciprocal social exchange (He et al., 2014). Employees who feel their organization meets legal requirements and cares about their concerns are more likely to reciprocate through OCB (Hofman and Newman, 2014). EO-HRM that meets employee development needs can also lead to higher OCB, with employees identifying more with the organization (Turker, 2009; Edwards and Peccei, 2010). Research finds a positive connection between CSR practices, regulatory compliance, and employee well-being, strengthening identification and leading to OCB (Hofman and Newman, 2014; Turker, 2009; Edwards and Peccei, 2010). Therefore:

Hypothesis 2. Socially responsible HRM positively relates to organizational citizenship behavior.

OCB and employee loyalty

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) encompasses voluntary efforts by employees to exceed prescribed tasks, benefiting both the organization and its members. It involves helpful behaviors reflecting social, moral, or practical support from colleagues and directed civic virtue and sportsmanship toward the organization itself (Organ et al., 2005). Highly regarded in organizational behavior literature, OCB has consistently shown positive associations with various individual and organizational variables such as job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Koys, 2001). Researchers have applied multilevel methods to comprehensively understand the mechanism explaining these behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

SET presents a suitable framework for analyzing the relationship between OCB and employee turnover intentions. According to SET, employees with high levels of OCB contribute positively to the organization as they perceive their efforts as valued and worthy of recognition (Morrison, 1994; Schaninger and Turnipseed, 2005). OCB towards the organization, or OCB-O, involves employees defending their organization's image and volunteering to represent it at external events (Lee and Allen, 2002). Based on social exchange theory, it is hypothesized that employees are rewarded for engaging in discretionary behavior, especially OCB-O, tend to show their appreciation by decreasing their intention to leave the company.

The literature has recognized the predictive potential of OCB for employee loyalty, as measured by intention to quit. Being a volitional behavior, OCB is influenced by employee dissatisfaction and can serve as an indicator for leaving the company (Chiu and Chen, 2005; Krausz et al., 1995). Studies suggest that a reduction in OCB may be the first step in the exit process (Harrison et al., 2006). Specifically, Chen et al. conceptualized the role of OCB in employee turnover and conducted preliminary tests of key hypotheses (Chen et al., 1998). Additionally, studies show

perceived training opportunities are fully mediated by task performance and OCB and partially mediated by employee intrinsic motivation in terms of turnover intention (Dysvik et al., 2008).

Researchers have extensively studied the influence of OCB on employee turnover intention (Chen, 2005). Identification with the organization is positively related to OCB and negatively related to the intention to quit, indicating a linkage between OCB and employee loyalty (Wegge et al., 2006). Coyne and Ong distinguish between different dimensions of OCB and their relationship to the intention to leave the organization. Specifically, sportsmanship was tested as the best predictor of intention to quit, while other elements of OCB did not significantly explain the relationship. Nevertheless, this result suggests that OCB, especially sportsmanship, can influence employee loyalty by reducing the intention to leave the organization (Coyne and Ong, 2007).

Additionally, Paillé (2007) examined the influence of perceived organizational support and OCB on the intention to quit. Turnley et al. conducted a study to investigate the impact of psychological contract violations on the desire to quit and OCB, with disappointed expectations and job discontent serving as mediators (Turnley et al., 2000). Yin et al. explored the relationships between specific types of psychological contrast and organizational outcomes, including intention to quit and OCB (Yin et al., 2018). Zheng et al. developed a scale to measure ethical leadership in Chinese organizations and found a positive relationship between ethical leadership and OCB and a negative relationship with intention to quit (Zheng et al., 2011). Similarly, Benjamin investigated the influence of affective commitment on OCB and intention to quit among employees of Nigerian commercial banks and revealed a significant relationship between affective commitment, OCB, and voluntary quitting intention (Benjamin, 2012). Plooy examined the predictive relationship between work engagement, burnout, OCB, and turnover intentions and confirmed the role of OCB as a predictor of turnover intention (Plooy and Roodt, 2010).

Overall, scholars have approached the understanding of OCB from a multilevel perspective, with some conceptualizing OCB-O as behaviors that employees engage in to defend or represent their organization beyond their formal roles (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Researchers have also recognized the impact of OCB on employees' intention to quit (Chen, 2005). Additionally, social exchange theory provides an effective framework for examining this relationship as it implies employees who participate highly in OCB perceive that their organization values their contributions and rewards their efforts (Morrison, 1994; Schaninger and Turnipseed, 2005). In turn, they are more likely to reciprocate by reducing their intention to resign. Drawing from studies above, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3. Organizational citizenship behavior positively relates to employee loyalty.

Some authors have considered various mediators and moderators of SRHRM's impact on employee outcomes, including loyalty. For instance, Zhao et al examined whether psychological contract violations (PCV) and moral identity affect the relationship between SRHRM and turnover intention (Zhao et al., 2022). Wheeler et al. stressed understanding how SRHRM strengthens psychological connections between employees and organizations, reduces turnover, and increases performance (Wheeler et al., 2010). These studies make significant contributions to unveiling the mechanism through which SRHRM influences employees' turnover intentions, or employee loyalty, whereas do not indicate the role of OCB in their models.

The literature has \confirmed the mediating effect OCB has in the relationships between various organizational factors and turnover intention, among which include certain HRM practices. For example, Asif et al conducted a study on the parallel mediating effect of perceived supervisor support and OCB on the relationship between manager-employee exchange and employees' intention to quit and empirically identified OCB as a mediator in reducing turnover intention (Asif et al., 2023). Additionally, Cesário et al investigated how positive perceptions of HRM practices influence employee attitudes and behaviors, emphasizing the importance of OCB in the context of turnover intention (Cesário et al., 2017). Finally, Sobhani et al, based on their research findings, recommended that organizations, especially banks, focus on promoting OCB and reducing turnover intention through SRHRM practices (Sobhani et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the role of OCB in the relationship between SRHRM and employee loyalty has not yet been clearly explained. Hence:

Hypothesis 4. Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the relationship between socially responsible HRM and employee loyalty.

Summary

In the first chapter presented above, we have conducted a literature review on the topics associated with key concepts of our study – SRHRM, OCB, and employee loyalty. The potential connections between these three constructs identified in previous research were discussed. We have examined the interpretive potential of social exchange theory in terms of explaining the mechanism, based on which the three variables interact with each other. Finally, considering insights gathered from the literature review, as well as from the theoretical framework SET, we proposed four hypotheses regarding the interconnections between the variables SRHRM, OCB and employee loyalty. A summary of our hypotheses and research model is presented in Figure 1:

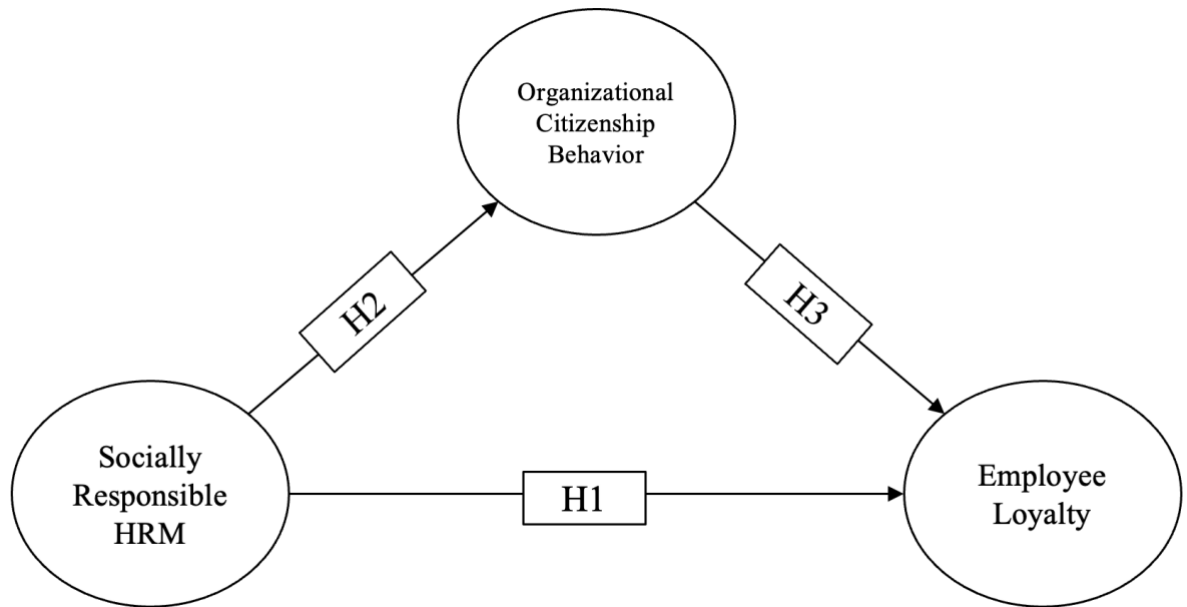Figure 1. Research model summary

H1: Socially responsible HRM positively relates to employee loyalty.

H2: Socially responsible HRM positively relates to organizational citizenship behavior.

H3: Organizational citizenship behavior positively relates to employee loyalty.

H4: Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the relationship between Socially responsible HRM and employee loyalty.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research context

Current state of SRHRM in China

Over the past decade, China has witnessed significant growth in corporate social responsibility. The leaders and pioneers in this development of CSR in China took their cue from western MNCs and have been extensively extending their focus on social and environmental sustainability development. The government of PRC, on the other hand has also engaged in advocation and promotion of CSR even the concept seemed suspicious to them in the past. The goal of their participation is to fill development gaps and to meet social objectives. Since the economic reform initiated by former PRC president Deng Xiaoping, the growth of CSR among SOEs has gone through several stages of development. By the year 2012, China's CSR principles and practices have been gradually standardized (Cooke, 2013).

However, SRHRM is a relatively new concept in China. It is no surprise for that the concept of HRM was only adopted in the country in the 1990s. There are three typical Chinese firm structures considering the ownership of the company: state-owned, domestic private, and foreign-funded multinational. For state-own firms, HR department conventionally implement the policies formulated and imposed by the government. In this case, SRHRM is adopted only when the state imposes it. Speaking of MNCs, their HRM is considered the most systematic among three types of structure resembling the western practices in HRM. As for the Chinese private-own firms, HRM is in a somewhat ambiguous state. For some private firms HR managers only play only an administrative function, following instructions from the business owner. Lack of professional management was a major problem for the Chinses family-owned businesses. On the other hands, a considerable number of private firms have adopted modern management principles from the west including contemporary HRM systems. They are the top players in each industry, such as Alibaba, Tencent, ByteDance (Zhao et al., 2021).

Predicament facing China's private sector in HRM

China's private sector amounts to a crucial part of the country's economy, contributing over 60% of China's GDP in 2023. Private firms account for over 50% of the state's tax income and about 80% of employment. However, this sector has encountered several issues since it took the hardest hit during the pandemic, one of these problems being significant turnover, causing significant pressure in HRM of these firms (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2023).

The predicament facing China's private sector in the reality of human resource management are threefold, first being considerable cases of nepotism. Almost 90% of private firms' financial

management control is held by family members, while about 40% of middle and senior management positions are occupied by friends or family members of the owner. This leads to three types of adverse effects. First, the qualifications of the incumbent staff do not align with the required competencies of the positions, resulting in inefficiencies for the company. Secondly, it adds complexity and reduces the efficiency of the interaction between employees, leading to unproductive losses in the organization. Finally, this prevents the organization from acquiring the talent of which they are in actual need (Cooke, 2013).

On top of existence of nepotism, another urgent problem is the severe turnover of employees. Employee loyalty level has been in declined over the past decade in China due to various factors. The pandemic has escalated the declining employee satisfaction with global resignation rates rising. Of those surveyed, about 14% in China are resigning or considering quitting (World Economic Forum, 2021). This not only amounts to an obstacle for companies to achieve business objectives, but also affects the corporate image as high turnover rates are associated with unsatisfactory working experience.

Moreover, the lack of a systematic and effective HRM strategy poses a problem. Effective human resource management requires a systematic approach and implementation of methodology, as well as the active participation of all managers, including general managers and supervisors at all levels. In China's private sector, the lack of a systematic human resource management strategy has led to a loss of talent, especially in middle and senior management positions and key departments, which has become an important factor in stunting growth of the firms (Cooke, 2013).

2.2. Sample

This research employed a quantitative method and a two-staged data collection, consisting of a pilot survey and the main data collection. The questionnaire was originally developed in English and then translated into Chinese by the author, following a rigorous translation procedure using the back-translation method (Brislin, 1986). Additionally, the questionnaire was assessed by two Chinese native speakers with a degree in Anglo-Chinese translation, and then revised based on their feedbacks.

The pilot study was first held among 15 employees of companies operating in the China's private sector, aiming at examining whether the questionnaire can be completed with all questions and the key notions understood by target respondents. A key criterion for selecting the companies where our respondents base is that there is a section on the official portal of the organization dedicated to CSR. Definitions and clarifications of key notions and concepts covered in the question items were included in the survey instruction to ensure respondents' understanding of all questions. Insights

gathered from the pilot survey were used to refine the survey instruction, especially sections associated with the clarifications of the included question items.

The main data collection, following the pilot survey, was conducted through a structured survey administered to incumbent employees of companies operating in the China's private sector using simple random sampling. The questionnaires were distributed electronically, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. Additionally, follow-up reminders were sent five days later after the initial distribution to maximize response rates. As a result, a total of 160 responses was received out of 200 sent-out pieces, with a response rate of 80%. After excluding invalid responses, a total of 155 valid questionnaires were retained, with an effective rate of 96.88%. The elimination of invalid questionnaires mainly focused on incomplete and short filled out questionnaires.

As shown in table 1, From the perspective of demographic basic information, at the education level, the majority of the population's education level is concentrated in graduate (with a master's degree) and undergraduate (with a bachelor's degree), with 86 and 39 individuals respectively, accounting for 55.48% and 25.16% of the population respectively. From the perspective of designation, the number of managerial staff and non-managerial individuals is 12 and 143, respectively. The vast majority of the population has a non-managerial role, accounting for 92.26%, which is consistent to the organizational structure of s. Regarding the nature of employment, the number of full-time and part-time participants is 145 and 10, respectively. The vast majority of the surveyed population is full-time employees, accounting for 93.55%. With respect to the distribution of employee tenure, it is to be noted that there are more people in 3-5 years and 5-10 years, with 74 and 37 respectively, accounting for 47.1% and 23.87%, respectively.

Items	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education level	Graduate	86	55.48
	MBA	5	3.23
	No degree	4	2.58
	Postgraduate	21	13.55
	Undergraduate	39	25.16
Designation	Managerial	12	7.74
	Non-managerial	143	92.26
Nature of employment	Full-time	145	93.55
	Part-time	10	6.45
Employee tenure	1-3 years	17	10.97

	3-5 years	74	47.1
	5 – 10 years	37	23.87
	More than 10 years	14	9.03
	less than 1	13	8.39
Total		155	100

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of demographic data

2.3. Measurement

We used in our study a 1–5 Likert scale (indicating from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'), measurements for the three constructs in this study adapted from relevant literature, validity and reliability of which tested for this particular study by authors utilizing SPSS 29.0. The key criteria for selection of the measurement scale include the impact factor of the developers of the scale, the impact factor of the academic journal where the paper introducing the scale was published, as well as the overall fit between the question items included in the scale and our research goal.

SRHRM

Socially responsible human resource management is measured by scale developed and validated by Shen and Benson. There are six items in this construct. Some examples of the question items are as follows: "my company considers the fit between personal identity and CSR identity in recruitment and selection.", "CSR training is provided to advocate CSR as a core organizational value.", "CSR training to develop employees' skills in receptive stakeholder engagement and communication." (4) "social performance is related to promotions", "employee social performance is evaluated for rewards and compensation" (Shen and Benson, 2016). The Cronbach's α of this measurement scale for our study is 0.921.

Organizational citizenship behavior

To measure organizational citizenship behavior, ten items were adopted from Lee and Allen, which consist of two dimensions of OCB, one being OCB directed towards individuals and the other, OCB directed towards the organization. The sample items of the scale are as follows: "I am willing to help colleagues with work-related problems.", "I go out of the way to make newer employees feel welcome in the workgroup.", "I defend the organization when other employees criticize it.", "I show pride when representing the organization in public.", "Loyalty that I show as a moral obligation", "I take action to protect the organization from potential problems.", and "I demonstrate concern about the image of the organization" (Lee and Allen, 2002). The Cronbach's α statistics of this scale for this study is 0.967.

Employee loyalty

For measuring employee loyalty, we applied the "intention to leave" scale by Moore, which is argued to be a significant indicator of withdrawal behavior (Giraud, 2015). There are four items in this scale. Some examples are: "I probably will look for a job at another organization in the coming year.", "Five years from now, I will still be with this company" (Moore, 2000). The Cronbach's α for this study is 0.733.

Control variables

Since our study amounts to an individual level of analysis, we have controlled the following individual level demographics of employees: (1) education level, which has four categories – no degree, undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate and MBA; (2) type of designation – managerial and non-managerial; (3) nature of employment – full-time basis and part-time; (4) employee tenure, i.e., the length of time (in year) that an employee had worked in the organization – less than 1, 1 to 3, 3 to 5, 5 to 10, and more than 10. The choosing of these control variable is based on relevant research findings, for example, studies show that the with longer tenure, the more loyal employees are.

2.4. Data analysis methods

All the data analysis procedures of our study were conducted utilizing SPSS 29.0. Specifically, frequency and percentage which each item account for were calculated to understand the characteristics of the sample. We applied Cronbach's alpha and corrected item total correlation (CITC) as indicators for reliability of measurement instruments. KMO and Bartlett's test were utilized to investigate sampling adequacy and data suitability for factor analysis. Next, we evaluated the validity of the measurement scales for each construct using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). For hypotheses testing, we first utilized Pearson correlation coefficients for preliminary examination. Then, we performed multiple regression analyses to examine the relationships between the studied variables. Finally, a three-step approach of mediation test was applied to examine the mediating effect of OCB.

CHAPTER 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Reliability and validity

Reliability testing

Before running regression analysis to test our hypotheses, we first examined the validity and reliability of developed questionnaire. Reliability testing is a method used to test the reliability of a questionnaire, to determine whether the tool measures the same concept or trait, rather than other concepts or traits. In reliability testing, Cronbach's alpha is a commonly used internal consistency measurement method used to evaluate the correlation between items in measurement tools. Cronbach's alpha value that is closer to 1 suggests a higher the internal consistency of the measurement tool, ranging from 0 to 1. A high Cronbach's alpha implies strong correlations between the items within the measurement instrument as well as high level of reliability of the measurement model. In general, α the value should be at least 0.70 or 0.80 or above to ensure good internal consistency (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011).

Corrected item total correlation (CITC) represents the corrected value of the correlation between each item and the total score. This indicator is used to evaluate the correlation between each item and the entire measurement scale. In general, it is better to have a CITC value greater than 0.3. According to table 2, the CITC values are all well above than 0.3, meaning that no item needs to be deleted (Wadkar et al., 2016).

When conducting reliability tests, Cronbach's alpha if Item Delete is usually also performed. That is to say, after deleting a project, recalculate the Cronbach's α value. If a project is deleted, α an increase in value indicates that the project may not be sufficiently relevant to other projects, affecting the reliability of the measurement tool. From the table 2, it can be seen that the items do not need to be deleted (Wadkar et al., 2016).

Looking at table 2, it is observed that the coefficient values for social responsibility HRM, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee loyalty are 0.921, 0.967, and 0.733, respectively. The total coefficient value is 0.943, indicating that the reliability meets the standard. And all items do not need to be deleted.

Items	CITC	Cronbach's α if Item Deleted	Cronbach's α	Total Cronbach's α
SHM1	0.788	0.905		
SHM2	0.774	0.907	0.921	0.943
SHM3	0.808	0.902		
SHM4	0.754	0.91		

SHM5	0.755	0.91	
SHM6	0.779	0.907	
OCB1	0.853	0.964	
OCB2	0.842	0.964	
OCB3	0.859	0.964	
OCB4	0.885	0.963	
OCB5	0.888	0.963	
OCB6	0.867	0.963	0.967
OCB7	0.812	0.965	
OCB8	0.825	0.965	
OCB9	0.831	0.965	
OCB10	0.839	0.964	
IL1	0.534	0.667	
IL2	0.558	0.653	
IL3	0.474	0.7	0.733
IL4	0.529	0.67	

Table 2. Reliability statistics of measurement model

Validity testing

Validity testing is an effective way to assess if the questionnaire and measurement model can accurately measure the concept or trait being studied. During validity testing, exploratory factor analysis was mainly used in this analysis. KMO and Bartlett's test are statistical tests used to evaluate the applicability and suitability of factor analysis. Specifically, The KMO measures the correlation between variables to determine whether factor analysis is appropriate. The range of KMO values is between 0 and 1. A greater value suggests higher correlation level between variables and higher applicability of data for running factor analysis. Generally speaking, the threshold of an acceptable KMO is 0.6 with a value greater than 0.8 considered very good.

Bartlett's test is used to evaluate whether a correlation exists between tested variables. If a significant correlation is confirmed between variables, then conducting factor analysis is appropriate. The null hypothesis of this test is that there is no correlation between variables. Therefore, if the result is significant with p-value below 0.05, the null hypothesis shall be rejected, indicating the existence of correlation between variables. Factor analysis is applicable (Kang, 2013). From table 3, it can be seen that KMO = 0.943 and sig=0.000<0.05, indicating that the validity meets the standard.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.943
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2516.476
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's test result

Commonalities statistics refer to the commonalities between each variable and its associated factor. It represents how much of the variance of each variable can be explained through factor analysis. In general, an extraction value greater than 0.3 is considered acceptable. And when it is less than 0.3, the corresponding item should be removed (Shrestha, 2021). As shown in the table 4, values are all greater than 0.3 and do not need to be deleted.

	Initial	Extraction
SHM1	1.000	.734
SHM2	1.000	.722
SHM3	1.000	.769
SHM4	1.000	.698
SHM5	1.000	.693
SHM6	1.000	.721
OCB1	1.000	.783
OCB2	1.000	.765
OCB3	1.000	.793
OCB4	1.000	.835
OCB5	1.000	.832
OCB6	1.000	.802
OCB7	1.000	.719
OCB8	1.000	.754
OCB9	1.000	.755
OCB10	1.000	.759
IL1	1.000	.576
IL2	1.000	.587
IL3	1.000	.471
IL4	1.000	.592

Table 4. Communalities statistics

Total variance explained refers to the percentage obtained by dividing the sum of the eigenvalues of all selected factors by the sum of the total eigenvalues. It is an indicator used to evaluate whether the number of selected factors is sufficient to explain the variability of tested original data. Commonly, it is hoped that the selected factors can explain most or even the vast majority of data variability, to ensure that the results of factor analysis have high credibility in explaining the data. Generally, a cumulative value of over 70% in rotation sums of squared loading is considered adequate (Cudeck, 2000). From table 5, it is observed that in the initial eigenvalues' column, the values greater than 1 are 9.751, 3.154, and 1.454, corresponding to 37.626%, 22.067%, and 12.102%. The total cumulative value reaches 71.796%.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.751	48.757	48.757	9.751	48.757	48.757	7.525	37.626	37.626
2	3.154	15.771	64.528	3.154	15.771	64.528	4.413	22.067	59.694
3	1.454	7.268	71.796	1.454	7.268	71.796	2.420	12.102	71.796
4	.738	3.688	75.484						
5	.625	3.127	78.612						
6	.568	2.840	81.452						
7	.459	2.293	83.744						
8	.392	1.958	85.702						
9	.372	1.858	87.561						
10	.336	1.680	89.241						
11	.327	1.633	90.874						
12	.307	1.536	92.411						
13	.267	1.335	93.746						
14	.247	1.235	94.981						
15	.208	1.041	96.022						
16	.197	.983	97.004						
17	.170	.849	97.853						
18	.162	.809	98.662						
19	.147	.733	99.395						
20	.121	.605	100.000						

Table 5. Total variance explained

In factor analysis, the rotated component matrix describes the relationship between each variable and each factor after factor rotation. The rotated component matrix displays the load or coefficient of each variable on the rotated factor, which represents the degree of correlation between each variable and each factor. By observing the rotated component matrix, we can better understand the concepts or features represented by each factor and explain the contribution of each variable to these factors (Fabrigar and Wegener, 2011).

From table 6, it is observed that on factor 1, the OCB1-10 load is relatively high, and all indicators belong to the OCB category; On factor 2, SHM1-6 has a higher load and is considered a socially responsible HRM indicator; On factor 3, IL1-4 is heavily loaded and belongs to the indicators of employee loyalty. The dimension division is consistent with the initial dimension division.

	Component		
	1	2	3
SHM1		.826	
SHM2		.800	
SHM3		.849	
SHM4		.807	
SHM5		.798	
SHM6		.793	
OCB1	.862		
OCB2	.840		
OCB3	.843		
OCB4	.899		
OCB5	.873		
OCB6	.863		
OCB7	.808		
OCB8	.831		
OCB9	.825		
OCB10	.838		
IL1			.713
IL2			.724
IL3			.623
IL4			.738

Table 6. Rotated component matrix

3.2. Test of hypotheses

Correlation analysis

Before running regression analysis to test our hypotheses, we first conducted a correlation analysis to examine the level of correlation among the three variables socially responsible HRM, organizational citizenship behavior and employee loyalty.

We utilized Pearson correlation coefficient to measure the degree of linear relationship between tested variables. A coefficient value greater than 0 indicates a positive correlation between tested variables, and a value below 0 suggests a negative correlation between them. In addition, a greater absolute value of the coefficient means a higher degree of correlation (Weaver and Wuensch, 2013). From table 7, it is observed that Pearson correlation coefficient between socially responsible HRM and organizational citizenship behavior is 0.428, with $P<0.001$. Therefore, there is a positive correlation between socially responsible HRM and organizational citizenship behavior, with a moderate degree of correlation. Next, we can see the Pearson correlation coefficient between socially responsible HRM and employee loyalty is 0.467, $P<0.001$. Therefore, there is a positive correlation between socially responsible HRM and employee loyalty, with a moderate degree of correlation; The correlation coefficient between organizational citizenship behavior and employee loyalty is 0.438, $P<0.001$. Therefore, a positive correlation exists between OCB and employee loyalty, with a moderate degree of correlation. Thus, we have acquired preliminary confirmation for H1, H2 and H3.

	Socially Responsible HRM	Organizational Citizenship Behavior	Employee Loyalty
Socially Responsible HRM	1		
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.428***	1	
Employee Loyalty	0.467***	0.438***	1

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table 7. Pearson correlation statistics

Regression analysis

The first regression analysis was conducted using education level, designation, nature of employment, and employee tenure as control variables, and socially responsible HRM as independent variables, results of which presented in table 8. Firstly, from model 1 to model 2, it is to be noted that R^2 has increased from 0.031 to 0.206. Secondly, in the F-test, P=0.000<0.05. Therefore, at least one

variable in education level, designation, nature of employment, employee tenure, and socially responsibility HRM is significant. Specifically, the regression coefficient value of socially responsible HRM is 0.515, P<0.001. Therefore, the impact of socially responsible HRM on organizational citizenship behavior is positive and significant. Hypothesis 2 established.

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	3.715*** (5.769)	2.060** (3.156)
Education level	-0.055 (-1.200)	-0.050 (-1.219)
Designation	-0.452 (-1.567)	-0.436 (-1.661)
Nature of employment	0.526 (1.616)	0.378 (1.274)
Employee tenure	0.023 (0.455)	0.002 (0.040)
Socially Responsible HRM		0.515*** (5.722)
N	155	155
R^2	0.031	0.206
Adj R^2	0.006	0.179
F	$F (4,150) = 1.215, p = 0.307$	$F (5,149) = 7.725, p = 0.000$
$\triangle R^2$	0.031	0.174
$\triangle F$	$F (4,150) = 1.215, p = 0.307$	$F (1,149) = 32.738, p = 0.000$

Dependent variable: Organizational Citizenship Behavior

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table 8. Regression analysis I result

Table 9 presents the results of the second regression analysis, using education level, designation, nature of employment, and employee tenure as control variables, and socially responsible HRM and organizational citizenship behavior as independent variables. Firstly, from model 3 to model 4, it can be seen that R^2 has increased from 0.034 to 0.304. Secondly, in the F-test, P=0.000<0.05. Therefore, at least one variable in education level, designation, nature of employment, employee tenure, socially responsible HRM, and organizational citizenship behavior is significant.

Specifically, the regression coefficient value of socially responsible HRM is 0.258, P<0.001. Therefore, the impact of socially responsible HRM on employee loyalty is positive and significant; Hypothesis 1 established.

The regression coefficient value of organizational citizenship behavior is 0.190, P<0.001. Therefore, the impact of organizational citizenship behavior on employee loyalty is positive and significant. Hypothesis 3 established.

	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	3.155*** (7.632)	1.622*** (3.986)
Education level	-0.002 (-0.064)	0.011 (0.422)
Designation	-0.005 (-0.025)	0.089 (0.559)
Nature of employment	0.333 (1.597)	0.160 (0.888)
Employee tenure	0.052 (1.616)	0.037 (1.348)
Socially Responsible HRM		0.258*** (4.294)
Organizational Citizenship Behavior		0.190*** (3.833)
N	155	155
R^2	0.034	0.304
Adj R^2	0.008	0.276
F	$F (4,150) = 1.305, p = 0.271$	$F (6,148) = 10.767, p = 0.000$
$\triangle R^2$	0.034	0.27
$\triangle F$	$F (4,150) = 1.305, p = 0.271$	$F (2,148) = 28.725, p = 0.000$

Dependent variable: Employee Loyalty

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$

Table 9. Regression analysis II result

Mediation test

The mediation test is used to test whether a variable amounts to a mediator between the independent and dependent variables. There are three conditions which are essential to establishing the mediating effect of a tested variable. (1) there should be a significant impact of the independent variable on the mediating variable. (2) the tested mediator should significantly relate to the dependent variable; Finally, when all three variables are included, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable decreases or is rendered no longer significant. If all conditions are met, it can be concluded that the tested variable has a mediating effect.

Table 10 presents the result of our mediation test. It is observed that the total effect value is 0.355, the mediating effect value is 0.98, and the direct effect value is 0.258. Therefore, OCB has a mediating effect on the relationship between SRHRM and employee loyalty, and it is a partial mediating effect. Hypothesis 4 established.

Term	c Total effect of c	a	b	The mediating effect value of a * b	a*b (Boot SE)	a*b (z)	a*b (p)	a*b (95% BootCI)	C 'Direct effect	Inspection conclusion

| SRHRM =>OCB =>IL | 0.355*** | .515*** | .190*** | 0.098 | | .035 | .775 | 0.006 | .056 ~ 0.196 | .258*** | Partial mediation effect |

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Bootstrap type: percentile bootstrap method

Table 10. Mediation test

To summarize the data analysis procedures of our study, we have first conducted tested the reliability and validity of our questionnaire utilizing Cronbach's alpha and exploratory factor analysis. Next, we did a correlation analysis utilizing Pearson correlation coefficient. Moving on to test of hypotheses, we conducted two regression analyses to test for H1, H2 and H3. Finally, a mediation test was conducted to test H4, namely the mediating effect of OCB. Figure 2 presents the overview of our regression analyses results, all significant at 0.001 level (p<0.001). All hypotheses of our study were established.
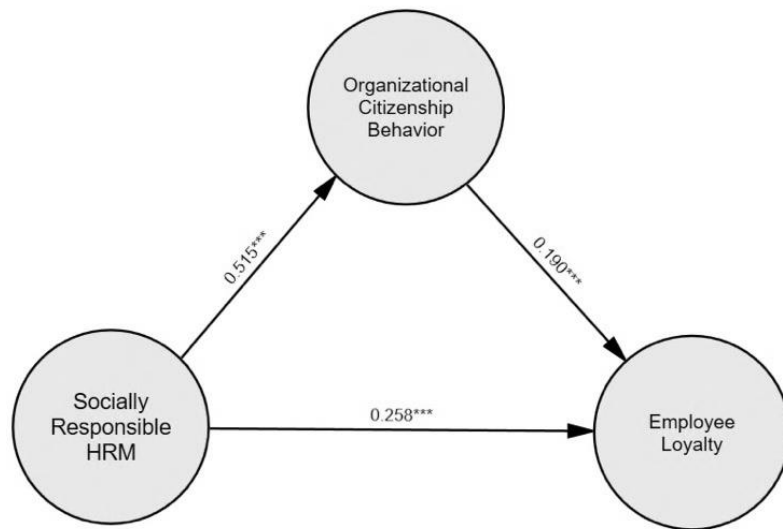
Figure 2. Overview of results of regression analyses

3.3. Discussion

In this study, the relationships between three constructs socially responsible human resource management practices (SRHRM), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and employee loyalty are investigated. First, we have established positive connection between SRHRM and employee loyalty, which is consistent with previous research findings (Li et al., 2011; Kundu et al., 2915). This can be explained by the social exchange theory, which suggests individuals would reciprocate their organizations as they receive benefits from them. The core concept of SRHRM is to integrate social

responsibility into all aspects of HRM and to build a people-oriented and sustainable organizational culture by focusing on the overall development of employees and social well-being. The specific practices of SRHRM include fair compensation system, favorable working environment, employee training and career development, employee participation in decision-making, and social welfare activities. These measures not only enhance employees' job satisfaction and happiness, but also strengthen their sense of identity and belonging to the company. Therefore, according to SET, when employee perceive the efforts of SRHRM and receive benefits of it from their employers, their loyalty to the organization is enhanced.

Secondly, we have confirmed the positive impact of SRHRM on OCB, echoing findings of several scholars (Newman et al., 2016). This result can also be interpreted through SET. OCB refers to the behavior of employees who voluntarily put in extra efforts for the organization and their colleagues in addition to completing their own work. Although these behaviors are not within the scope of formal job duties, they play an important role in the efficient operation of the organization and the formation of a positive atmosphere. Similarly, considering implications of SET, as employees perceive the SRHRM practices implemented by their organizations and receive the benefits embedded, they would engage in OCBs as a reciprocal move. In other words, SRHRM practices not only enhance employees' job satisfaction and happiness, but also strengthen their intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm, making them willing to exhibit more OCB.

Thirdly, we have recognized a positive linkage between OCB and employee loyalty, which aligns with previous literature in organizational behavior (Newman & Roth, 2006). This is consistent to the idea of social identity theory or organizational identification. Specifically, OCB towards the organization involves actions such as defending the organization's image and representing it at external events. These particular actions reflect a strong identification with the organization (Lee & Allen, 2002). Consequently, employees engaged in such discretionary behaviors are less likely to intend to leave the company.

Finally, we have discovered OCB as a partial mediator in the relationship between SRHRM and employee loyalty, which is the novelty of this study. This finding suggests that when employees perceive their organization as socially responsible as a result of implementing SRHRM, they would practice OCBs, which in turn leads to higher level of employee loyalty. This result was expected because previous studies suggest OCB may play a mediating role in the relationships between several organizational-level constructs and employees' intention to quit (Dysvik et al., 2008; Benjamin, 2012).

Theoretical implications

Our study provides significant theoretical contributions to the existing literature on SRHRM, OCB, and employee loyalty. The theoretical contributions are reflected in three aspects. First, this study amounts to a valuable addition to SRHRM literature, significantly contributing to the understanding of SRHRM practices and OCB's impact. The results of our study are consistent to previous research findings, thereby validating and further confirming the established knowledge. The novelty of this research is examining and identifying OCB as the mediator through which SRHRM lead to employee loyalty, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms.

Secondly, the findings support the value of social exchange theory (SET) in explaining the relationship between SRHRM, OCB, and employee loyalty. SET posits that employees reciprocate positive treatment from the organization by engaging in behaviors that benefit the organization (Blau, 1964; Morrison, 1994; Thompson and Bunderson, 2003). By showing that SRHRM positively relates to OCB and employee loyalty, this study is consistent with SET's assumption that employees engage in discretionary behaviors (OCB and loyalty) as reciprocal exchange when they receive benefits of SRHRM from their organizations (Morrison, 1994; Schaninger and Turnipseed, 2005).

Finally, having identified OCB as a partial mediator in the relationship between SRHRM and employee loyalty, we create a new avenue for explaining the mechanisms through which SRHRM practices influence employee attitudes and behaviors. While previous research has demonstrated the importance of OCB in explaining the effects of certain HRM practices on employee related outcomes, this study provides empirical evidence confirming the mediating role of OCB specifically in the context of SRHRM and employee loyalty (Gond et al., 2010). In addition, the intermediatory nature of OCB suggests that there is potentially other pathway through which SRHRM influences employee loyalty. Therefore, we have pointed possible directions for future research.

Managerial implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for organizations seeking to improve employee loyalty and OCB through SRHRM practices. We have synthesized the findings of our research with previous studies to provide actionable insights for managers and HR practitioners.

Our study confirms that SRHRM practices positively influence both OCB and employee loyalty. Therefore, organizations should invest in developing and implementing robust SRHRM practices if these outcomes are required. These practices should be deeply rooted in key HRM processes and practices. For example, in recruitment and selection, the organization can consider personal identity-CSR identity fit as a major criterion of assessing person-organization fit. Regarding training and development of the HRM process, the company can implement comprehensive CSR

training programs to foster CSR as a fundamental organizational principle as well as to enhance employees' abilities in engaging and communicating with stakeholders. As for performance management, they can consider employee social performance in promotions as well as appraisals and relates employee social performance to rewards and compensation policies of the company (Shen and Benson, 2016). In addition, organizations can consider practices such as regulatory compliance, promoting employee-oriented policies, and encouraging employee participation in CSR initiatives. According to Shen and Zhu, these practices help create a supportive work environment that fosters employee engagement and organizational commitment (Shen and Zhu, 2011). Integrating CSR into HRM policies can improve the overall perception of the company as a socially responsible organization (Newman et al., 2016). Therefore, companies can embed CSR principles into their HRM practices while encouraging employees' participation in CSR activities, incentivizing CSR engagement as well as incorporating CSR objectives into performance appraisals (Newman et al., 2016). By aligning HRM policies with CSR goals, companies can create a sense of purpose and meaningfulness among employees, which can lead to higher levels of engagement and commitment (Newman et al., 2016; Rawshdeh et al., 2019).

Our findings also suggest that the effects of SRHRM on OCB and employee loyalty can be explained by social exchange according to which employees who receive benefits from their organization are inclined to respond with positive behaviors, in our case, OCBs and loyalty (Morrison, 1994; Schaninger and Turnipseed, 2005). Therefore, organizations should focus on building reciprocal relationships with their employees by actively providing them with fair treatment, recognition and support. This approach not only increases employee satisfaction, but also fosters a culture of mutual respect and cooperation that is conducive to OCB and employee loyalty (Schaninger and Turnipseed, 2005).

The negative relationship between OCB and turnover intentions of employees implies the importance of advocating OCB to improve employee retention (Chen, 2005; Morrison, 1994). Specifically, organizations targeting at reducing turnover intentions should recognize and reward OCB by implementing recognition programs, providing non-monetary incentives, and acknowledging employee contributions in public forums (Chen, 2005). In addition, fostering a culture of teamwork and collaboration can increase employees' sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization. A supportive working environment is critical to promoting OCB and reducing turnover intentions (Edwards and Peccei, 2010). Therefore, organizations should ensure that their HRM practices support employees' personal and professional development which may iinclude offering career development

opportunities, providing appropriate training and resources, and fostering a collaborative and inclusive work culture (Edwards and Peccei, 2010).

Finally, we propose the following specific recommendations on SRHRM practices sorted by different processes and aspects of HRM activities, based on the integrative framework proposed by Barrena-Martinez et al:

– Attraction and retention of employees

The recruitment process should be tailored to attract individuals who share the company's socially responsible values (Fernández et al., 2018). Specific adaptation and integration initiatives for new employees should be considered, providing them with welcome manuals and training on the company culture. Transparent mechanisms for internal promotions and communication about future vacancies and career plans are recommended, ensuring that all employees can have access to these opportunities. Retention of skilled workers is achieved through motivational mechanisms and incentive programs, including awards for meeting certain goals and demonstrating collaborative attitudes (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Training and continuous development

Training needs are periodically assessed, and various learning methodologies are established, including face-to-face seminars, online courses, and training via the intranet. Regular performance reviews enhance professional development and job enrichment. Additionally, knowledge sharing should be promoted among employees through various channels and techniques including, group meetings, and brainstorming sessions (Fernández et al., 2018; Jia et al., 2019; Gutiérrez-Broncano et al., 2024).

– Employment relations management

A comfortable work environment that respects employees' dignity and meets their social needs should be provided (Shen and Benson, 2016) Regular meetings and interaction mechanisms should be established to foster an environment where reciprocity, trust, honesty, and commitment are achieved among managers and subordinates. Moreover, early communication of changes affecting employees' contractual relationships is also prioritized to maintain transparency and trust (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Communication, transparency, and social dialogue

Both formal and informal communication among employees through various channels such as group meetings should be provided (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019). Ensure the transparency of information on economic, social, and environmental actions and results. A free media

environment should be established to facilitate social dialogue, where employees of varying statuses can meet and share information. Participation and idea exchange can be promoted through tools such as quality circles, suggestion systems, and discussions (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Diversity and equal opportunities

Implementation of diversity and equal opportunity principles across all HRM policies, practices, and processes can be considered (Shen and Benson, 2016). This includes creating and promoting equality and diversity plans, assessing training needs on diversity and equal opportunities, and integrating these principles as criteria for workforce composition and management. Diverse teams should be formed to foster creativity, group opinions, and workflows (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Fair remuneration and social benefits

Remuneration should be based on skills and daily performance, and additional benefits such as scholarships, life insurance, retirement plans, and medical services are provided to encourage retention and motivate employees. Furthermore, tools and resources that offer economic benefits, such as housing or vehicle assistance should be involved (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Prevention, health, and security at work

Training programs and actions aimed at improving occupational well-being and safety may go beyond legal mandates under the scheme of SRHRM (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019). Employees are assigned monitoring and control tasks to cultivate a culture focused on prevention and well-being. In addition, certification of safety and health standards, such as OSHAS and ISO is also pursued by employers to ensure appropriate levels of employee safety, along with measures to minimize physical and emotional risks including stress and occupational diseases aiming at protecting employees as well as their families (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

– Work-family balance

Consider accommodating modifications in working hours and shifts meeting employees' needs and granting flexibility in paternity and maternity leave, lactation periods, and absences of various causes. The transfer of employees to other work centers to better meet their personal and professional needs should be considered (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019).

Limitations and future research

While our research offers invaluable theoretical and practical insights, several limitations need to be addressed. First, the sample respondents of this study consisted of only employees from organizations operating in China's private sector with a limited sample size of 155 respondents. While this allowed for a focused examination of SRHRM practices in a specific context, it amount to a limitation in terms of transferability and generalizability of the findings to other sectors such as SOEs and MNCs, as well as to other cultural contexts. Future research could replicate this study in another organizational or cultural setting to assess the robustness of the relationships identified.

Secondly, the data collected for this study relied on self-report measures, which may potentially lead to common method bias or social desirability bias, which means employees may have provided responses that they perceived as socially acceptable rather than reflecting their true attitudes or behaviors.

Finally, it should also be noted that different dimensions of OCB have different effects on turnover intention, whereas our study only focused on the overall effects of OCB on employee loyalty (Coyne and Ong, 2007). In addition, this study focused on OCB as the only mediator in the relationship between SRHRM and employee loyalty while other mediating mechanisms could also play a role, such as organizational identification or job satisfaction. In this regard, Future research could explore alternative mediation models to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying processes linking SRHRM practices to employee outcomes.

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Survey questionnaire (English)

Section I. Demographic Profile

Name: _____ **Age**:_____ **Gender**: Male / Female

Education level: No degree / Undergraduate / Graduate / Postgraduate / MBA

Designation: Managerial / Non-managerial

Nature of employment: Full-time / Part-time

Employee tenure (years): less than 1 / 1 –3 / 3 –5 / 5 – 10 / More than 10

_____

I would be very grateful if you would indicate your opinion/perception on each statement by giving a tick (√) on the number given at the right-hand side.

[Scale: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree= 1]

Section II					
Items	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. My company considers personal identity-CSR identity fit in recruitment and selection.					
2. My company provides adequate CSR training to promote CSR as a core organizational value.					
3. My company provides CSR training to develop employees' skills in receptive stakeholder engagement and communication.					
4. My company considers employee social performance in promotions.					
5. My company consider employee social performance in performance appraisals.					
6. My company relates employee social performance to rewards and compensation.					
7. I am willing to help colleagues with work-related problems.					
8. I adjust my work schedule to accommodate other employees' requests for time off.					
9. I go out of the way to make newer employees feel welcome in the workgroup.					
10. I attend functions that are not required but that help the organizational image.					

11. I keep up with developments in the organization.					
12. I defend the organization when other employees criticize it.					
13. I show pride when representing the organization in public.					
14. I offer ideas to improve the functioning of the organization.					
15. I take action to protect the organization from potential problems.					
16. I demonstrate concern about the image of the organization.					
17. I will probably look for a job at a different company in the next year.					
18. I will take steps during the next year to secure a job at a different company.					
19. I will be working at the same company this time next year.					
20. I will be with this company five years from now.					

SPSS outputs

Regression analysis I

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.551[a]	.304	.276	.51637	.304	10.767

Model Summary[b]

Model	Change Statistics			Durbin-Watson
	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	6	148	.000	1.969

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employeetenure, OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior, Educationlevel, Designation, Nature SociallyResponsibleHRM

b. Dependent Variable: EmployeeLoyalty

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.225	6	2.871	10.767	.000[b]
	Residual	39.462	148	.267		
	Total	56.687	154			

a. Dependent Variable: EmployeeLoyalty

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employeetenure, OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior, Educationlevel, Designation, Natureofemployment, SociallyResponsibleHRM

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1.622	.407		3.986
	SociallyResponsibleHRM	.258	.060	.327	4.294
	OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior	.190	.049	.295	3.833
	Educationlevel	.011	.025	.031	.422
	Designation	.089	.160	.039	.559
	Natureofemployment	.160	.180	.065	.888
	Employeetenure	.037	.028	.093	1.348

Coefficients[a]

Model		Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics
			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	.000				
	SociallyResponsibleHRM	.000	.467	.333	.295	.809
	OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior	.000	.438	.300	.263	.794
	Educationlevel	.673	.040	.035	.029	.870
	Designation	.577	.013	.046	.038	.942
	Natureofemployment	.376	.130	.073	.061	.878
	Employeetenure	.180	.126	.110	.092	.989

Coefficients[a]

Model		Collinearity Statistics
		VIF
1	(Constant)	
	SociallyResponsibleHRM	1.236
	OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior	1.259
	Educationlevel	1.149
	Designation	1.061
	Natureofemployment	1.138
	Employeetenure	1.011

a. Dependent Variable: EmployeeLoyalty

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions		
				(Constant)	SociallyResponsibleHRM	OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior
1	1	6.386	1.000	.00	.00	.00
	2	.306	4.569	.00	.00	.01
	3	.178	5.996	.00	.01	.02
	4	.062	10.161	.01	.03	.50
	5	.035	13.452	.01	.26	.18
	6	.026	15.555	.02	.66	.23
	7	.007	29.530	.96	.04	.05

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Variance Proportions			
		Educationlevel	Designation	Natureofemployment	Employeetenure
1	1	.01	.00	.00	.00
	2	.81	.00	.00	.04
	3	.02	.00	.01	.91
	4	.04	.05	.14	.01
	5	.05	.05	.61	.03
	6	.04	.15	.22	.00
	7	.03	.74	.02	.01

a. Dependent Variable: EmployeeLoyalty

Regression analysis II

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.454[a]	.206	.179	.8554	.206	7.725

Model Summary[b]

Model	Change Statistics			Durbin-Watson
	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	5	149	.000	1.912

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employeetenure, Designation, SociallyResponsibleHRM, Natureofemployment, Educationl

b. Dependent Variable: OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.262	5	5.652	7.725	.000[b]
	Residual	109.019	149	.732		
	Total	137.280	154			

a. Dependent Variable: OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employeetenure, Designation, SociallyResponsibleHRM, Natureofemployment, Educationlevel

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2.060	.653		3.156
	SociallyResponsibleHRM	.515	.090	.421	5.722
	Educationlevel	-.050	.041	-.095	-1.219
	Designation	-.436	.262	-.124	-1.661
	Natureofemployment	.378	.297	.099	1.274
	Employeetenure	.002	.046	.003	.040

Coefficients[a]

Model		Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics
			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	.002				
	SociallyResponsibleHRM	.000	.428	.424	.418	.987
	Educationlevel	.225	-.042	-.099	-.089	.879
	Designation	.099	-.102	-.135	-.121	.960
	Natureofemployment	.205	.096	.104	.093	.888
	Employeetenure	.968	.025	.003	.003	.989

Coefficients[a]

Model		Collinearity Statistics
		VIF
1	(Constant)	
	SociallyResponsibleHRM	1.014
	Educationlevel	1.138
	Designation	1.042
	Natureofemployment	1.126
	Employeetenure	1.011

a. Dependent Variable: OrganizationalCitizenshipBehavior

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions		
				(Constant)	SociallyResponsibleHRM	Educationlevel
1	1	5.458	1.000	.00	.00	.01
	2	.297	4.290	.00	.00	.81
	3	.167	5.714	.00	.01	.05
	4	.041	11.518	.00	.58	.05
	5	.029	13.638	.04	.27	.06
	6	.008	26.707	.96	.13	.03

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Variance Proportions		
		Designation	Natureofemployment	Employeetenure
1	1	.00	.00	.01
	2	.00	.00	.07
	3	.01	.02	.89
	4	.00	.48	.01
	5	.26	.46	.02
	6	.73	.03	.01