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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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

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**Abstract**

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

**KEYWORDS**

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

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## 1 | INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

New ways of working, such as flexible schedules and remote work, are increasingly considered to be a vital component for balancing life and work by (prospective) employees, a trend further accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ahamad et al., 2022; Gerards et al., 2018). In terms of the latter, a study by Bain and Company (2022, p. 2) notes that talent feels it necessary “to rethink the balance between life and work.” In our study, we address this point and propose that the demand for flexible work arrangements will continue to be an important factor for talented recruits, including those employed in the nonprofit sector.

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

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

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

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

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

Our conceptualization draws on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2004). The theory is, at its core, concerned with human motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). It conceives motivation's degree of regulation as a continuum between controlled (external) and self-determined (intrinsic) motivation, next to two intermediate types (Manganelli et al., 2018). The theory's predecessors argue that to foster an individual's intrinsic motivation toward a specific action, it is crucial to satisfy three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Autonomy refers to being given the opportunity for self-direction; competence involves the experience of utilizing and developing skills and expertise; lastly, relatedness is about having meaningful relationships with others (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020; Vansteenkiste et al., 2023). According to Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 68), the three needs are “essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as constructive social development and personal well-being.”

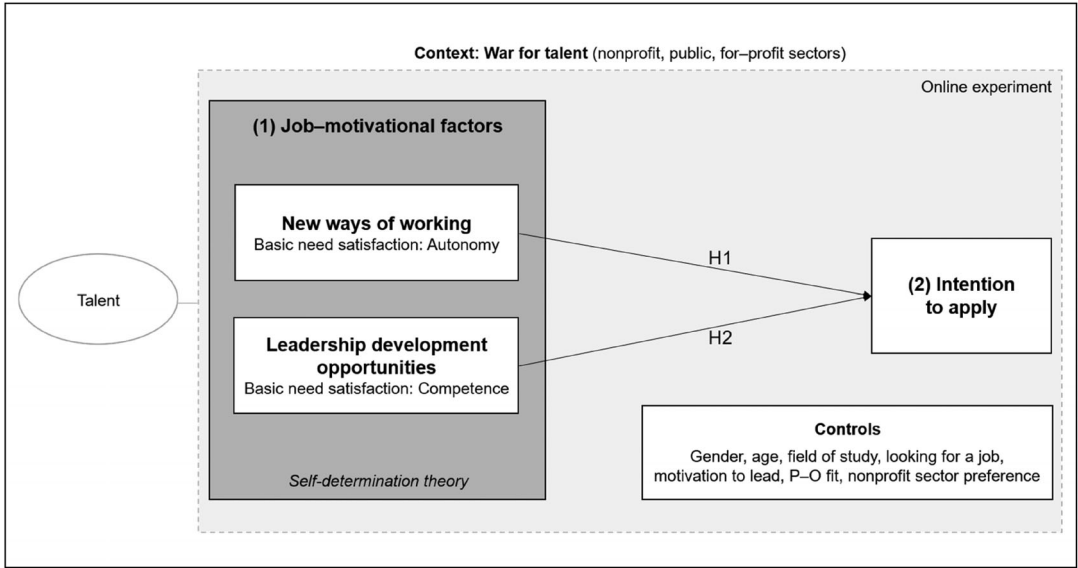


FIGURE 1 Conceptual framework.

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

Building on the above, this study's framework (Figure 1) stresses two basic needs in a work-recruitment setting. It also links the basic need of autonomy to new ways of working, and competence to leadership development opportunities. In the following two subsections, both conceptual connections and their integration into the framework are explained in detail. We then present the derived hypotheses (H1, H2).

## 2.1 | New ways of working

HRM researchers and practitioners have extensively discussed new ways of working (Peters et al., 2014). However, a shared understanding of what practices are related to the term lacks consensus. In this study, we refer to Gerards et al.'s (2018) five-facet approach and consider facets of new ways of working as follows: the first facet entails that employees are relatively free to decide where and when to work to best deliver results. The second facet underscores employees' ability to work the way that best suits them to perform their organizational tasks. The third facet accentuates employees' access to organizational information and social work relations via personal devices (tablets, smartphones, computers). The fourth facet emphasizes the idea of employers encouraging the reconciliation of employees' work and private lives. Finally, the fifth facet underscores the need to create physical spaces that are available to personnel at all times.

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

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

**H1.** Signaling new ways of working in nonprofit job advertisements lead to a higher intention to apply.

## 2.2 | Leadership development opportunities

HRM research has started associating the job-related motivational factor of career advancement opportunities with the satisfaction of the need for competence (Landry et al., 2017; Rigby & Ryan, 2018). As Rigby and Ryan (2018, p. 139) point out, in work contexts, “[c]ompetence is our basic need [...] to grow.” The need for competence is also touched upon in nonprofit employment discourse. For instance, Gazley (2016) suggests that nonprofit recruits value career advancement opportunities. Using graduate panel data, Kang et al. (2015) also show that low satisfaction with career opportunities can negatively affect nonprofit employee retention. Lee and Wilkins (2011) reveal that managers seeking career advancement tend to avoid nonprofit sector jobs, indicating that nonprofits may underinvest in (top) employees. Moreover, Manganello et al. (2018, p. 235) argue that the need for competence can be addressed by allowing employees to “develop a variety of skills.”

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

**H2.** Signaling leadership development opportunities in nonprofit job advertisements lead to a higher intention to apply.

## 2.3 | Controls

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

### 2.3.1 | Gender

Scholars such as Chung (2019) or Shockley and Allen (2007) show that opportunities offering new ways of working can be especially appealing to women, as it enables them to grow in their career as well as contribute to family and home life, especially when they become mothers.

### 2.3.2 | Age

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

### 2.3.3 | Field of study

We argue that potential applicants' academic discipline represents their vocational interests and thus shapes their employment considerations. This could alter their intentions to apply for a sector-specific job (Pedersen, 2013).

### 2.3.4 | Looking for a job

The framework effects could be influenced by whether potential applicants are looking for a (new) job. As Sievert et al. (2022) suggest, actual job searchers may be prone to be generally interested more in job offers, which could impact their attitudes and behavior.

### 2.3.5 | Motivation to lead

Chan and Drasgow (2001) stressed that motivation to lead influences individuals' preference to assume leadership responsibilities. As our study utilizes signals in a job advertisement for a position with managerial duties (see Appendix 1), we account for its influence on the intention to apply.

### 2.3.6 | P–O fit

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

### 2.3.7 | Nonprofit sector preference

Our study deals with a sector-specific (nonprofit) job advertisement. Referring to scholars such as Ko and Jun (2015) or Cordes and Vogel (2023), potential applicants' (nonprofit) sector preference can also be associated with their intention to apply.

## 3 | METHODS

### 3.1 | Research design, data collection, and procedure

We conducted a survey experiment in Germany on job applicants and employed a between-subjects online design ( $n = 389$ ). In the experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one of three stimulus conditions (two treatments and one control condition) for a job advertisement to become a nonprofit manager in the fictitious Foundation of German Accident Aid (Stiftung Deutsche Unfallhilfe). We manipulated this advertisement so that it contained (a) new

ways of working and (b) leadership development opportunities in only one of the two treatment conditions. Everything else was held equal, and the stimulus in the control condition did not include either new ways of working or leadership development opportunities. Appendix 1 provides an overview of our three conditions. All participants ultimately stated whether they intended to apply for the job.

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

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

3.2 | Pretest

In the pretest, we conducted a trial with 150 students. After analyzing the results, we were confident that our experiment would work as intended, with slight modifications. For instance, to

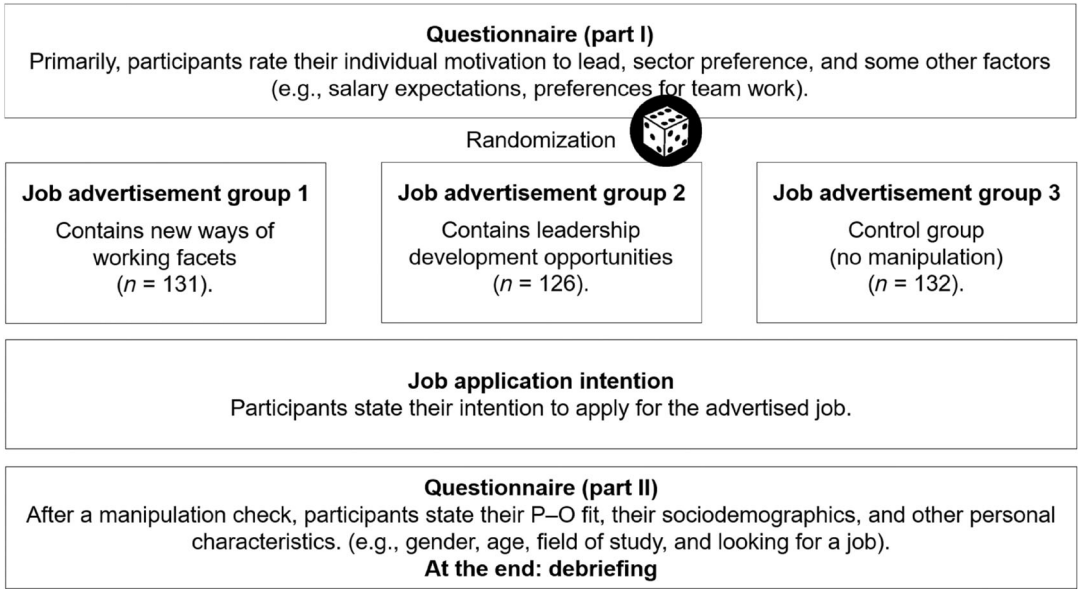


FIGURE 2 Experimental procedure.

make the items clearer to the participants, we added example organizations (such as associations, public companies, and so on; see Appendix 2) to the respective statements on sector preferences.

### 3.3 | Measures

To measure the constructs, we relied on operationalizations from previous studies and used validated psychometric instruments whenever applicable. If necessary, we translated English items into German (some scales had German versions available). We slightly modified the wording of the items for the practical use of our questionnaire. We then back-translated them into English to ensure their reliability and content accuracy (Mullen, 1995). Appendix 2 presents a quality report of our main measures, and Appendix 3 describes the supplementary measures.

### 3.4 | Dependent variable

#### 3.4.1 | Intention to apply

Job application intentions can be gauged in different ways, such as yes–no questions (Swider et al., 2015) or Likert scales (Gomes & Neves, 2011; Sievert et al., 2022; Silva & Dias, 2022; Wang, 2013). We opted for a Likert scale—as per Gomes and Neves (2011)—for this study, due to two reasons: It distinguishes intention from action and prevents data loss from dichotomization (Cohen, 1983; MacCallum et al., 2002). On a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*), we included three items. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements, including, “If I were looking for a job, I would most likely apply for this job” or “If I were looking for a job, I could very well imagine myself working in this job.” Mean scores were calculated for analysis (for all latent constructs). According to George and Mallery's rule of thumb (2019, p. 240), our measurement falls within the range of “excellent” internal consistency; with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.94 for the single-construct of intention to apply.

### 3.5 | Independent variable

The experimental manipulation, our independent variable, was embedded in a job advertisement for a fictitious social service nonprofit—chosen because of the prominence of this field in Germany. Appendix 2 shows the text for our treatment conditions.

### 3.6 | Participants

We sourced participants for our study from the Bilendi online platform. The provider financially incentivized participants for their participation. To recruit the participants, we set the following two fundamental sample requirements: All the participants had to be working in Germany and they had to be between 20 and 45 years old. We chose this to reach out to talented potential employees on the German labor market. Initially, 450 potential participants

responded; however, we excluded 61 individuals who completed the experiment in less than 5 min, as their responses could bias the results (the average duration in the pretest and main study was 10 min). Our final sample comprised 389 participants. Their characteristics are described in Table 1.

Our participants comprised 65.3% women and 33.4% men, primarily aged between 25–29 years (24.2%), 30–34 years (31.9%), and 35–39 years (31.6%). Their median age was 32 years (Appendix 2). Altogether, 44.2% held a bachelor's and 38.0% a master's degree. About 40.1% studied business administration, social sciences, or both as an interdisciplinary program (Appendix 4). Furthermore, 74.6% had more than a year of work experience (full-time or part-time).

### 3.7 | Randomization and attention checks

Our randomization was successful (as shown in Appendix 4), with no significant differences in the key sample characteristics of gender, age, academic background, field of study, looking for a job, educational degree, and work experience; these were tested using chi-squared tests. Moreover, we assessed participant attention by instructing them to select “totally agree” on the 5-point Likert scale immediately before the actual manipulation, which 97.4% ( $n = 379$ ) correctly followed.

### 3.8 | Manipulation check

We validated our manipulation by checking if participants perceived the differences in job advertisement conditions. One-way ANOVAs confirmed significant differences in perceptions [ $F_{\text{NWW}}(2, 386) = 83.44, p = 0.000$ ], [ $F_{\text{LDO}}(2, 386) = 98.96, p = 0.000$ ], [ $F_{\text{Control}}(2, 386) = 62.06, p = 0.000$ ]. Moreover, post hoc Scheffé tests revealed that, for example, participants perceived new ways of working significantly more in Group 1 (new ways to work [NWW]) ( $M = 4.10, SD = 1.15$ ) than in Group 2 (leadership development opportunities [LDO]) ( $M = 2.40, SD = 1.22, p = 0.000, 95\text{-CI } [1.32, 2.07]$ ) and the control group ( $M = 2.42, SD = 1.26, p = 0.000, 95\text{-CI } [1.31, 2.04]$ ). Similarly, leadership development opportunities were perceived more in the leadership development opportunities group ( $M = 4.19, SD = 1.00$ ) than the new ways of working ( $M = 2.51, SD = 1.23, p = 0.000, 95\text{-CI } [1.33, 2.03]$ ) and control groups ( $M = 2.37, SD = 1.19, p = 0.000, 95\text{-CI } [1.47, 2.17]$ ). We therefore conclude that our manipulation was successful.

### 3.9 | Analytic approach

We used generalized linear regression modeling to test our hypotheses, due to the non-normal distribution of residuals in our dependent variable (intention to apply). Generalized linear regression models imply link functions to delineate the mathematical relationship between the predictor and the outcome variables (Nelder & Wedderburn, 1972; Roback & Legler, 2021). As such, rather than transforming the dependent variable itself, corresponding models transform their predictions to better fit the data.

TABLE 1 Sample characteristics.

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

Abbreviations: LDO, leadership development opportunities; NWW, new ways of working.

<sup>a</sup>Does not amount to *n* = 389 (100%) because the participants were allowed to select multiple answers. *n* = 389.

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Descriptive statistics

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics. The average intention to apply for the advertised job was 2.9 (mean<sub>NWW</sub> = 3.1). The mean values for participants' preferences for new ways of working and leadership development were 4.0 (NWW) and 3.5 (LDO), respectively. As Appendix 5 shows regarding the control descriptives, more than a third (37.5%) of participants were job searching. Moreover, mean values for participants in motivation to lead were 3.2 (NWW), 3.2 (LDO), and 3.0 (control group). Thus, motivation to lead was moderate. Perceived P–O fit means were moderate to high with values of 3.4 (NWW), 3.3 (LDO), and 3.3 (control group).

Regarding sector preferences, we found that most participants (47.8%) ranked a job in a for-profit company as most desirable, followed by a job in the public sector (38.6%; Appendix 5). Additionally, 13.6% ranked a job in the nonprofit sector as most appealing. When compared to earlier European studies (such as Santinha et al., 2021), the latter is exceptional; that is, it is significantly higher. An interesting question in this respect is why these statistics differ when compared across Europe. In this study, we argue that it is conditioned to country-specifics in Germany. This is because the German nonprofit sector is particularly large, due to its long history of providing services on behalf of the German government (Anheier, 2014). The most recent representative data from Germany displays a consistent pattern (Schubert et al., 2023). Given its established nature, working in the German nonprofit sector could appear more appealing to prospective employees. However, our findings should not be overinterpreted. Independent ratings of sector preferences indicate that participants paid most attention to individual job descriptions (Appendix 2) and not individual sectors. In this regard, the mean value of 3.5 for the statement (item) “Professionally, I don’t look at the sector, I only look at the description of the job” was the highest.

When looking for jobs, participants primarily searched via job advertisement sites (74.6%), employer websites (63.2%), social media (33.7%), and personal contacts (45.8%) (Appendix 5). They also expected an average annual salary of EUR 51,355 (approx. USD 55,143); 16.5% would have even accepted up to EUR 20,000, while 15.2% wanted an annual salary between EUR 20,000 and 40,000. Participants' nonprofit service motivation was moderate across all groups

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics.

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

Note: Measurement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “totally disagree” to 5 = “totally agree”), except sector preference (ranking); *n* = 389.

Abbreviations: LDO, leadership development opportunities; NWW, new ways of working.

(mean = 3.1; SD = 0.9). In addition, most participants highly preferred job security (Ballart & Rico, 2018; Kuenzi et al., 2021, 2024) (means between 4.3 and 4.5 across groups).

## 4.2 | Test of hypotheses

Table 3 presents the hypotheses results of three models. While we include our group variables as independent variables in the first step, the baseline model results show a significant positive effect of the new ways of working condition on the intention to apply (control condition = reference category) ( $\beta_{\text{NWW}} = 0.340$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). We interpret this result as follows: The introduction of our new ways of working manipulation increased participants' intention to apply for the job by 0.340 units (scale points) compared to the control condition. However, the leadership development condition did not significantly affect the intention to apply (control condition = reference category;  $\beta_{\text{LDO}} = -0.054$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

To test our hypotheses, however, we include individual-level characteristics as controls in two models (controlled Models II, III). Overall, our data support H1, but not H2. We interpret the individual results (Table 3) of both controlled Models II and III as follows: Even when considering individual-level characteristics, Model I's results hold true. In controlled Model II, the new ways of working manipulation increased participants' intention to apply for the job by 0.358 units, compared to the control condition ( $\beta_{\text{NWW}} = 0.358$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The leadership development opportunities condition did not affect participants' intention to apply (control condition = reference category;  $\beta_{\text{LDO}} = -0.047$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Out of the covariates of gender, age, field of study, and looking for a job, only age ( $\beta_{\text{Age}} = 0.032$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and field of study ( $\beta_{\text{Fieldofstudy}} = 0.604$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) had significant effects on our regression results. As such, the data suggest that older participants and those having a study background in business administration, social sciences (or both in an interdisciplinary program) are more likely to apply.

In contrast, the positive and significant effect of the new ways of working manipulation on participants' intention to apply for the job is slightly lower in controlled Model III. Moreover, the effect of age diminishes, while the effect of the field of study remains ( $\beta_{\text{Age}} = 0.015$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ;  $\beta_{\text{Fieldofstudy}} = 0.323$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Holding all else equal, Model III indicates that the three additionally added controls explain variance in our data ( $\beta_{\text{MTL}} = 0.189$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\beta_{\text{NPSP}} = 0.070$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\beta_{\text{POfit}} = 0.870$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A unit increase in participants' motivation to lead makes their intention to apply for the job 0.189 units higher. Likewise, a unit increase in participants' perceived P–O fit intensifies their intention to apply by even 0.870 units. Finally, a unit increase in participants' nonprofit sector preference slightly strengthens their intention to apply for the job—by 0.070 units.

To obtain an even more granular picture of our data, we further explore participants' more general preference for new ways of working and leadership development opportunities (Appendix 3) in their career. First, we examine whether participants' preferences differ, based on their gender. For this, we perform Mann–Whitney U tests. This test is suitable for non-normally distributed data analyses, including a single continuous dependent variable (Nachar, 2008). It can be applied to determine whether there is a significant difference between the rankings (not value means) of independent samples (McKnight & Najab, 2010). In the case of our study, the test enables us to assess whether, for example, women indicate a significantly higher preference for new ways of working than men; we do indeed find such effect ( $U_{\text{PrefNWW}} = 14,477.50$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The effect size is  $r = >0.10$ , indicating a small effect. We do not find a similar effect for the leadership development opportunity preference ( $U_{\text{PrefLDO}} = 15,743.50$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Second, we investigate whether participants' preferences differ

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

	Baseline model I			Controlled model II			Controlled model III		
Predictor	B	SE	p	B	SE	p	B	SE	p
New ways of working	0.340*	0.149	0.023	0.358*	0.146	0.014	0.226*	0.101	0.025
Leadership development opportunities	−0.054	0.105	0.723	−0.047	0.145	0.748	−0.092	0.100	0.363
Control condition	– reference category –			– reference category –			– reference category –		
Controls									
Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)				0.072	0.128	0.576	0.074	0.090	0.418
Age				0.032*	0.012	0.010	0.015	0.008	0.090
Field of study (0 = other, 1 = ba, sosc, or inter)				0.604***	0.124	0.000	0.323***	0.087	0.000
Looking for a job (0 = no, 1 = yes)				0.143	0.124	0.252	0.029	0.086	0.740
Motivation to lead (MTL)							0.189***	0.043	0.000
P–O fit							0.870***	0.049	0.000
Nonprofit sector preference (NPSP)							0.070*	0.034	0.043
Constant	−0.097	0.105	0.357	−1.506	0.438	0.000	−0.756*	0.307	0.014
AIC	1260.86			1209.99			933.827		
BIC	1276.71			1241.53			977.198		

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .  $n = 389$ .  
Abbreviations: AIC, Akaike information criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; ba, business administration; inter, interdisciplinary; sosc, social sciences.

in terms of their age. To do this, we dummy-code our age variable and use the sample mean of 32 years as the cutoff value between “young” and “old.” The results of the Mann–Whitney U tests display no significant group differences ( $U_{PrefNWW} = 17,034.00$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ;  $U_{PrefLDO} = 17,789.00$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Third, we conducted Mann–Whitney U tests to determine whether participants’ preferences differ when they favor the nonprofit/public sectors, compared to a for-profit sector for jobs. Again, we find no significant differences ( $U_{PrefNWW} = 17,190.00$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ;  $U_{PrefLDO} = 17,410.50$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Lastly, we analyze whether participants’ preferences differ based on their field of study (0 = other; 1 = business administration, social sciences, or both as an interdisciplinary program). While there is no significant effect regarding new ways of working ( $U_{PrefNWW} = 16,062.00$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), we find a significant effect related to leadership development opportunities ( $U_{PrefLDO} = 15,048.50$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The effect size with  $r = >0.10$  is rather small.

5 | DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Considering that our study is among the few presenting recent experimental evidence on non-profit talent recruitment, our findings demand careful interpretation. We find that new ways of

working do increase talented recruits' intention to apply for a nonprofit job. However, we find no empirical evidence in our data that leadership development opportunities are a strong motivational factor to apply for a nonprofit job. Below, we suggest possible explanations.

Our findings showed that new ways of working strengthen participants' intention to apply, confirming the work of Thompson et al. (2015) and Wörtler et al. (2021). However, while signaling new ways of working in nonprofit job advertisements worked well, overall, it is not to say that such a job flexible model suits everyone. In fact, some argue that it might also have disadvantages, such as work pressure and employee isolation (De Vries et al., 2019; Demerouti et al., 2014). In terms of nonprofit and public sector employees, some scholars also note that if organizations do not support and care for employees in flexibilization processes, a so-called "telework divide" might arise (Kwan et al., 2024); at worst, this may mitigate intrinsic service motivation (Van der Wal, 2021). Nonetheless, our results are more encouraging in a nonprofit recruitment strategy setting. We contend that indicating new ways of working in nonprofit job descriptions does not provoke negative attitudes among potential employees. Indeed, it seems to signal that one's basic need for autonomy will be satisfied. This also links to work by Acheampong (2021) and Guillot-Soulez and Soulez (2014). Furthermore, it must be noted that we collected our data during the COVID-19 pandemic; it is possible that the crisis has increased the desire of potential employees to work more flexibly (Kuenzi et al., 2024; Kwan et al., 2024). Additionally, the positive effect of new ways of working could become even stronger in the future, as the post-pandemic world of work has become extensively digitalized (McPhail et al., 2024), and (potential) employees thoroughly restructure their lives in response.

Surprisingly, leadership development opportunities did not significantly impact the intention to apply. While Gazley (2016) argued that these opportunities are important for successful nonprofit recruitment, we cannot confirm this statement, based on our data. The results indicate that leadership development signals may have a negative effect; however, this finding is insignificant. Strictly speaking, our study thus could not gauge to what extent leadership development opportunities affect the application intentions.

Our results could also vary in a different setting, for example, when utilizing stronger experimental signals, in later recruitment stages, or in a retention context. Regarding the latter, research emphasizes that career advancement opportunities are essential for keeping key staff (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Kang et al., 2015; Kim & Lee, 2007; Pepelko, 2020). While nonprofit recruiters aim to attract suitable employees, comprehensive HRM strategies must focus on retaining them by offering career prospects such as leadership development opportunities. Nonprofits may therefore only see talent and succession management systems flourish if they implement and actively oversee recruitment and retention efforts together.

Regarding our controlled models' findings (Table 3), the covariates of field of study, motivation to lead, P-O fit, and sector preference were shown to significantly and reliably influence participants' intention to apply. However, we caution against taking their interpretation at face value. As they were not explicitly evident from our experiment, we want to remark the following: A unit increase in participants' motivation to lead, for instance, correlates with higher application intention by 0.189 scale units (controlled Model III). As noted earlier, this may be because the job advertisement shown in the experiment promotes a managing position (across all conditions) that invites some managerial proactiveness. In turn, this may be particularly catchy for participants with default (affective) leadership ambitions (Schuh et al., 2013). Surprisingly, nonprofit sector preference had the weakest influence among the controls added in Model III. When compared to P-O fit, for example, its influence suggests that nonprofits' ability to fulfill potential recruits' personal values and requirements is more important. To some

degree, our Model III's results even indicate not to rely on potential recruits' interest in working in the sector, per se, when placing a job advertisement; not least considering the intrasectoral aspect of competition for talented workforce. Recruitment success could instead be even more contingent on signaling alignment of values and displaying employee-oriented policies (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Liu & Xie, 2023), supporting the finding of the appeal of new ways of working. It should be noted that our study exposed partial loading issues of intention to apply and P–O fit (see Appendix 6). This could be because P–O fit can be identified as one precondition of attitudes and behavior (Celani & Singh, 2011; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Verquer et al., 2003). As such, it differs conceptually from the intention to apply construct, as demonstrated empirically by HTMT ratios (0.85). The latter confirmed that both were statistically discriminant.

Highlighting our results regarding participants' general preferences for new ways of working and leadership development opportunities (Appendix 3), these imply that granting new ways of working is especially appealing to women. This is in line with former research. For example, scholars continuously emphasize that most domestic tasks are still maintained by women (Atkinson & Hall, 2009; Lott, 2020). As studies, too, point out that women tend to request more work schedule control than men (Chung, 2019), a commonly shared assumption among researchers is that flexible work arrangement policies do support women, particularly those with greater family responsibilities (Shockley & Allen, 2007). This is not to say that traditional gender compositions at work may not be reforming recently (Kumar et al., 2023). In addition, our findings across groups point toward leadership development opportunities being more compelling to participants who studied business administration, social sciences, or both.

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

1. *Developing and implementing new ways of working.* Based on our experimental results, we recommend that nonprofit HRM professionals acknowledge the current and future needs of employees (as well as volunteers) regarding new ways of working. New ways of working mean attracting more potential talented applicants for the respective organization. Moreover, the literature indicates that flexible working can be positively associated with nonprofit/public service motivation (Caillier, 2016). For nonprofit managers and leaders, this increases the likelihood of building up and deploying human capital in targeted manners (such as project managers, team lead vacancies, and so on).

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

2. *Highlighting new ways of working in job descriptions.* Nonprofits should prominently feature implemented new ways of working in job descriptions, as potential employees scrutinize these thoroughly (Kuenzi et al., 2021). However, nonprofits should avoid over-promising, as “reality shocks” can diminish service motivation and commitment, and increase turnover (Dean et al., 1984; Hur & Bae, 2021; Miller-Mor-Attias & Vigoda-Gadot, 2022; Schott et al., 2019).
3. *Offering leadership development opportunities where they are effective by evidence.* We recommend that nonprofit managers avoid offering everything possible when posting jobs to attract talent. This helps save organizational costs. In this regard, our experimental data does not hint evidence on whether advertising leadership development programs in the early recruitment phase (posting job ads) is effective. Since career development offers, such as leadership development, however, are found to be important for employees (Kang et al., 2015), their influence could be apparent in, for example, later nonprofit recruiting (such as job interviews, salary negotiations, and so on) or retention stages (such as being part of individual career development plans).

## 6 | LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSION

First, our scenario-based experiment can only be compared to real job searches to a certain extent. Only a portion of our participants were actively looking for a job, which is a common limitation in studies that use similar approaches (Sievert et al., 2022). Moreover, the job advertisement and application situation were fictitious, which might have influenced participants' responses (Levitt & List, 2007). To address these issues, field experiments in which potential applicants view real job advertisements should be performed, to observe actual application behavior.

Second, although scholars indicate a positive link between P–O fit and application intentions (such as Wei et al., 2016), we must interpret our corresponding control results with some caution. This is because a factor analysis exposed factors with loading issues in some cases (see Appendix 6). However, consulting HTMT ratios ( $<0.85$ ) demonstrates that, P–O fit and intention to apply are not only theoretically, but also statistically discriminant constructs.

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

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

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

## 7 | CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of offering new ways of working and leadership development opportunities during the early recruitment stage—specifically in a nonprofit job advertisement setting. It theoretically expanded on potential job-related motivational factors in nonprofits. Building on self-determination theory, we conducted an online vignette experiment with potential job talents in Germany. The results revealed that only new ways of working significantly increased individuals' intention to apply for the advertised nonprofit job. Despite the limitations of this study, the findings highlight that nonprofit managers and recruiters should enable and offer flexible working options to attract more talented workers to the sector. The hope is that this can help to keep the nonprofit sector competitive.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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APPENDIX 1: FICTIVE JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

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

## APPENDIX 2: MEASUREMENT QUALITY REPORT

Variable	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Dependent variable</i>		
<b>Intention to apply</b> (Gomes & Neves, 2011) <sup>a</sup>		<b>0.944</b>
If I were looking for a job, I would most likely apply for this job.	2.9 (1.26)	
If I were looking for a job, applying for this job would be very appealing to me.	2.9 (1.25)	
If I were looking for a job, I could very well imagine myself working in this job.	3.0 (1.25)	
<i>Independent variable (experimental conditions)</i>		
<b>Condition 1</b> (new ways of working)		
We offer you modern new ways of working! We offer you unique new ways of working in which you can flexibly and individually design your work. This includes self-determined working hours, a close fit between your workload and phase of life, work-life balance, the ability to retrieve all work-related content via your own computer/tablet/smartphone, and the option to work from home.		
<b>Condition 2</b> (leadership development opportunities)		
We offer you a modern leadership program! We offer you a unique leadership program in which you can train for higher management positions. This includes practical (team) exercises on leadership situations, coaching by management and board members, mentoring support and 360-degree feedback, good networking opportunities with peers, and a leadership certificate.		
<i>Control variables</i>		
<b>Gender</b>		
You are...? (Please select female, male, or non-binary.)		
<b>Age</b>		
How old are you? (Specify in digits in the blank field.)	32.1 (4.88)	
<b>Field of study</b>		
Are you currently studying in or have a degree in any of the following fields? (Please select social sciences, business administration, or both as an interdisciplinary program.)		
<b>Looking for a job</b> (job search status)		
Are you currently looking for jobs? (Please select yes or no.)		
<b>Motivation to lead</b> (Elprana et al., 2015) <sup>a</sup>		<b>0.940</b>
I do enjoy performing executive functions.	3.4 (1.10)	
I like to take over a leading role.	3.3 (1.16)	
I like taking over the leadership function better than working in a supporting role for others.	3.0 (1.17)	
When I can give guidance to others, I am in my element.	3.2 (1.13)	
I like to assume responsibility for others.	3.4 (1.13)	
I normally want to lead the group in which I am working.	3.1 (1.14)	

Variable	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's alpha
I tend to assume the leadership of most groups and teams I work in.	3.1 (1.18)	
I rarely hesitate to assume the leadership of a group.	3.0 (1.19)	
When I am part of a working group, I usually prefer leading it rather than just being a member.	3.0 (1.16)	
<b>P–O fit</b> (Saks & Ashforth, 2002) <sup>a</sup>		<b>0.877</b>
My own values are similar to the values of the organization in the job advertisement.	3.6 (0.97)	
My personality matches the image of the organization conveyed to me in the job advertisement.	3.4 (0.99)	
The organization in the job advertisement satisfies my needs.	3.2 (1.05)	
The organization of the job advertisement is a good fit for me.	3.2 (1.10)	
<b>[Nonprofit] sector preference<sup>b</sup></b>		
Professionally, I prefer a job in the for-profit sector (company).	3.4 (1.15)	
Professionally, I prefer a job in the public sector (e.g., public administration, public company)	3.4 (1.13)	
Professionally, I prefer a job in a nonprofit organization (e.g., association, foundation, nonprofit LCC., federation)	2.6 (1.27)	
Professionally, I don't look at the sector, I only look at the description of the job	3.5 (1.16)	

Note: *n* = 389. <sup>a</sup>Multi-item scale (5-point Likert scale [1 = “totally disagree” to 5 = “totally agree”]). <sup>b</sup>Single-item scale (5-point Likert scale [1 = “totally disagree” to 5 = “totally agree”]). The bold values are for highlighting the most important numbers.

## APPENDIX 3: MEASUREMENT QUALITY REPORT (SUPPLEMENTARY)

Variable	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's alpha
<b>Preference for leadership development programs<sup>a</sup></b>		<b>0.860</b>
Mentoring support and 360-degree feedback on-the-job are important to me.	3.3 (1.12)	
Coaching from experienced leaders on-the-job are important to me.	3.6 (1.05)	
Practical exercises on leadership situations skills on-the-job are important to me.	3.5 (1.08)	
Overall, programs to develop my leadership skills on-the-job are important to me.	3.5 (1.09)	
<b>Preference for new ways of working (Gerards et al., 2018)<sup>a</sup></b>		<b>0.807</b>
It is important to me that I can determine my own working hours.	4.0 (1.02)	
It is important to me that I can determine where I work (office, home office, and so on.).	4.0 (1.04)	
It is important to me that I can access all work-related information via my computer, cell phone, and/or tablet.	3.8 (1.07)	
It is important to me that I can adapt my workload to my current life phase or situation.	4.1 (0.92)	
It is important to me that I have access to my workplace at all times.	3.4 (1.15)	
It is important to me that I can balance the demands of my job with the needs of my personal and family lives.	4.2 (0.93)	
<b>Nonprofit service motivation (Word &amp; Carpenter, 2013)<sup>a</sup></b>		<b>0.733</b>
I volunteer for social causes.	2.9 (1.29)	
I value carrying out meaningful work.	3.6 (1.07)	
I consider working for a social mission as my civic duty.	2.9 (1.22)	
<b>Preference for a sustainable employer<sup>a</sup></b>		<b>0.892</b>
It is important to me that my employer attaches importance to social sustainability in its operations.	3.6 (1.05)	
It is important to me that my employer attaches importance to environmental sustainability in its operations.	3.5 (1.06)	
It is important to me that my employer attaches importance to being economically positioned to act sustainably.	3.6 (1.04)	
<b>Preference for job security</b>		
It is important to me that my employer offers me a secure job.	4.3 (0.89)	
<b>Preference for employer reputation</b>		
It is important to me that my employer enjoys a high social standing.	3.1 (1.04)	
<b>Preference for team work (Kiffin-Petersen &amp; Cordery, 2003)<sup>a</sup></b>		<b>0.883</b>
I generally prefer to work as part of a team.	3.6 (1.09)	
I am eager to be working with other employees in a team.	3.6 (1.08)	

Note:  $n = 389$ . <sup>a</sup>Multi-item scale (5-point Likert scales [1 = "totally disagree" to 5 = "totally agree"]). The bold values are for highlighting the most important numbers.

APPENDIX 4: RANDOMIZATION, ATTENTION, AND MANIPULATION CHECKS

Randomization checks variable	Overall ( <i>n</i> = 389)  <i>n</i> (%)	NWW ( <i>n</i> = 131)  <i>n</i> (%)	LDO ( <i>n</i> = 126)  <i>n</i> (%)	Control ( <i>n</i> = 132)  <i>n</i> (%)	$\chi^a$ A. sig. (2-sided)
Gender					0.772
Female	254 (65.3)	81 (61.8)	82 (65.1)	91 (68.9)	
Non-binary	2 (0.5)	47 (35.9)		1 (0.8)	
Male	130 (33.4)	1 (0.8)	43 (34.1)	40 (30.3)	
Missings	3 (0.8)	2 (1.5)	1 (0.8)		
Age (years)					0.802
20–24	27 (6.9)	8 (6.1)	8 (6.3)	11 (8.3)	
25–29	94 (24.2)	31 (23.7)	31 (24.6)	32 (24.2)	
30–34	124 (31.9)	47 (35.9)	42 (33.3)	35 (26.5)	
35–39	123 (31.6)	39 (29.8)	37 (29.4)	47 (35.6)	
40–45	18 (4.6)	4 (3.1)	7 (5.6)	7 (5.3)	
Missings	3 (0.8)	2 (1.5)	1 (0.8)		
Academic background					0.204
Yes	357 (91.8)	124 (94.7)	116 (92.1)	117 (88.6)	
No	32 (8.2)	7 (5.3)	10 (7.9)	15 (11.4)	
Field of study					0.501
Social sciences	49 (12.6)	22 (16.8)	14 (11.1)	13 (9.8)	
Business administration	90 (23.1)	25 (19.1)	29 (23.0)	36 (27.6)	
Interdisciplinary	17 (4.4)	7 (5.3)	5 (4.0)	5 (3.8)	
Other	230 (59.1)	75 (57.3)	77 (61.1)	78 (59.1)	
Missings	3 (0.8)	2 (1.5)	1 (0.8)		
Looking for a job					0.137
Yes	146 (37.5)	54 (41.2)	51 (40.5)	41 (31.1)	
No	240 (61.7)	74 (56.5)	75 (59.5)	91 (68.9)	
Missings	3 (0.8)	3 (2.3)			
Educational degree (highest)					0.332
High school diploma	35 (9.0)	11 (8.4)	10 (7.4)	14 (10.6)	
Bachelor's (B.A./B.Sc.)	172 (44.2)	57 (43.5)	57 (45.2)	58 (43.9)	
Master's (M.A./M.Sc.)	148 (38.0)	48 (36.6)	52 (41.3)	48 (36.4)	
Ph.D.	18 (4.6)	9 (6.9)	3 (2.4)	6 (4.5)	
Other	11 (2.8)	2 (1.5)	3 (2.4)	6 (4.5)	
Missings	3 (0.8)	2 (1.5)	1 (0.8)		
Work experiences <sup>b</sup>					
Internship	195 (50.1)	65 (49.6)	68 (54.0)	62 (47.0)	0.526

(Continues)

<b>Randomization checks variable</b>	<b>Overall (<i>n</i> = 389) <i>n</i> (%)</b>	<b>NWW (<i>n</i> = 131) <i>n</i> (%)</b>	<b>LDO (<i>n</i> = 126) <i>n</i> (%)</b>	<b>Control (<i>n</i> = 132) <i>n</i> (%)</b>	<b><math>\chi^a</math> A. sig. (2-sided)</b>
Marginal job ( $\leq$ EUR 450/month)	157 (40.4)	54 (41.2)	50 (39.7)	53 (40.2)	0.967
Student job ( $\leq$ 20 h/week)	70 (18.0)	23 (17.6)	25 (19.8)	22 (16.7)	0.792
$\leq$ 1 year (full-time/part-time)	36 (9.3)	10 (7.6)	13 (10.3)	13 (9.8)	0.728
$>$ 1 year (full-time/part-time)	290 (74.6)	94 (71.8)	94 (74.6)	102 (77.3)	0.590
Attention check	379 (97.4)	127 (96.9)	122 (96.8)	130 (98.5)	
<b>Manipulation checks Variable<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>NWW (<i>n</i> = 131)</b>	<b>LDO (<i>n</i> = 126)</b>	<b>Control group (<i>n</i> = 132)</b>	<b>ANOVA F (<i>p</i>)</b>	
Perception of NWW in advertisement				83.44 (0.000)	
Mean	4.10	2.40	2.42		
SD	1.15	1.22	1.26		
Post hoc scheffé test		1.69**	1.67**		
Mean difference to NWW group					
SE		0.152	0.150		
<i>p</i>		0.000	0.000		
Perception of LDO in advertisement				98.96 (0.000)	
Mean	2.51	4.19	2.37		
SD	1.23	1.00	1.19		
Post hoc Scheffé test	1.68**		1.82**		
Mean difference to LDO group					
SE	0.144		0.143		
<i>p</i>	0.000		0.000		
No perception of LDO or NWW in advertisement				62.06 (0.000)	
Mean	2.17	2.27	3.72		
SD	1.31	1.28	1.18		
Post hoc Scheffé test	1.55**	1.45**			
Mean difference to CG					
SE	0.156	0.157			
<i>p</i>	0.000	0.000			

Note: \*\* $p < 0.001$ ;  $n = 389$ . <sup>a</sup>Single-item scale (5-point Likert scale (1 = “totally disagree” to 5 = “totally agree”)). <sup>b</sup>Does not amount to  $n = 389$  (100%) because the participants were allowed to select multiple answers.

Abbreviations: CG, control group; LDO, leadership development opportunities; NWW, new ways of working.

## APPENDIX 5: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (SUPPLEMENTARY)

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

Note: *n* = 389. <sup>a</sup>Does not amount to *n* = 389 (100%) because the participants were allowed to select multiple answers.

<sup>b</sup>Measurement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “totally disagree” to 5 = “totally agree”).

## APPENDIX 6: FACTOR SCORES (CFA) AND DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY (HTMT RATIO)

Variable	Overall ( <i>n</i> = 389)	NWW ( <i>n</i> = 131)	LDO ( <i>n</i> = 126)	Control ( <i>n</i> = 132)
<b>Intention to apply</b> (Gomes & Neves, 2011)	HTMT <0.85			
If I were looking for a job, I would most likely apply for this job.	0.910	0.871	0.913	0.928
If I were looking for a job, applying for this job would be very appealing to me.	0.920	0.901	0.939	0.929
If I were looking for a job, I could very well imagine myself working in this job.	0.921	0.902	0.912	0.927
<b>Motivation to lead</b> (Elprana et al., 2015)	HTMT <0.85			
I do enjoy performing executive functions.	0.853	0.850	0.884	0.878
I like to take over a leading role.	0.874	0.847	0.852	0.851
I like taking over the leadership function better than working in a supporting role for others.	0.801	0.749	0.831	0.810
When I can give guidance to others, I am in my element.	0.781	0.738	0.773	0.835
I like to assume responsibility for others.	0.756	0.688	0.709	0.832
I normally want to lead the group in which I am working.	0.885	0.915	0.890	0.855
I tend to assume the leadership of most groups and teams I work in.	0.836	0.857	0.853	0.805
I rarely hesitate to assume the leadership of a group.	0.770	0.786	0.820	0.718
When I am part of a working group, I usually prefer leading it rather than just being a member.	0.848	0.846	0.859	0.840
<b>P–O fit</b> (Saks & Ashforth, 2002) <sup>a</sup>	HTMT <0.85			
My own values are similar to the values of the organization in the job advertisement.	0.837	0.446	0.901	0.882
My personality matches the image of the organization conveyed to me in the job advertisement.	0.751	0.401	0.708	0.757
The organization in the job advertisement satisfies my needs.	0.498		0.473	0.519
The organization of the job advertisement is a good fit for me.	0.449		0.494	0.440

*Note:* HTMT = confidence intervals (bias corrected) for all 3 constructs do not include the value 1. <sup>a</sup>Although CFA exposes some loading issues, we refrain from scale purification (for Table 3, controlled Model III). From a judgmental standpoint, we hinge on scholars like Wieland et al. (2017) and argue that all four P–O fit items derived from theory contribute reflectively to the construct's overall assessment.