

Social Work Design and Prosocial Organizational Behaviors

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Abstract Prosocial behaviors are defined as acts which are performed by an individual or a group and are beneficial to other people either at the individual or group level. An act qualifies as prosocial regardless of the motivation of the agent or the fact that the act was voluntary or a role requirement. With this broad definition, prosocial behaviors in organizations constitute a less researched topic in organizational literature. Rather, it was conventionally operationalized as organizational citizenship behaviors, helping others or willingness to cooperate. In this respect, the present study is an attempt to operationalize prosocial organizational behaviors with a broader scope and aims to explore the social structure of work as an antecedent of prosocial organizational behaviors. Social aspects of work design were explored as likely antecedents of prosocial organizational behaviors. A total of 308 employees, working in white-collar jobs from various industries participated in the study. Among the antecedents tested, interaction and caring were found to contribute significantly to prosocial behaviors in organizations, while the contribution of interdependence was not found to be significant. The findings were discussed in terms of their possible individual as well as organizational outcomes.

Keywords Work Design, Prosocial Organizational Behaviors, Social Aspects Of Work

1. Introduction

Ranging from philosophical to biological, several perspectives are offered to study and explain prosocial behaviors. Yet, at the intersection of these various disciplines, the study of prosocial behaviors suffers from the lack of adequate knowledge transfer among fields. There are a multitude of definitions for prosocial behavior. Broadly defined, it “represents acts that are defined by some significant segment of society and/ or one’s social group as beneficial to other people” [1, p. 366].

Although an exhaustive review of the mechanisms explaining prosocial behaviors in general is provided by

Penner et al. [1], additional mechanisms may be operational in explaining prosocial behaviors within organizational contexts. Among them, the design of work is hypothesized as contributing to the display of prosocial acts in organizations. Therefore, among the possible antecedents of prosocial behavior in organizations, social work design is addressed in the present study.

Prosocial acts in organizational settings can cover a wide range from lending an office supply to a colleague to whistleblowing. Also, within organizational limits, prosocial acts may benefit either a specific individual or the organization as a whole, or both. However in most of the cases, it may not be easy to identify the beneficiary of a prosocial act.

Prosocial behaviors were shown to be beneficial not only for the receiving end, but also having multiple benefits for the agent performing them. For example, using citizenship behaviors as the general framework, two recent studies identified mood regulation effect of altruistic behaviors compared to courteous behaviors. In the first study, the researchers used an experience sampling methodology for a period of three weeks and documented mood regulating effects of altruistic behaviors compared to courteous behaviors. More specifically, the participants’ moods were assessed once in the morning and twice during the next 7.5 hours, that is, during the work day. Altruistic behaviors and courteous behaviors were assessed twice during the workday. The measures taken during the work day were taken at random intervals. They found that altruistic behaviors preceded by a negative mood were more likely to be followed by a positive mood than courteous behaviors were. Moreover, the effects of altruistic behaviors were more pronounced for extroverted individuals [2].

Mood regulating effects of altruistic behaviors over courteous behaviors were also observed in another study. However, this study differs from the first one by documenting that the mood regulating effects of altruistic behaviors extended well beyond the work day. Again, altruistic behaviors preceded by a negative mood were more likely to be followed by a positive mood than courteous behaviors were. Also, coupled with competence perceptions of the employee, performing prosocial acts at work was

found to predict positive affect at home, at the end of the work day [3]. Taken together, the mood regulating effects of prosocial behaviors in organizations can be extended to the general well-being of the individual and of his or her immediate environment.

Therefore, on the practical side, the distant implications of the present study may lead us toward organizational practices which can nourish well-being both within and outside the organization.

1.1. Prosocial Organizational Behaviors

Batson and Powell [4] identify several theoretical approaches offered to explain why humans behave prosocially. While social learning theory links prosocial behaviors to individuals' learning history, norms and roles are also proposed to account for prosocial acts. Another commonly adopted approach to explain prosocial behaviors is social exchange theory [5] which basically states that all social exchanges can be interpreted with an economic utilitarian perspective.

In order to explain prosocial behaviors, different types of prosocial motivation are offered to be in action and affect prosocial behavior either directly or indirectly. In his recent work, Batson [6] identifies four main motivations to act prosocially. He proposes that people can behave prosocially out of egoistic, altruistic, collectivistic, or principistic motivations. Although not confined in a specific setting, these four motivations or any combination of them could as well be in action for prosocial organizational behaviors.

Another account of prosocial motivation applied to the work setting is offered by Grant and Berg [7]. According to their account, prosocial motivation can be studied at different levels of generality. They defined prosocial motivation using three hierarchical levels, global, contextual and situational. Global prosocial motivation is defined as one's general concern about benefiting others and can be conceptualized in terms of prosocial values. Contextual prosocial motivation is more specific in scope and can be defined as one's desire to benefit a predefined category or group of people through a particular occupation, job or role. As the most specific type of prosocial motivation, situational prosocial motivation refers to the desire to benefit a given group or individual in a specific situation.

Basing their line of thinking on these different levels of generality, Grant and Berg [7] identified the contextual and dispositional antecedents as well as the individual and organizational consequences of prosocial motivation at work. As antecedents, they point to relational job design, and collectivistic norms and rewards as organizational variables. Other-oriented values, agreeableness and conscientiousness appear as individual difference variables affecting prosocial motivation. Consequences of prosocial motivation include persistence performance and productivity and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Another problematic area that the field presents involves the definition and study of prosocial behavior within

organizational settings. One can define the literature on prosocial behavior in organizations as, at best, fragmented. Although common themes emerge, prosocial organizational behaviors are operationalized in several different ways such as organizational citizenship behaviors, role-prescribed behavior [e.g. 8], extra-role behavior [e.g. 8], organizational spontaneity or cooperation [e.g. 8,9], to name a few, a comprehensive approach, together with a firm operationalization is yet to be offered.

The study of prosocial behavior in organizations can be dated back to Katz and Kahn's [10] conceptualization of spontaneous behaviors, as engaging in discretionary behaviors thereby going above and beyond the job requirements. Katz and Kahn [10] suggested that these spontaneous behaviors were an essential part of organizational survival and effectiveness. The rather recent concepts matching the essence of "going above and beyond" formal job requirements, include prosocial organizational behavior [11], extra-role behavior [12], contextual performance [13] and organizational citizenship behavior [14]. Among these, prosocial organizational behaviors are of particular importance for the present study since it encompasses a wider range of behaviors compared to each one of these concepts.

Prosocial organizational behavior is defined as "behavior which is performed by a member of an organization, directed towards an individual, group or organization with whom he or she interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role, and performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, or organization toward which it is directed" [11, p. 711].

With such an encompassing definition, Brief and Motowidlo [11] identify three axes along which prosocial organizational behaviors may vary. First, they differentiate between organizationally functional and dysfunctional prosocial behaviors. Second, they make the distinction between role prescribed and extra-role prosocial behaviors. Finally, they point to the receiving end of prosocial acts by distinguishing between individual (either co-workers or customers) and organizational recipients of prosocial acts.

Considering these distinctions they identify thirteen specific categories of prosocial organizational behaviors which include but not limited to behaviors such as assisting co-workers with job-related matters, showing leniency in personnel decisions, complying with organizational values, policies and regulations, staying with the organization despite temporary hardships.

Although comprehensive, such an approach [11] was not widely adopted by organizational researchers. Partly due to the hardship in operationalizing some of the sub-categories such as showing leniency in personnel decisions or staying with the organization despite temporary hardships, for instance, their approach did not produce much empirical research. Rather, when studying prosocial behavior in organizations, the common approach has been to use several related concepts interchangeably. Among these, organizational citizenship is probably the most frequently

chosen as a measure of prosocial behavior in organizations.

Compared to the set of behaviors offered to define prosocial organizational behaviors, both organizational citizenship behaviors and organizational spontaneity offer a more manageable set of behaviors, especially when it comes to identify and assess them in organizational settings. In effect, organizational citizenship and organizational spontaneity are mostly being used as proxies for prosocial organizational behavior to be able to better operationalize it.

As delineated by George and Brief [15], the three concepts differ on several behavioral dimensions. While citizenship behaviors and organizational spontaneity include only organizationally functional behaviors, prosocial behaviors include both organizationally functional and dysfunctional behaviors, such as showing leniency in personnel decisions. While organizational spontaneity only includes extra-role behaviors, citizenship behaviors and prosocial behaviors include both role-prescribed and extra-role behaviors. While citizenship behaviors are defined by being outside of the reward system, prosocial behaviors and organizational spontaneity may be rewarded by organizational means. Finally, while organizational spontaneity only includes active behaviors, citizenship behaviors and prosocial behaviors include both active and passive behaviors.

In addition, using prosocial behavior as an umbrella term, researchers studied several related concepts including but not limited to role-prescribed behavior [8], extra-role behavior [8], knowledge sharing or cooperation [8, 9].

Bierhoff [16] interprets this multitude of approaches as originating from the need to focus on the functional aspects of prosocial behavior in order to offer procedural, administrative or organizational advice on related issues. With a similar concern, the present study aims to dissociate prosocial behaviors in terms of the intended beneficiaries.

Based on the observation that the majority of the studies on prosocial behavior in organizations do not explicitly differentiate among the beneficiaries of the prosocial acts, McNeely and Meglino [17] reasoned that different processes might be in action for prosocial behaviors which have specific individuals as the beneficiaries and for prosocial behaviors which have the organization as the beneficiary. Following this line of thought, they hypothesized that situational variables (i.e. perceived reward equity and recognition for desirable behavior) would be operational in predicting prosocial behavior intended to benefit the organization and dispositional variables (i.e. concern for others and empathy) would better predict prosocial behaviors intended to benefit specific individuals. Indeed, the findings confirmed their hypotheses regarding the differential contribution of dispositional and situational variables to prosocial acts with individually and organizational beneficiaries.

Another issue where a conceptual clarification might prove useful is the distinction between the recipient (e.g. toward whom the act is directed) of the prosocial act and its beneficiary (e.g. who benefits from the act). Although the two coincide most of the time, such as in the case of helping

a co-worker, prosocial behavior can be defined along two axes representing who the beneficiary is and toward whom the prosocial act is directed. In an organizational context, prosocial acts can either be beneficial for the individual or the organization. Also, the target toward which the act is directed can either be internal or external (with regard to the organization). With such a perspective, prosocial acts in organizations can be classified into four main groups. These main groups are (A) acts which benefit specific individuals and have an internal target (e.g. helping or assisting a co-worker), (B) acts which benefit specific individuals and have an external target (e.g. extra-role behaviors toward a customer or a client), (C) acts which benefit the organization and have an internal target (e.g. giving extra time and effort for organizational duties or complying with organizational norms), and (D) acts which benefit the organization and have an external target (e.g. maintain a positive company image).

Building on the finding that prosocial acts which benefit individuals and organizations correlate with dispositional and situational antecedents differentially [17], the present study explores whether the beneficiary of the prosocial act factors in as a determining component of prosocial behavior in organizations.

1.2. Social Aspects of Work Design

Referring to how one's work is structured and executed, work design can broadly be defined as "how jobs, tasks, and roles are structured, enacted and modified, as well as the impact of these structures, enactments and modifications on individual, group, and organizational outcomes" [18, p. 319]. As such, the design of work is inseparable from the work itself. As an essential part of working life, work design is also important due to its interaction with the general structure and climate of an organization as well as the individuals performing the work. On the practical side, work design, as an actionable feature of organizations, offers several avenues to implement planned change in the work environment. Therefore, the design of work can be seen as one of the most fundamental issues in organizational life.

Work design theories are also important from a historical point of view. Through the study of work design, it is possible to observe the shift from the manufacturing industries to service and knowledge oriented industries, and to more recent trends of globalization and increased mobility and interaction. Although research on work design culminated in the 70's and 80's following the job characteristics theory offered by Hackman and Oldham [19], the ever-changing nature of work as well as the importance and meaning attributed to work made the study of work design an ongoing quest.

The job characteristics theory identifies several core job dimensions and focus on their personal and work related outcomes through the mediation of critical psychological states. A multitude of findings points to the robustness of the model. In addition to individual empirical studies, several meta-analyses document the validity of the propositions that

the model holds [e.g. 20]. More recently, in their integrative framework of work design, Morgeson and Humphrey [21] identified three aspects of work design. Task characteristics, similar to the model proposed by Hackman and Oldham [19], are defined as the attributes of the task environment or the work itself. They primarily refer to how the work itself is accomplished and the range and nature of tasks expected from the job holder. Social characteristics of work are defined as the characteristics that emerge from the social environment or when working with others. Contextual characteristics are defined as the characteristics that emerge from the physical and organizational environment.

The term work design, instead of job design, is purposefully used to emphasize the broad scope of the model [22]. Indeed, work design involves integrating the elements of both job and team design, as well as placing them into an organizational context. As such, the model presents a nested structure. Task characteristics are at the core of the model, surrounded by the characteristics arising from the social environment within which the work is carried out. Then, both are situated within an organizational context which provides the physical environment.

The major difference between job characteristics theory and the framework offered by Morgeson and Humphrey [21] was the inclusion of social and contextual aspects into the job design. Collapsing all the core job dimensions proposed by the job characteristics model into one general category of task characteristics, they extended the design of work to include the social and contextual aspects.

As an intermediary between task characteristics and contextual characteristics, social characteristics of work design are indeed in a key position to affect several organizational outcomes. Borrowing from the job characteristics model proposed by Hackman and Oldham [19], social and contextual characteristics of work design can also be thought as affecting organizational outcomes such as employee motivation, performance, satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover. For the present study, social characteristics are at the focus and their effects on prosocial work behavior will be investigated.

Being a rather neglected topic in work design literature, social characteristics of work has recently begun to draw researchers' attention. Recently, pointing to the issue, Oldham and Hackman [23] called for research focusing entirely on the social aspects of work and specifically articulated some of the research questions pertaining to the role of social dimensions of work design. Mostly exploratory, the research questions they articulated as calling for further studies included the identification of social dimensions of jobs which may lead to greater work motivation, the identification of a theoretical framework where the research on the social aspects of work would best fit in, and the identification of possible individual level variables which may moderate the relationship between social aspects of work and job outcomes.

Social characteristics of work, as defined by Morgeson and Humphrey [22], include social support, feedback from

others, interdependence, and interaction outside the organization. Social support at work is identified by a network of supervisors or coworkers who are available for assistance or advice. Meta-analytic results [24] present evidence for the positive link between social support and organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Social support was also found to be negatively related to turnover intentions and role perception outcomes such as role ambiguity and role conflict.

Feedback from others represents the feedback about one's job performance provided by other members of the organization and it has been found to be positively related to well-being, job satisfaction and work motivation and negatively related to turnover intentions. Interdependence is reflected in attributes that convey the degree of relatedness among the jobs of coworkers within an organization. Meta-analytic results [24] present evidence for the positive relation between interdependence and outcomes such as satisfaction and organizational commitment. Also, a high degree of interdependence was associated with higher motivation and better performance resulting from the frequent sharing of tacit knowledge. Interaction outside the organization refers to the interaction of the individual performing the job with the broader social environment, such as non-organizational members [21]. These may include customers, providers or other agents that people contact with while working (e.g. passengers for the driver of a public transport vehicle, students for a kindergarten teacher). Among others, interaction outside organization is the least researched component among the social characteristics of work.

These four dimensions are proposed to cover all aspects of social stimulation that a job may provide to its holders. By taking into account the social structure of the work environment within the organization (i.e. social support and feedback from others), social interaction that is necessitated by the work itself (i.e. interdependence) and the social environment that the job holder faces outside the organization (i.e. interaction outside the organization) all at once, the model provides an exhaustive account of the social characteristics of work. Along with this comprehensive approach, there are also a number of studies which also tap various social aspects of work rather partially such as coworker support [e.g. 25]. Considering the fragmented nature of these findings, incorporating them within the larger framework of work design and treating the social component of work as one of its dimensions constitute a firm step in the quest for a theoretical stand to base the research on social characteristics of jobs [23].

Standing as a convenient proxy for studying prosocial behavior in organizations, organizational citizenship behaviors have already been linked to various task characteristics. For example, task feedback, referring to the knowledge of employees about how well they are performing their jobs, was found to be positively related to the civic virtue dimension of organizational citizenship [26]. Other antecedents, having more social connotations, were

also found to affect citizenship behaviors.

In terms of its conceptual closeness to prosocial behavior, the antecedents of the altruism component of citizenship behaviors are particularly relevant for the current study. Among organizational characteristics, group cohesiveness and perceived organizational support were found to affect altruism positively. With regard to leadership behaviors, transformational leadership, supportive leader behaviors and leader member exchange were also found to positively affect altruistic citizenship behaviors [26].

Following the same line of thought, social characteristics of work can be linked to organizational outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviors or prosocial work behaviors. Indeed, despite the recent introduction of social aspects to the work design literature, evidence pointing to their contribution to prosocial work behaviors started to accumulate rather quickly [24].

In addition to their impact on promoting resilience, security, and positive moods on the job [27], social characteristics of work were also found to affect prosocial behaviors directly. Extending beyond social characteristics, Grant [28] argued that impact on and contact with beneficiaries were not only social but also prosocial characteristics of work. In a series of three studies, he showed that job opportunities for impact on and contact with beneficiaries fueled prosocial motivation through perceived impact and affective commitment to beneficiaries. Extrapolating from these findings, social aspects of work design are expected to predict prosocial work behavior. The more social elements one's work includes, the more prosocial behaviors are expected to be displayed.

The effects of the social aspects of work design will also be analyzed in terms of their differential contributions to prosocial work behaviors. Therefore, two additional purposes of the current study are first, to establish the factor structure of the Turkish version of social aspects subscale of the Work Design Questionnaire [21], and second, to identify the differential contributions of the social aspects of work on prosocial behaviors.

2. Materials and Method

2.1. Participants

A total of 308 participants took part in the study. The questionnaire is distributed online. Participants were e-mailed a short invitation letter and a link to an online questionnaire. The invitation e-mails were either addressed personally or directed through business related or alumni e-mail groups. This way, a wider distribution of participants was ensured both in terms of industry and geographical location. The participants were coming from various industries such as education (22.7%), marketing and market research (13.9%), banking and finance (10.7%), IT and communication (7.8%) and health (7.1%). A total of 798 participants started the survey but 308 of them completed the

entire questionnaire, resulting in a completion rate of 39%. The final analyses are carried out using the data provided by these 308 participants. Age and tenure of the participants are provided in Table 1 and the demographic profile of the participants is provided in Table 2.

Table 1. Age and tenure of participants (years)

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Age	22	62	33,70	7,50
Tenure (Overall)	0.80	39.92	10,91	7,89
Tenure (Current)	0.80	29.00	4,23	4,80

Table 2. Demographic profile of participants

Gender	Male	46.1%
	Female	53.9%
Education	High school	3.6%
	College degree	55.5%
	Graduate degree	40.9%
Managerial position	Manager	43.5%
	Non-manager	56.5%
Organization type	State owned	15.9%
	Private	84.1%

2.1. Instruments

2.1.1. Work Design Questionnaire

Social characteristics of work design are assessed by the Work Design Questionnaire developed by Morgeson & Humphrey [22]. Given the purpose of the current study, only the social characteristics subscale was included in the questionnaire. The social characteristics subscale is also composed of five subscales which are social support, initiated interdependence, received interdependence, interaction outside organization, and feedback from others. Means, standard deviations and internal consistency scores (Cronbach's α) for each subscale from the original scale development study [22] are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations and internal consistency scores for the selected subscales of Work Design Questionnaire

	M	SD	α
Social support	4.12	.52	.82
Initiated interdependence	3.56	.82	.80
Received interdependence	3.69	.86	.84
Interaction outside organization	3.54	1.03	.91
Feedback from others	3.54	.72	.88

2.1.1. Questionnaire for Prosocial Organizational Behavior

Considering the fragmented approach to measuring prosocial behavior in organizations, the present study attempts to develop a measure of prosocial behavior in organizations by incorporating items from several relevant

instruments. The instrument is intended to measure prosocial behavior on two axes, with regard to the beneficiary and the target of the act.

Therefore it is expected a four-factor structure composed of the following combinations of the two axes: (A) individual beneficiary and internal target, represented by behaviors such as helping a co-worker; (B) individual beneficiary and external target, represented by behaviors generally defined as extra-role service behavior such as helping or assisting a customer even it is not role prescribed; (C) organization as the beneficiary and internal target, represented by behaviors including compliance, civic virtue or any other behavior performed with the benefit of the organization in mind and (D) organization as the beneficiary and external target, represented by behaviors aimed at maintaining a positive company image. The distribution of items in scale according to their original source is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of items in the prosocial behavior scale according to their original source.

Source	A	B	C	D	Total
OCBI [29]	4				4
OCB/ Altruism [30]	2				2
Extra-role customer service [8]		5			5
Voice [31]			3		3
OCBO [29]			1		1
OCB/ Civic virtue [30]			1		1
OCB/ Conscientiousness [30]			1		1
OCBO [32]				5	5
Total	6	5	6	5	22

3. Results

Prior to testing the proposed models, the factor structure and internal consistency of the instruments were assessed. Factor structures of the instruments were assessed by conducting principal components analysis with varimax rotation and internal consistencies are assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha. Below is a summary of factor structure and internal consistency for each instrument used in the present study.

3.1. Work design questionnaire

After performing the initial analysis, 4 factors emerged which accounted for the 67.30% of total variance. However, one item appeared as a single item factor and therefore discarded. As such, 3 factors emerged explaining 63.55% of total variance. Cronbach's α for the final instrument was .87. The items forming the first factor had a common theme of communication and interaction both within and outside the organization, hence this factor is labeled as "interaction". The second factor is formed of items pertaining to

"interdependence". Finally, the items with a general theme of coworkers' care and interest towards others are grouped under the third factor which is therefore labeled as "caring". When these three factors are analyzed individually, internal consistencies were found to be high. Cronbach's α scores were .92, .84 and .84 for the interaction, interdependence and caring subscales respectively. Table 5 shows the factor structure and internal consistency for the current sample.

Table 5. Factor structure and internal consistency of social aspects of work design scale

Factor 1 – Interaction	
The job involves a great deal of interaction with people outside my organization	.916
I have the chance in my job to get to know other people	.873
On the job, I frequently communicate with people	.865
The job involves interaction with people who are not members of my organization	.850
I have the opportunity to meet with others in my work	.807
The job requires spending a great deal of time with people outside my organization.	.674
Eigenvalue = 5.97	
Variance explained = 24.73%	
Cronbach's α = .92	
Factor 2 – Interdependence	
Other jobs depend directly on my job	.824
My job cannot be done unless others do their work.	.772
The job depends on the work of many different people for its completion.	.765
Unless my job gets done, other jobs cannot be completed.	.763
The job activities are greatly affected by the work of other people.	.701
The job requires me to accomplish my job before others complete their job.	.567
Eigenvalue = 2.88	
Variance explained = 19.84	
Cronbach's α = .84	
Factor 3 – Caring	
I receive feedback on my performance from other people in my organization (such as my managers or coworkers).	.813
My supervisor is concerned about the welfare of the people that work for him/ her.	.811
People I work with are friendly.	.756
I receive a great deal of information from my manager and coworkers about my job performance.	.707
People I work with take a personal interest in me.	.695
Other people in the organization, such as managers and coworkers, provide information about the effectiveness (e.g. quality and quantity) of my job performance.	.599
Eigenvalue = 2.59	
Variance explained = 18.99%	
Cronbach's α = .84	
Total variance explained = 63.55%	
Cronbach's α = .87	

3.2. Questionnaire for Prosocial Organizational Behavior

Prosocial work behavior was assessed with a scale specifically designed for the present study. It was hypothesized that the factor structure would yield to four factors composed of the target audience and the beneficiary of the prosocial act. However, the final analysis yielded to three factors emphasizing the beneficiary of the act. After performing the initial analysis, 4 factors emerged which accounted for the 66.67% of total variance, yet there were several items which loaded to more than one factor. Following a series of consecutive analyses a total of 4 items are excluded from the final scale. As such, the final instrument is composed of 18 items, loaded on 3 factors which accounted for 63.52% of total variance. Cronbach's α for the final instrument was .94. The first factor was composed of items which pointed to the organization as the beneficiary of the prosocial act, therefore labeled as

“organization as beneficiary”. The items in the second and third factors pointed to the individual as beneficiary. However, they differed in whether this individual was a member of the organization or not. More specifically, the second factor was composed of items with an individual beneficiary external to the organization, such as a supplier, client, student or patient.

And the third factor was composed of items with reference to the individual beneficiaries internal to the organization, such as a colleague or coworker. Therefore, the second and third factors were labeled as “external beneficiary” and “internal beneficiary”, after the beneficiary of the prosocial act. When the factors are analyzed individually, internal consistencies for all factors were found to be high. Cronbach's α scores (presented in Table 6) were .90, .89, .84 for organizational, external and internal subscales respectively.

Table 6. Factor structure and internal consistency of prosocial organizational behavior scale

Factor 1 –Organization as beneficiary	
I show pride when representing the organization in public	.829
I defend my organization when others criticize it	.794
I express loyalty toward my organization to others	.780
I demonstrate concern about the image of the organization	.743
I attend functions that are not required but help the organization's image	.627
I speak up with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures in the organization	.598
I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but considered important	.489
Eigenvalue = 8.82	
Variance explained= 23.80%	
Cronbach's α = .90	
Factor 2 –External beneficiary	
I frequently go out the way to help people in contact with my organization (e.g. customer, supplier, student, patient etc.)	.830
I willingly go out of my way to make people in contact with my organization (e.g. customer, supplier, student, patient etc.) satisfied	.801
I help people in contact with my organization (e.g. customer, supplier, student, patient etc.) with problems beyond what is expected or required of me by management	.746
I often go beyond the call of duty when serving people in contact with my organization (e.g. customer, supplier, student, patient etc.)	.737
I help orient new people even though it is not required	.570
Eigenvalue = 1.39	
Variance explained= 20.28%	
Cronbach's α = .89	
Factor 3 – Internal beneficiary	
I take time to listen co-workers' problems and worries	.765
I willingly help others who have work related problems	.739
I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me	.695
I pass along information to co-workers	.638
I help others who have heavy work loads	.574
I adhere to informal rules devised to maintain order within the organization	.552
Eigenvalue = 1.23	
Variance explained= 19.44%	
Cronbach's α = .84	
Total variance explained = 63.52%	
Cronbach's α = .94	

Table 7. Means, standard deviations and zero order correlations of study variables

	Mean	SD	1	1a	1b	1c	2	2a	2b	2c
1. Social aspects of work design	4.15	0.78	1							
1a. Interaction	4.43	1.21	.783**	1						
1b. Interdependence	4.03	1.03	.678**	.287**	1					
1c. Caring	4.00	1.01	.693**	.328**	.213**	1				
2. Prosocial work behavior	4.43	0.86	.412**	.356**	.146*	.382**	1			
2a. Organization as the beneficiary	4.36	1.05	.429**	.360**	.133*	.430**	.914**	1		
2b. External beneficiary	4.29	1.08	.338**	.328**	.121*	.269**	.875**	.676**	1	
2c. Internal beneficiary	4.62	0.78	.297**	.231**	.134*	.277**	.855**	.666**	.674**	1

3.3. Social Aspects of Work as Antecedents of Prosocial Organizational Behavior

Having established the factor structure of the scales used to assess the study variables, a correlation analysis is performed in order to see all the intercorrelations among variables. Zero order correlations are presented in Table 7 as well as mean scores and standard deviations. The correlations among the subtypes of social aspects of work and prosocial organizational behaviors were all significant although there appeared some variations. For example, the highest correlation was observed between caring and prosocial behaviors having the organization as beneficiary ($r(306) = .43, p < .01$) while the lowest was observed between interdependence and prosocial behaviors having an external beneficiary ($r(306) = .12, p < .05$).

A series of regression analyses (presented in Table 8, Table 9, Table 10 and Table 11) were carried out in order to investigate the contribution of the social aspects of work to prosocial organizational behavior, both as a general construct and with respect to their subcomponents. For all analyses, the predictors were entered as standardized scores to the regression models.

Table 8. Regression analysis for prosocial organizational behavior as predicted by social aspects of work design

	β	t	R ²	Adj. R ²	F
<u>Model</u>			.206	.198	26.29*
Interaction	.256	4.61**			
Interdependence	.009	.17			
Caring	.296	5.43**			

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Among all the predictors in the model, the effect of caring on prosocial organizational behaviors was found to be highest ($\beta = .296, t = 5.43, p < 0.01$) followed by interaction ($\beta = .256, t = 4.61, p < 0.01$). Additional regression analyses were carried out in order to see the differential effects of the social aspects of work design to the three subcomponents of prosocial work behaviors.

Table 9. Regression analysis for prosocial organizational behaviors having the organization as beneficiary as predicted by social aspects of work design

	β	t	R ²	Adj. R ²	F
<u>Model</u>			.239	.231	31.77**
Interaction	.249	4.57**			
Interdependence	-.013	-.25			
Caring	.351	6.57**			

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 10. Regression analysis for prosocial organizational behaviors having an external beneficiary as predicted by social aspects of work design

	β	t	R ²	Adj. R ²	F
<u>Model</u>			.137	.128	16.08**
Interaction	.268	4.62**			
Interdependence	.006	.10			
Caring	.180	3.16**			

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 11. Regression analysis for prosocial organizational behaviors having an internal beneficiary as predicted by social aspects of work design

	β	t	R ²	Adj. R ²	F
<u>Model</u>			.101	.092	11.33**
Interaction	.146	2.47**			
Interdependence	.045	.79			
Caring	.219	3.78**			

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

In terms of significant contributions, the pattern of relationships was identical for each subtype of prosocial behaviors. Interaction and caring were found to have a significant contribution to prosocial behaviors having the organization as beneficiary, to prosocial behaviors having an external beneficiary, and to prosocial behaviors having an internal beneficiary while the effect of interdependence was not found to be significant. When the individual β values are compared, the highest contribution was found to be that of caring to prosocial behaviors having the organization as

beneficiary ($\beta = .351$, $t = 6.57$, $p < 0.01$).

Exploratory analyses were also performed in order to spot the differential effects of demographic variables on prosocial behaviors. The effects of gender, tenure, managerial position and organization type were investigated. While prosocial behaviors were not found to differ according to the agents' gender or organization type, they were found to differ according to the agents' managerial position. Employees in a managerial position ($M = 4.63$, $SD = .80$) reported performing prosocial behaviors ($t(306) = 3.80$, $p < .01$) more than the employees in non-managerial positions ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .87$). This was also the case for prosocial behaviors having the organization as beneficiary ($M = 4.70$, $SD = .90$ for managers, and $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.09$ for non-managers, $t(306) = 5.13$, $p < .01$), prosocial behaviors having an external beneficiary ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.00$ for managers, and $M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.13$ for non-managers, $t(306) = 2.02$, $p < .05$) and prosocial behaviors having an internal beneficiary ($M = 4.73$, $SD = .78$ for managers, and $M = 4.53$, $SD = .77$ for non-managers, $t(306) = 2.32$, $p < .05$).

4. Discussion

The present study is carried out in order to identify the contribution of social work design to prosocial organizational behaviors. Individual contributions of the social aspects of work to different subtypes of prosocial organizational behaviors were assessed using a survey methodology. The validity of each instrument for the current sample was assessed through a series of exploratory factor analyses. The scales were found to be valid and reliable, although the findings pointed out some differences between the original and Turkish versions.

Compared to the original 19-item scale (social aspects subscale of the Work Design Questionnaire) devised by Morgeson and Humphrey [22] the Turkish version showed a slightly different factor structure. The original scale was composed of five factors. The factors were social support, initiated interdependence, received interdependence, interaction outside organization and feedback from others. However in the Turkish version, one item (originally belonging to the social support factor) was discarded since it appeared as a single item factor and the total number of factors from the resulting 18 items was three.

The items in the two factors of initiated and received interdependence converged into one factor. Considering the difference with respect to the level of individualism between the current and original samples, this can be considered as an expected finding. The original study was carried out in the United States where the individualism score was 91 [33]. In comparison, in a country like Turkey where the individualism score was 37, it is understandable the difference between the two types of interdependence, initiated and received, doesn't matter much. In other words, the fact that the job requires interdependence of any two parties is perceived as more salient than the individuals who

are at the receiving or initiating end of it.

The items in the social support factor were dispersed into two other factors of interaction outside organization and feedback from others. In this way, the newly formed "interaction" factor was composed of items emphasizing interaction both within and outside organization. Two items originally belonging to the social support factor of the questionnaire converged with the items from the interaction outside organization factor. Interestingly enough, these two factors had reference to "others" (i.e. other employees, colleagues) in the workplace. This difference between the two versions can also be attributed to cultural differences. In a collectivistic society, people in one's immediate environment are usually perceived as members of one's in-group. Since these in-groups also refer to the organizations one works for [33], "others" in one's in-group can easily be interpreted as a contradiction in terms. Therefore, these two items referring to the social support provided by other people at work can easily be interpreted as focusing on the interaction rather than on the differentiation between one's self and his or her in-group at work.

Also, items from the feedback from others factor converged with the remaining social support items resulting in a new factor for which the focus was on "caring". Again, the cultural differences between the two samples appear as the primary source of this structure. Collectivism is defined by its emphasis on harmony among group members at one side and the prevalence of indirect communication and indirect feedback at the other [33]. Combining these two elements of collectivistic cultures, it becomes easier to interpret professional feedback and personal care and interest as interchangeable. Indeed, the current factor structure where items from social support and feedback from others appear as one factor can be read as a reflection of this blurring of lines between these two concepts in collectivistic cultures.

Prosocial work behavior scale was designed for the current study. Following the approach outlined by Brief and Motowidlo [11], prosocial work behavior is defined along two axes one representing the beneficiary of the act and the other representing the audience (i.e. the immediate observer of the prosocial act). Operationalized as such, prosocial work behavior scale was expected to show a four-factor structure. However, the resulting instrument had three factors for which the discriminatory aspect was the beneficiary of the prosocial act.

The first factor, focusing on the organization as the beneficiary, was mainly composed of items taken from the OCBO scale devised by Lee and Allen [32]. Two items originally belonged to the civic virtue subscale of another measure of OCB [30]. One item referred to the voice behavior, a rather neglected aspect of prosocial work behavior, identified by Brief and Motowidlo [11], however not emphasized enough in later studies. This item, pertaining to voice behavior was taken from the scale devised to assess voice behavior in organizations [31].

The second factor, with the emphasis on beneficiaries external to the organization, was mainly composed of items

taken from the scale devised by Bettencourt and Brown [8]. The scale was originally used to assess prosocial service behaviors demonstrated by contact employees. Among the three components originally identified to assess prosocial service behaviors, the items pertaining to extra-role customer service were included in the present scale. The original study was carried out with bank tellers and customer service managers of the same bank. Considering the heterogeneous nature of the present sample the items were generalized by changing the word “customer” with “people in contact with my organization, such as customers, suppliers, students, patients etc.”. Only one item in this factor had a different source. As a shared item of two other scales, it was previously associated with both the altruism component of OCB [30] and OCBI [29]. The item’s specific reference to new employees can be interpreted as indicative of their status as an out-group member, close enough to provide help for their orientation but not yet accepted as a member of the work group.

As expected, the third factor points to the internal beneficiaries of prosocial behaviors at work. Internal beneficiaries refer to colleagues and other employees at the workplace. With one exception, all items in this factor were originally belonging to either the altruism component of organizational citizenship behaviors [30] or organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards individuals [29]. However, one item, with reference to the informal rules accepted in the organization appeared as part of this rather homogenous factor. This item was originally used to assess organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization [29]. However, for the current sample, this item showed a common pattern with items having other employees as the beneficiary. Again, from a cultural point of view, adhering to informal norms can be seen as beneficial to other employees, to the extent that this kind of behavior prevents possible sources of conflict between individual members of the organization.

Among the social aspects of work design, interaction and caring were found to significantly predict prosocial organizational behaviors. Overlapping with the relational job design perspective offered by Grant and Parker [18], the interaction component of the social aspects of work design significantly predicted all three subtypes of prosocial organizational behaviors.

Grant [34] proposed that when the structure of jobs offered employees opportunities for contacting the beneficiaries, employees would be more strongly motivated to act prosocially. He also proposed that the relational job design would lead to a stronger affective commitment to the beneficiaries, thereby increasing the motivation to act prosocially. Although it falls short in explaining the mechanism through which it operates, the current finding on the effects of interaction on the two types of prosocial behavior supports this proposition.

Although essential, social aspects of work design are a neglected topic in work design literature [23]. Therefore, making their relationships with other constructs explicit

constitutes a not so small step within the work design literature. At the practical side, on the other hand, recognition of their possible contributions to several organizational outcomes, such as prosocial organizational behaviors, can provide a useful tool for designing jobs and work environments in a way that would lead to desired outcomes. In light of the current findings, promoting interaction among employees, for instance, appears as one of the indirect ways of promoting prosocial organizational behaviors.

In methodological terms, the present study can be criticized on two grounds. The respondents were accessed through convenience sampling and participation was voluntary. Although this is a rather customary approach in organizational research, caution should be taken while interpreting current findings. The act of voluntarily completing a survey which takes 10 to 15 minutes, just for the sake of it, can be considered a prosocial act by itself. Therefore, all the respondents were, for some reason or another, were performing a prosocial act by filling out a survey on prosocial work behaviors. Given that the final sample included enough variance, this was not considered a major issue but still, should be taken into account while interpreting the findings.

Again, with regard to methodology, the present study can be criticized on the ground of relying on a single, self-report type measure for each construct that it intended to measure. Although this isn’t a shortcoming per se, a better approach would be to complement the findings either with information from different sources. Using a composite measure for prosocial organizational behaviors with data gathered from both the participants and their colleagues would constitute such an example.

Regarding work design, only social aspects of work were assessed in the current study. However, with an exploratory aim in mind, task characteristics and contextual characteristics of work [21] would also offer possible paths for further studies on prosocial work behaviors.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the present study contributes to organizational literature both by reviving a rather neglected topic, prosocial organizational behaviors, and by accentuating the contribution of social aspects of work within a framework of work design. Both topics are essential in the sense that they contribute to employees’ sensemaking process regarding their work.

Several, contributions to the literature are therefore possible from this point on. Among all, probably the most essential one would be to clarify the contents and boundaries of prosocial organizational behaviors. Currently, literature on prosocial organizational behaviors is dominated by studies focusing on organizational citizenship behaviors. Considering the complexity of the construct, it is a rational choice, especially in terms of operationalization. However,

despite their shared components, the two constructs differ significantly one from another. Therefore, the need for a clearer definition of prosocial work behaviors is a pressing issue for the relevant literature.

The present study also opens up several avenues for further research, especially with regard to neighboring areas. As Oldham and Hackman [23] put it, social aspects of work design provide a new ground for the study of job characteristics. One of the various areas which can be studied in relation to job characteristics and work design may be emotional labor. Given that social aspects of work design include interactions with third parties, and these interactions might not always be pleasant, the combined effects of emotional labor and social aspects of work design would tell more about the enactment of prosocial behaviors at work.

The possible effects of the social aspects of work design on organizational outcomes were delineated by Grant and Parker [18] in their account of relational job design. Coupled with findings linking commitment to organizational citizenship behaviors, a likely path to be investigated further is the one between the social aspects of work design and prosocial work behaviors where different types of commitment act as mediating variables. A fuller picture, however, would also include several other aspects of work design such as task related and contextual factors [21].

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