

Article

# The Relationship between Responsible Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior in the Hospitality Industry

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to explore the mediating role of the perception of social responsibility, and organizational identification, in the relationship between responsible leadership and organizational citizenship behavior in the hospitality industry. A questionnaire was answered by 214 frontline employees of four and five-star hotels, in the north of Portugal. Results indicate that there is a mediation model, which uses the effect of the perception of social responsibility and organizational identification in the relationship between responsible leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. This study is a first attempt to propose a parallel multiple mediator model that explores the effect of hotel frontline employees' perceptions of the importance of social responsibility, as well as the effect of employees' identification with the organization, both of which act as mediators in the relationship between responsible leadership and OCB in the hospitality industry.

**Keywords:** responsible leadership; organizational citizenship behavior; perception of social responsibility; organizational identification; hospitality industry



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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the increase in tourism on a global scale, in addition to its impact on the economy and the environment, has aroused the interest of this sector concerning environmental issues. The importance that the hospitality industry attributes to green practices has, more recently, focused attention on water and energy conservation, towel reuse, linen reuse, recycling, and waste management [1]. These sustainability initiatives are increasingly appreciated by hotels due to their impact on customer satisfaction, as well as the consequent influence on the hotel's star rating [2], along with a return on investment, sales, profit, and market share [3].

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) constitutes one of the most desired behaviors in organizations, in general and in hotels in particular [4], due to its association to high levels of organizational efficiency [5], organizational effectiveness [6,7], job performance, productivity, customer satisfaction [8], as well as sustainability [3].

OCB is defined as behaviors that are "discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that, together, promote the effective functioning of the organization" [5] (p. 4). OCB is also defined as "the activities and behavior required from employees by leaders to attain their common targets and objectives" [9] (p. 5). Five dimensions of OCB were considered by Organ (1988) such as: (1) altruism, that is, employees help co-workers with relevant duties and tasks required by the job; (2) courtesy, that is, employees are polite, show consideration for others, and treat others with respect; (3) conscientiousness, that is, employees perform tasks in a conscientious manner, even though this might not constitute current practice; (4) sportsmanship, that is, employees display a positive attitude and are willing to tolerate some circumstances without complaining; finally (5) civic virtue, which means that employees participate freely in the governance

of the organization. The definition of the concept indicates an altruistic and courteous behavior that aims to 'help others' [7], behave favorably towards the organization, and increase the likelihood that employees will go beyond their job role requirements to act sustainably at work [3]. The success of tourism organizations can be driven by the role of employees, who constitute a fundamental part of an organization's quality of service in areas where contact with the customer is privileged [10]. Unlike most other industries, the products of organizations in the hospitality and tourism industries are service experiences, which are mostly intangible and highly dependent on interactions between employees and customers [11].

Many studies have sought to identify how employees can be encouraged to develop environmentally friendly practices [12–14] through the promotion of OCB, and leadership has been reported to be an important antecedent [15–17]. Despite the obvious association, few existing studies have established a relationship between responsible leadership and OCB [15]. Responsible leadership is associated with the idea that leaders have a responsibility to improve the world and solve environmental problems [18–20]. A responsible leader must assume several roles: as an "expert who tries to achieve organizational performance goals, as a facilitator who cares for his/her followers, and as a citizen who considers the consequences of business decisions for society and the environment" [15] (p. 2). Recent research seems to share the perspective of the accountability of leadership in relation to the various stakeholders [21,22] within a global, complex, and connected stakeholder society [23]. Responsible leadership is, in this sense, viewed as a "value-based and, through ethical principles, a driven relationship between leaders and stakeholders" [18] (p. 438). In this perspective, leaders think about the consequences of their conduct for stakeholders [24], and of how they positively influence other organizational members' attitudes and behaviors towards the environment.

Considering the effects of tourism on society and on the stakeholders involved, a leadership style, which includes a broader view of stakeholders, is required. In this sense, responsible leadership, which goes beyond serving the needs of shareholders/owners, aims to interact and prioritize the various stakeholders, so they can be incorporated into the strategy and organizational processes [25]. This can be the key to a sustainable long-term strategy in tourism organizations.

According to this view of accountability, Ehrhart [26] indicates that followers perceive when the leader does not focus only on benefits for the organization, seeking to reach his/her followers and other groups of stakeholders. Furthermore, when those in leadership perform their duties with a sense of responsibility, and follow more ecologically sound operating principles, followers tend to respond with higher levels of OCB.

Drawing on the theory of social exchange [27], as well as the theory of social identity [28] and the stakeholder theory [29], this study aims to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between responsible leadership and OCB through the mediating effect of the perception of social responsibility and organizational identification. Literature is also scarce with regard to the study of variables, which can be considered as mediators in the relationship between responsible leadership and OCB. In this sense, this study wishes to propose a model that explores the effect of hotel frontline employees' perceptions of the importance of social responsibility, as well as the effect of employees' identification with the organization, both of which act as mediators in the relationship between responsible leadership and OCB.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Development of Hypotheses

### 2.1. Defining Responsible Leadership

Haque et al. [19,20] argued that contemporary leaders are increasingly challenged to fulfill their leadership roles with a higher sense of responsibility. In this sense, responsible leadership appears in literature in association with the idea that companies and, more particularly, their leaders have social responsibilities [19,20,30], which contribute to the improvement of the world and environmental problems [18,31]. In this context, organizations,

and especially their leaders, are increasingly seen as being responsible for what they do, or do not do, in order to benefit society and the different stakeholders [31].

Responsible leadership can be defined as a social and ethical-relational phenomenon, which occurs in social processes resulting from the interaction between a leader and his/her followers, be they internal or external to the organization [32]. Based on this, responsible leaders are “geared towards the establishment of accountability in matters pertaining to organizational value creation” [33] (p. 464), and share a meaningful business vision [31].

This definition is in line with Pless’s [18] view of this construct, where the author considers a responsible leader to be someone who establishes social and moral relationships with different stakeholders based on recognition, care, and responsibility. The dynamic process of the interaction between leaders and followers aims to develop activities oriented towards social change [18]; that is, it refers to the role of organizations and their leaders in contributing to a better world and, therefore, to the development of corporate social responsibility.

This new way of thinking about the role of leaders and what they generate is understood as “leadership challenge, which requires leaders who care, who are morally conscious, open towards the diversity of stakeholders inside and outside the corporation, and who are aware of and understand the responsibilities of business in society” [18] (p. 438). Based on these definitions, a responsible leader is a person of character who possesses ethical values; that is, he/she displays moral reasoning skills and “moral imagination”. Decision-making is supported by ethical principles, which consider the ensuing impact on the various stakeholders, and uses influence and power to achieve moral and legitimate goals, through justifiable means [21].

Contemporary leaders are increasingly challenged to perform their leadership roles in accordance with a broader sense of responsibility. However, one of the problems underlying this type of leadership resides in the concept of responsibility itself, which depends on how leaders view the term of “leadership” [21,34]. While this approach focuses on the relationship between responsible leadership and different stakeholders, it is not entirely clear what leaders must do to be more accountable. In other words, it is generally acknowledged that a responsible leader is required to balance the concerns of the different stakeholders; there is still no broad understanding of how this can be undertaken [34]. Some authors have, however, proposed some possibilities: (1) lead by example; (2) incorporate the values of the stakeholders in the main objective and vision; (3) use motivation to help followers implement the values of the stakeholders; (4) empower employees [34].

These challenges faced by the responsible leader do not depend entirely on the person in question; they are also conditioned by the context in which this subject finds him/herself [22]. Responsible behavior by the leader depends both on the leader’s characteristics as well as the environment [22]. This approach analyzes the role of the responsible leader based on the combination of individual and contextual factors that interact and contribute to influence others’ behaviors and the environment. Leaders act and make decisions that seek to develop two types of socially responsible behavior [22]. These are distinguished as follows: “Doing good” (i.e., improving the social and environmental well-being of stakeholders) and “avoiding harm” (i.e., avoiding harmful consequences for the stakeholders, other than the shareholders alone).

## *2.2. Responsible Leadership and Employees’ Perception of Social Responsibility*

Literature pertaining to the role of leadership in promoting corporate social responsibility is scarce [35] and has pointed to the growing need to address the responsibility of organizational leaders [24]. Responsible leaders can influence the perception of social responsibility carried out by the organization through the sensitization of their employees to the possible social and environmental consequences of corporate actions, emphasizing, and also demonstrating, through their own actions, the importance of stakeholders in this process [23,36]. As role models of good social responsibility practices, responsible leaders do not only promote an ethical culture; they also emphasize the relevance of social

responsibility initiatives, directing individuals and organizations towards the importance of listening to them and doing what is right for business and society [37].

The stakeholder theory acts as a theoretical framework in the sense that it offers a more comprehensive view of how responsible leadership influences the organization's processes and results [38]. In this perspective, responsible leadership signifies morally conscious leaders, who are aware of the responsibilities held by companies in today's society [18]. However, and above all, they must be available to the different internal and external stakeholders.

The role of these leaders consists of emphasizing the need for corporate social responsibility and providing meaning for the social activities promoted by the organization [23]. In brief, if responsible leaders are able to convince their employees that social responsibility constitutes an important path, and are also able to create a sense of purpose for social activities, they will be active when it comes to social and environmental issues [23]. According to these studies, one might further add that responsible leadership can influence perceptions and socially responsible behaviors [39]. In this way, responsible leadership can be viewed as an antecedent of perceptions of social responsibility which, in turn, depend on the leader's responsible guidance [40].

Therefore, these studies point out that responsible leadership can contribute to the followers' greater awareness of the importance of the organization's social responsibility practices. This argument allows for the construction of the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1).** *Responsible leadership will be positively related to the frontline employees' perception of social responsibility.*

Understanding the relationship between the perception of social responsibility and OCB is an issue that literature has recently begun to address. In order to analyze this relationship, the theory of social identity [28] and the theory of social exchange [27] are particularly interesting, as they enable a better understanding of the influence of the perception of corporate social responsibility practices on employees' positive behavior [41]. The results of Jones' study [42] showed that employees repay with OCB when they perceive the existence of socially responsible business practices. Using Blau's theory of social exchange [27], or, more specifically, the notion of reciprocity, one can consider that organizational members may perceive that social responsibility is also in line with their own interests [43]. In this exchange, supported by reciprocity, organizations guarantee good working conditions and benefits for their employees, who, in turn, reciprocate through extra efforts [43,44]. Similarly, Hansen et al. [45] also resort to the theory of social exchange [26] to explain why employees engage in discretionary behaviors when they want to "return" to their organization. This explains why, when employees realize that their leader adopts socially responsible behaviors, they are more susceptible to making a special effort when carrying out their duties [45].

For example, the perceptions of organizational environment support are significantly related to employees' attitudes and behaviors, such as behaviors that go beyond what is stipulated, in favor of sustainability [46]. It is important to mention another form of response by employees to social responsibility initiatives. For example, CSR discretionary actions, such as donations to the community, do not provide direct benefits to employees; however, as members of the community, they tend to "repay" these activities in the form of positive behaviors towards the organization [47]. In other words, when employees perceive that their organization invests in social responsibility practices, in an intrinsic (sincere) or extrinsic way (seeking to obtain some benefit), they tend to exert an extra effort in their work [44].

Thus, when employees perceive the organization to be socially responsible, they will tend to be reciprocal and to develop OCB. Thus, hypothesis 4 under study was elaborated:

**Hypothesis 2 (H2).** *The perception of social responsibility will be positively associated with the frontline employees' organizational citizenship behaviors.*

### 2.3. Responsible Leadership and Employees' Organizational Identification

Leadership can influence how followers perceive themselves and how they experience a sense of identification with the organization [48]. Organizational identification consists of the perceptions of "oneness" with and "belongingness" to the organization [49]. According to the social identity theory, it generates a positive impact on employees' behavior, which is why it is so important for leaders to foster their followers' identification with the organization [41].

Leaders do not only lead groups of people; they are also members of those groups, and leadership processes are, therefore, enacted in the context of a group, which shares values and objectives [41,48]. This sharing of values and objectives is associated with responsible leadership, since responsible leaders aim to achieve a business vision that is commonly shared with stakeholders [31], where he/she is also an interested party in this process. Bearing in mind that responsible leaders care about others, and that the values they share are centered on consideration for others [24], as well as empirical evidence, which points out that socially responsible organizational practices influence employees' identification [50,51], one can state that responsible leadership may influence the way his/her followers experience a sense of identification with the organization. The following hypothesis is based on this assumption, namely that:

**Hypothesis 3 (H3).** *Responsible leadership will be positively related to the frontline employees' organizational identification.*

When an employee positively perceives the company's values and its socially responsible initiatives, he/she will feel closer to the company and co-workers and will be more predisposed to going the extra mile in order to achieve the goals of the group which he/she identifies with [52]. In this case, employees will experience the need to respond positively to their sense of identification with the organization [44]. Using the theory of social identity [28], literature suggests that CSR communicates the company's underlying values, which can lead people to form a strong psychological link with it (i.e., organizational identification) and thus trigger behaviors that benefit the company. In this perspective, employees' identification will positively influence their behaviors, namely that of OCB [53,54]. When employees identify with the organization and its leaders, they not only promote values that conform to the values of social responsibility; they also develop behaviors that go beyond what is required. The more employees identify with the organization and its leader, the more likely they are to demonstrate positive attitudes and behavior towards it [55]. Thus, it is expected that hotel frontline employees who show greater identification with the organization will develop positive behaviors, such as OCB. Based on these assumptions, the following hypothesis is established:

**Hypothesis 4 (H4).** *Organizational identification will be positively associated with frontline employees' organizational citizenship behaviors.*

### 2.4. The Mediating Role of the Perception of Social Responsibility

Employees' perceptions of the company's social responsibility practices positively influence their attitudes and behaviors, namely OCB [53,54]. Thus, according to the norm of reciprocity, if the organization exhibits practices of social responsibility, and if these practices benefit the individual, then he/she will, in turn, reciprocate with beneficial behaviors towards the organization.

Despite this connection, it is our belief that responsible leadership can indirectly affect followers' OCB through the mediating effect of the perception of social responsibility. In other words, taking into account the theory of social identity and the theory of social exchange [27], it is considered that responsible leaders can develop perceptions of the importance of social responsibility in their followers, and thus contribute to reciprocal

actions towards the organization, such as organizational citizenship behaviors. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**Hypothesis 5 (H5).** *Responsible leadership influences organizational citizenship behavior through the mediating role of the perception of social responsibility.*

Literature indicates that leadership practices are positively related to OCB, which means that leaders can promote this type of behavior amongst subordinates through their own example [56]. As a result, a high-quality relationship between the leader and his subordinates is related to behaviors, which extend beyond what is expected, namely OCB [57]. Accordingly, Buil et al. [58] point out that previous research has broadly identified supervisory behavior as playing a key role in the performance of frontline employees in the tourism sector. Looking into this issue, a study carried out by Groves and LaRocca [59] presents results that provide empirical evidence on the role of leadership in the subordinates' attitudes toward CSR; Zhao and Zhou [60] suggest that the responsible leader has an impact on OCB by means of the influence of leadership identity. Walumbwa et al. [61] use the theory of social identity to suggest that organizational identification plays a mediating role in the relationship between ethical leadership and performance [61]. Based on these studies, it is therefore equated that responsible leadership can produce an impact on OCB through the mediating role of organizational identification. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**Hypothesis 6 (H6).** *Responsible leadership influences organizational citizenship behaviors through the mediating role of organizational identification.*

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Procedures

The delivery and collection of the questionnaires took place between the months of January and March 2020 (terminated by the emergence of the first cases of COVID-19 in Portugal). To this end, a request for collaboration via e-mail was prepared. However, few organizations responded to our initial request. Thus, in view of this situation, one had to choose another type of approach and opted for face-to-face contact in order to ask companies directly to participate in the study. In some cases, one was able to speak to the human resources director or hotel manager personally. Even so, it was still necessary to send e-mails to ensure formal authorization by the hotels' Administration Board.

Respondents were provided with clear explanations regarding guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity of the sources. One also requested a truthful completion of the questionnaires, indicating that there were no right or wrong answers. Additionally, an informed consent sheet was attached, where reference was made to the respondent's freedom to abandon the study if he/she wished to do so. The e-mail and contact details were made available in case of doubts or a need for further clarification. After all the questionnaires had been collected, an inspection was carried out, during which incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis.

#### 3.2. Sample

The sample of this study consisted of 214 frontline employees who worked at four-and five-star hotels in the north of Portugal. For the collection and calculation of the sample, the National Tourism Register was used, where one was able to find the registration of all the hotels integrated in the tourism sector.

With regard to the gender of respondents, 114 (53.5%) were female, and 99 (46.5%) were male. In relation to age, respondents were between 17 and 60, corresponding to an average of 32 years. Of the total number of individuals surveyed, 74% were 17 years of age or older, 16.7% were between 31 and 40 years, 6.4% were between 41, and 50 and, finally, only 2.9% were between 51 and 60 years.

Regarding the professional duties performed, 119 (55.6%) carry out activities associated with the reception of guests, 68 (31.8%) work in the bar and restaurant areas, 9 (4.2%) execute tasks related to housekeeping, 8 (3.7%) perform activities pertaining to sport and spa, and the remaining 7 (3.3%) are involved at service management level, that is, accommodation technicians, as well as operational and coordination management.

With regard to work timetables, 14 of the respondents (6.5%) work on a part-time basis, and the remaining 200 (93.5%) have full-time schedule.

Concerning the level of academic qualifications, respondents were ranked as follows: 6.6% of the individuals have 6 years of compulsory education; 6.1% have 9 years of compulsory education; 36.9% have 12 years of compulsory education; 46.3% possess a higher education degree, and 9.3% a master's degree. Regarding the hotel category, 169 (79%) work in 4-star hotels and the remaining 45 (21%) in 5-star hotels.

Finally, tenure in the organization is structured as follows: 97 (45.5%) have worked in the organization for less than 1 year, 82 (38.5%) have worked for less than 5 years, 20 (9, 4%) have worked with the organization between 5 and 10 years, and 14 (6.6%) have been there for more than 10 years.

### 3.3. Measures

In the construction of the questionnaire, one used scales, which had previously been validated by literature, and revealed good psychometric qualities, especially in terms of internal consistency and their suitability for the purposes of the aims of this research study. Although they were applied and validated in other cultural contexts, we tried to integrate scales that had already been applied to studies in the hotel sector, since this area of activity presents characteristics and needs which are different from those of the other sectors of activity. Whenever possible, we tried to translate the original statements literally; however, for some statements, one had to adapt the semantic formulation to the particularity of the Portuguese language and to the study in question. The first version of the measurement instrument was subjected to a pre-test, and the changes suggested in this process resulted in the final version of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of five parts. In the first part, and in order to measure responsible leadership, a five-item scale, proposed by Voegtlin [24], was used. Some sample items are: "My direct supervisor demonstrates awareness of the relevant stakeholder claims"; "My direct supervisor involves the affected stakeholders in the decision-making process" (see Table 1). Respondents were asked to characterize the leader's responsible behavior towards the different stakeholders, based on the following possibilities: 1. "Not at all"; 2. "Once in a while"; 3. "Sometimes"; 4. "Fairly often," and 5. "Frequently, if not always".

**Table 1.** Item scale adapted from Voegtlin [24] to measure Responsible leadership.

Responsible Leadership	$\alpha$
My supervisor demonstrates awareness of the relevant stakeholder claims.	0.94 *
My supervisor considers the consequences of decisions for the affected stakeholders.	
My supervisor involves the affected stakeholders in the decision-making process.	
My supervisor weighs different stakeholder claims before making a decision.	
My supervisor tries to achieve a consensus among the affected stakeholders.	

Note: \* Cronbach's alpha in relation to the original scale [24].

Perception of social responsibility is measured by means of a 22-item scale, proposed by Park and Levy [52], which constitutes the second part of the questionnaire. Socially responsible practices are divided according to the recipients of social responsibility initiatives; that is, one part is intended for practices, which involve employees, another includes customers, and the other concerns the community. The items were adapted to refer to the hotel, with the sample including items such as: "customer satisfaction is highly important for my hotel"; "my hotel treats our employees fairly and respectfully"; "my hotel helps improve life quality in the local community" (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Item scale adapted from Park and Levy [52] to measure Perception of social responsibility.

<b>Perception of Social Responsibility—Environment and Community</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
My hotel incorporates environmental concerns in business decisions.	0.95 *
My hotel reports on the hotel's environmental performance.	
My hotel encourages guests to reduce their environmental impact through programs and initiatives.	
My hotel financially supports environmental initiatives of other organizations.	
My hotel actively attempts to minimize the environmental impact of the hotel's activities.	
My hotel actively attempts to purchase products and services which minimize environmental impacts.	
My hotel helps improve the quality of life in the local community.	
My hotel actively works with international organizations which promote responsible business.	
My hotel financially supports local charities through financial donations, sponsoring events, and/or providing goods and services.	
My hotel incorporates the interests of community in business decisions.	
My hotel encourages employees to be actively engaged in local community organizations.	
<b>Perception of Social Responsibility—Collaborators</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
My hotel treats our employees fairly and respectfully.	0.92 *
My hotel provides employees with fair and reasonable salaries.	
My hotel's policies encourage a good work and life balance for employees.	
My hotel incorporates the interests of employees in business decisions.	
My hotel provides a safe and healthy working environment to all employees.	
My hotel encourages employees to develop their skills and careers.	
<b>Perception of Social Responsibility—Clients</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
Customer satisfaction is highly important for my hotel.	0.85 *
One of the main principles of my hotel is to provide high-quality services and products to our customers.	
My hotel is responsive to the complaints of our customers.	
My hotel incorporates the interests of customers in business decisions.	
My hotel respects consumer rights beyond legal requirements.	

Note: \* Cronbach's alpha relating to the original scale [52].

To measure organizational identification, a six-item scale, developed by Mael and Ashforth [62], was adapted. Sample items include: "when someone criticizes my hotel, it feels like a personal insult"; "I am very interested in what others think about my hotel" (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Item scale adapted from Mael and Ashforth [62] for measure Organizational identification.

<b>Organizational Identification</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
When someone criticizes my hotel, it feels like a personal insult.	0.87 *
I am very interested in what others think about my hotel.	
When I talk about my hotel, I usually say, "we" rather than "they."	
My hotel's successes are my successes.	
When someone praises my hotel, it feels like a personal compliment.	
If a story in the media criticizes my hotel, I would feel embarrassed.	

Note: \* Cronbach's alpha relating to the original scale [62].

Organizational citizenship behaviors include 22 items of the scale devised by Ma et al. [63]. The scale is subdivided into three dimensions, namely the behaviors adopted by employees in relation to the organization, leaders, colleagues, and customers. Some examples are: "I will give advance notice if I cannot come to work"; "my attendance at work is above the required level"; "I help my co-workers when their workload is heavy"; "I am always exceptionally courteous and respectful to customers" (Table 4).



**Table 4.** Item scale adapted from Ma, Qu, Wilson, and Eastman [63] to measure Organizational citizenship behaviors.

<b>Organizational Citizenship Behaviors—Organization</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
My attendance at work is above the required level.	0.95 *
I take fewer breaks than I deserve.	
I do not complain about unimportant things at work.	
I follow informal rules in order to maintain order.	
I protect our hotel's property.	
I say good things about our hotel when talking to outsiders.	
I actively promote the hotel's products and services.	
<b>Organizational Citizenship Behaviors—Individual</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
I help my co-workers when their workload is heavy.	0.94 *
I help previously absent co-workers to finish their work.	
I take time to listen to my co-workers' problems and worries.	
I go out of my way to help new co-workers.	
I take personal interest in my co-workers.	
I pass along notices and news to my co-workers.	
<b>Organizational Citizenship Behaviors—Clients</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
I always have a positive attitude at work.	0.94 *
I am always exceptionally courteous and respectful to customers.	
I follow customer service guidelines with extreme care.	
I respond to customer requests and problems in a timely manner.	
I perform duties with very few mistakes.	
I conscientiously promote products and services to customers.	
I contribute many ideas to customer promotions and communications.	
I make constructive suggestions for service improvement.	

Note: \* Cronbach's alpha relating to the original scale [63].

A five-point Likert scale was used to assess the respondent's level of agreement regarding employees' perceptions of social responsibility, organizational identification and organizational citizenship behaviors, based on the following response possibilities: 1. "Strongly Disagree"; 2. "Disagree"; 3. "Do not agree or disagree"; 4. "Agree" and 5. "Strongly Agree".

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 5 shows the values of the descriptive statistics, such as the mean, standard deviation, and intercorrelations among the key variables. The results reveal a positive association between all the study variables, thus providing support for subsequent analysis.

**Table 5.** Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and intercorrelations among variables.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
1. Responsible leadership	4.05 <sup>a</sup>	0.779	<i>(0.92) <sup>b</sup></i>			
2. Perceptions of Social Responsibility	3.72 <sup>a</sup>	0.695	0.595	<i>(0.94) <sup>b</sup></i>		
3. Organizational Identification	3.97 <sup>a</sup>	0.710	0.217	0.339	<i>(0.82) <sup>b</sup></i>	
4. Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	4.33 <sup>a</sup>	0.435	0.255	0.356	0.454	<i>(0.88) <sup>b</sup></i>

Note: N = 214. All the correlations are significant at  $p < 0.001$  (2-tailed). <sup>a</sup> Likert scales of 5 points; <sup>b</sup> Scale reliabilities appear diagonally, in italics.

### 4.2. Hypotheses Tests

#### 4.2.1. Measurement Model

One first tested the measurement model using AMOS [64], which has four latent variables (i.e., responsible leadership, perceptions of social responsibility, organizational identification, and organizational citizenship behavior). For responsible leadership, 5 indicators were included; for perceptions of social responsibility, 21 indicators were included;

for organizational identification, 6 indicators were included; the test of organizational citizenship behavior comprised 15 indicators. The model with all the latent variables presented a good fit with the data ( $\chi^2/df = 1.388$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; CFI = 0.932; IFI = 0.933; RMSEA = 0.044). It can thus be assumed that the index values show a good adaptation of the model to the data structure [65]. All the indicators included obtained significant loadings ( $p < 0.001$ ) in the respective construct.

#### 4.2.2. Hypothesized Model

Once the fit of the model was checked, our hypothesized model was subsequently tested using the macro-PROCESS [66]. A parallel multiple mediator model was estimated (Model 4). In this model, the antecedent variable X (Responsible Leadership—RL) is modeled as influencing consequent Y (Organizational Citizenship Behavior—OCB), directly as well as indirectly, through two mediators (M1: Perception of Social Responsibility—PSR; M2: Organizational Identification—OI). For this analysis, the most relevant information considered was the direct and indirect effects of responsible leadership on OCB [66]. First, beginning with the indirect effects, as shown in Table 6, through PSR this effect is estimated as being  $a_1b_1 = 0.412(0.123) = 0.205$ .

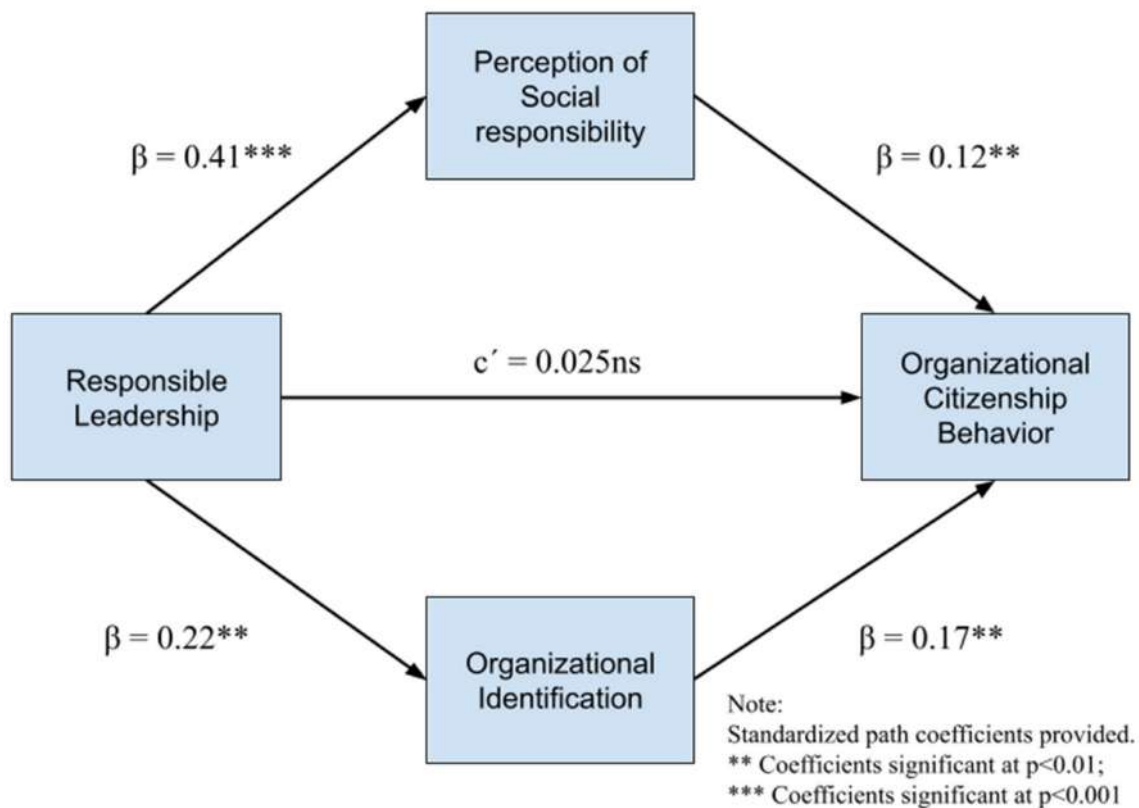
**Table 6.** Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary Information (Parallel Multiple Mediator Model).

Antecedent	Consequent														
	M <sub>1</sub> (PSR)					M <sub>2</sub> (OI)					Y (OCB)				
	$\beta$	SE	<i>t</i> -Test	CI 95% [LL; UL]		$\beta$	SE	<i>t</i> -Test	CI 95% [LL; UL]		$\beta$	SE	<i>t</i> -Test	CI 95% [LL; UL]	
X (RL)	$a_1$	0.41	0.039	10.50 ***	0.33 0.49	$a_1$	0.22	0.066	3.37 ***	0.092 0.354	$c'$	0.03	0.033	0.62	-0.05 0.07
M <sub>1</sub> (PSR)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	$b_1$	0.12	0.049	2.60 **	0.03 0.22
M <sub>2</sub> (OI)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	$b_2$	0.18	0.029	5.99 ***	0.12 0.23
K	$i_{M1}$	3.72	0.039	94.44 ***	3.64 3.80	$i_{M2}$	0.21	0.067	3.32		$i_Y$	3.87	0.115	20.87 ***	3.50 4.23
	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.35 F(1.20) = 110.34, <0.001					R <sup>2</sup> = 0.05 F(2.20) = 11.33, <0.0009					R <sup>2</sup> = 0.26 F(3.2) = 23.39, <0.001				

Notes: Based on a bootstrap test (5000 re-samples). When the bootstrap of 95% CI (LL: Lower Levels; UL: Upper Levels) contains zero for one of the values, it indicates that the effect was not significant. K = Constant;  $\beta$  = Regression Coefficients; SE = Standard Error; CI = Confidence Interval; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . PSR-Perception of Social Responsibility; RL-Responsible Leadership; OI-Organizational Identification; OCB-Organizational Citizenship Behaviors.

A statistically significant indirect effect implies that the relationship between the antecedent and the consequent variable occurs through the mediator. In this case, the results indicated that there was a positive and significant impact of RL on PSR ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $t(203) = 10.5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), thus confirming H1; a positive and significant impact of PSR on OCB ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $t(203) = 2.6$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), which confirms H2. The indirect effect of RL on OCB was modeled through OI, pointing to a significant relationship between RL and OI ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $t(203) = 3.37$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), confirming H3; between OI and OCB ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $t(203) = 5.99$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which confirms H4. These results indicate that there is an indirect effect of RL on OCB through the mediators PSR and OI.

As for the indirect effect represented by  $c'$  (Figure 1) of the RL on OCB, the results reveal that it is not statistically significant, thus indicating that RL influences OCB through the mediating role of the PSR, which confirms H5, as well as through the mediating role of the OI, confirming H6. Consequently, this indicates that the only path between responsible leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors is through the impact that leadership exercises on the perception of social responsibility, as well as on organizational identification.



**Figure 1.** Statistical Diagram of the parallel multiple mediator model.

The results of the indirect mediation effect were tested via bootstrapping, which considers 95% confidence intervals. These showed that zero or zero effects were not found within the intervals for the relationship between responsible leadership and OCB (95% CI  $[-0.045; -0.086]$ ); namely, that path  $c'$  is a value other than zero. Thus, the effects of responsible leadership on OCB are fully mediated by PSR and OI.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The main objective of the study was to analyze the impact of responsible leadership on OCB through the mediating role of the perception of social responsibility and organizational identification in hotels.

This study makes several theoretical and empirical contributions. One of the most important of these was to find evidence for the mediating role of the perception of social responsibility and of organizational identification in the relationship between the responsible leader and OCB. This contribution is relevant to theory as it indicates that leadership can be seen as a variable antecedent of the perception of social responsibility [40], and organizational identification [41,52,67]. As a result, these two mediating variables may influence the extra-role behavior of the organizational members, which is the case of organizational citizenship behaviors [42,50].

Responsible leaders can influence followers through their initiatives of social responsibility [68], thus highlighting the importance of corporate social responsibility in organizational effectiveness [36]. In other words, when leaders are seen as models, in terms of good corporate social responsibility practices, they tend to emphasize the importance of social responsibility and provide their followers with a sense and meaning of these socially responsible activities [37]. It is important to emphasize that a leader can play a central role in the way in which conditions are interpreted and designed in the minds of followers [67], and that employees react to the socially responsible practices adopted by the leader and organization [53,54]. Basu and Palazzo [69] suggest that the perception of social responsibility derives from the processes of the creation of meaning, thus allowing

one to understand how leaders and employees think, communicate, and act in relation to social responsibility. The truth is that followers turn to their leaders when they intend to discuss the socially responsible policies carried out by the organization [68].

The results led one to confirm that responsible leaders favor the perception of social responsibility practices by their followers, thus suggesting that a leader is able to create meaning and sense in the way employees interpret the importance of these types of initiatives for the benefit of the organization and society. In general, the most socially responsible hotels will tend to take better care of their current and future employees, and will seek to continually improve their working conditions and well-being through the implementation of sustainable and responsible practices in terms of green human resource management [70].

Empirical evidence has suggested that leadership and support from superiors has contributed to organizational identification [71]. The results of this study indicate the existence of a relationship between leadership and identification, which subsequently contributes to citizenship behaviors. These results are in line with the study by Zhao and Zhou [60], also carried out in the hotel sector, which presents empirical evidence of the mediating role of leader identification on the relationship between responsible leadership and OCB (for the environment). From this perspective, by promoting CSR policies, responsible leaders provide meaning to them, which in turn attracts the best employees, increases talent retention, and raises employee productivity. As internal stakeholders, people must be integrated and involved in work that is meaningful to them, which leads to greater involvement, more creativity and productivity, and the achievement of better results. In this way, and in line with the abovementioned studies, CSR initiatives can constitute an effective mechanism and means for hotels to reinforce their relationship with employees and obtain more positive results [72].

The evidence ensuing from this study pointed that the perception of social responsibility is related to organizational citizenship behaviors. Thus, according to the norm of reciprocity, if the organization exhibits practices of social responsibility, these practices benefit the individual who will, in turn, reciprocate with behaviors which are beneficial to the organization, such as those of organizational citizenship [53,54]. For example, the theory of social exchange has been used to understand the relationship between PRS and CCOs. Jones [42] suggested that the theory of social exchange served as a framework for the relationship between the benefits perceived by individuals in terms of CSR and the CCOs. When organizations seek to go beyond what is required, they tend to get involved in actions that benefit several stakeholders, including shareholders, suppliers, employees, customers, and communities [73,74].

Organizations in the hospitality and tourism industry face a complex and competitive environment, where human resource management plays a critical role. In the selection and recruitment processes, new recruits may be hired on the basis of their previous experience in volunteering activities, or the recruitment process might include questions relating to social responsibility and sustainability. However, the organization can educate staff through seminars, training, and skill development programs, instead of hiring people based on their environmental beliefs [3]. In addition to the organization's expenditure of resources on staff, leaders need support as well. During the process of recruiting and selecting managers, hotels should hire individuals who exhibit values and characteristics inherent to responsible leadership; furthermore, specific training should be introduced to help managers appreciate and promote responsible leadership practices. Since responsible leadership aims to contribute to social change and the role of organizations and their leaders in society and the environment, responsible leadership may be effective in encouraging employees to engage in environmentally friendly practices.

Sustainability is now a term of emerging importance in the hospitality sector, and the COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the issue. This context has "exposed some of the fragilities in the boundaries between people and nature, highlights the environmental limits

that ultimately circumscribes human activities and raises the elusive issue of sustainable consumption" [75] (p. 3043).

Hotels should educate employees regarding the value of environmental management activities, conduct training on working methods to save energy and reduce waste, disseminate environmental awareness within the organization to improve employees' ability to adapt to changes, and cultivate their positive attitude towards environmental issues [76].

It should be noted that many Millennials are looking for organizations with different purposes, which extend beyond financial values and assume a clear commitment to society and the defense of the environment [77]. In doing so, hotels can stimulate civic behavior in their employees, a factor that has motivated many academics and practitioners due to its obvious advantages for organizations.

#### *Limitations and Future Directions*

The work developed so far presents some limitations, which are partly due to the lack of support inherent to the relationship studied. The research results have reinforced the robustness of the theory of social identity, as well as the theory of social exchange and the theory of stakeholders, in explaining employees' perceptions of responsible leadership. In this sense, and similar to some of the research work presented throughout this study, it is advisable that continuous use is made of these theories to explain the theoretical model which supports the investigation.

Given that the perception of CSR generates positive results for organizations, it might be interesting to see how employees transfer these values learned in organizations to their daily lives and the family sphere. This is because the adoption of these types of practices is increasingly crucial to the safeguarding of sustainability. In this manner, hotels could consider encouraging and facilitating the participation of members in CSR initiatives oriented towards external stakeholders, through projects aimed at the community, sustainable development, sustainable behavior, and activities to alleviate poverty [78].

Finally, the development of a longitudinal study might prove to be particularly useful. In line with this perspective, it would be interesting to carry out this study in the post-COVID-19 context, since it would refer us to a context different from that in which the study is set. However, time constraints limited this option and, as such, we challenge future researchers to follow this path.

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