

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Governing a union's external stakeholders: a prioritization method based on relationship quality and perceived impact

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Abstract

Stakeholder governance is a growing issue in the literature and for organizations. The complex and uncertain environment of nonprofit organizations forces them to prioritize stakeholder requirements. The traditional criterion of influence and power is nevertheless proving insufficient for these organizations, especially those in political or interest representation sectors. This article proposes to use the relationship quality with stakeholders and its components (trust, satisfaction, influence, engagement) as criteria for prioritization. The study is carried out within the “Young Farmers” union, a French 50,000-member union defending the interests of agriculture and of farmers under 35 years of age. It questions external stakeholders on the relationship with the organization and its impact and it enables to verify the relevance of these criteria. The results suggest integrating stakeholder emotions into the same-named theory and studying relationship quality as a process in which satisfaction builds trust that enables engagement, which itself has a positive role on influence. The findings also revisit strategic models of stakeholder prioritization by

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proposing the four components of relationship quality mentioned above as prioritization attributes. Finally, NPOs' partners are invited to take into account the subjectivity of the evaluation process and thus to favor reasonable methods to avoid handicapping NPOs.

KEYWORDS

governance, impact, nonprofit organization, relationship quality, stakeholders

1 | INTRODUCTION

Organizational governance is a key issue that has been investigated by researchers and by practitioners for many years. Its importance is particularly emphasized when cyclical, structural or specific difficulties arise. The theoretical foundations of organizational governance are multiple and go beyond the traditional vision of agency theory to focus on stakeholders. Stakeholder governance is now prevalent and its study is particularly desired by the literature (e.g. Amis et al. 2020). Stakeholder governance has several implications. It means dealing with the “bargaining game” between and with them; making governance a place for handling and resolving conflicts; and assuming “establishing priorities among different stakeholders” (Amis et al. 2020).

Stakeholder governance is essential for all organizations but has particular meaning for nonprofit organizations (NPOs). Defined for NPOs as a “mode of structuring relationships between stakeholders around a collective project” (Chatelain-Ponroy et al. 2014, p. 220), nonprofit governance seeks an optimal balance between stakeholders, the organization's mission and the rest of the environment. Engagement-based organizations, such as *associations*, political parties or unions, do not have owners. Their governance is therefore concerned with both their members and beneficiaries, in order to achieve their organizational objectives, but also with the rest of their stakeholders. The governance of these organizations is indeed democratic and the ideal associated with it would be to be able to respond to all the demands of the environment and the stakeholders. In a context of scarce resources but also of profound uncertainty and complexity of the environment (Laville et al. 2015), the democratic ideal creates a dilemma for these organizations (Young 2002). The hesitation is between trying to achieve this ideal by satisfying the maximum number of stakeholders (Dainelli et al. 2013) and accepting a hierarchy within their demands, especially based on their ability to help the organization in achieving its mission.

While the dilemma appears to be a long-standing one in these organizations, it is still relevant: recently, Schubert and Willems (2020) noted that “maintain[ing] a healthy balance between meeting the demands of powerful stakeholders” and “ensur[ing] the representation of less powerful ones in organizational decisions” in NPOs was particularly challenging. The authors then pointed out that the traditional method of hierarchizing stakeholders, based on influence (Mitchell et al. 1997; Wood et al. 2021), could find limits in NPOs. Influence and power are useful but partial criteria: for example, beneficiaries have little power but are real organizational actors (Benjamin 2021). In addition, influence is extremely variable depending on time or context. An alternative method focuses on the value created for the organization: NPOs should focus on the stakeholders who contribute most to value creation (MacMillan et al. 2005; Wymer et al. 2021). This point of view

immediately confronts the problem of value in NPOs, which is subjective (Balser and McClusky 2005; Hansen et al. 2021), because it is constructed with the stakeholders (Conaty and Robbins 2021; Murray 2010).

In short, nonprofit governance focuses on stakeholders and orchestrates the organization's relationships with them. This is its main mission and this is what differentiates it from for-profit governance. It allows the definition of the created value by the organization to be negotiated and then seeks to determine those who participate most in the value creation. Relationships with stakeholders are the keystone, as demonstrated by Rey García et al. (2013). The authors indeed consider that "effective relationships with relevant stakeholders translate into improved organizational performance and social impact according to nonprofit's mission and societal values" (Rey García et al. 2013, p. 94).

This article, thus, proposes to explore this still untapped avenue and to rely on the framework proposed by the authors to determine criteria for prioritizing stakeholders. The aim of this article is to determine the extent to which the relationship quality with each category of stakeholder can help prioritize their demands.

This research discusses the stakeholder theory applied to the concept of impact of NPOs and integrates an emotional approach (Freeman et al. 2020b). A processual view is also proposed to complete the organization–public relationship theory. The results will also contribute to the strategic thinking of NPOs by proposing four new attributes for stakeholders (satisfaction, trust, engagement and influence). By adopting an emotional approach to impact and a vision of value co-creation (Mascena and Stocker 2020), this research invites stakeholders and policy makers to adopt a reasonable and subjective assessment of NPOs' impact, which takes into account the already scarce means of organizations.

The article begins with a literature review dedicated to NPO stakeholders and the traditional prioritization method based on influence. The study, based on a combination of theories and structural equation models, focuses on the Young Farmers union, a French 50,000-member union defending the interests of agriculture and of farmers under 35 years of age, which is experiencing the problem stated above.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

Prioritizing stakeholders is a delicate governance process that requires agreement on the definition of stakeholders as well as on a precise method.

2.1 | Stakeholders in a union

Organizational stakeholders are individuals and organized or unorganized groups who can influence and affect that organization and who can be affected and influenced by it (Freeman et al. 2020a). However, in the specific context of NPOs, and particularly those of engagement (including trade unions), two other complementary views can be added, also discussed by Freeman et al. (2020a). On the one hand, for Langtry (1994, p. 433), stakeholders "hold a moral or legal claim" on the organization. He precises that the organization "is significantly responsible for their well-being". Unions are indeed surrounded by groups and individuals for whom they act. They advocate for their interests and seek to improve their well-being. Moreover, unions have legal and moral roles, including democratic representation (in dedicated councils or chambers,

for example) as well as union rights (e.g., to strike). On the other hand, Clarkson (1995, p. 5) defines stakeholders in terms of risk, either taken by investing in the organization or incurred as a result of the organization's activities. For example, the action of trade unions in itself represents a risk for political, administrative or economic actors. Individuals and groups invested with or in a union also take risks.

Thus, the stakeholders of a trade union are extremely numerous and above all diffuse, insofar as the engagement organizations have a project for society or, at least, for their sector. The stakeholders' pressures, requirements, demands or needs are therefore plural and, above all, sometimes contradictory. This diversity and occasionally the divergence of interests lead NPOs to prioritize requirements and choose the stakeholders that are most in line with their mission (Retolaza et al. 2019). In fact, "the divergence of interests between and among the various constituents (...) must not prevent the construction of a common space of interactions where these different interests come together" (Baudry 2003, p. 72, based on the work of Rebérioux 2002).

2.2 | Stakeholder influence and prioritization

The need for stakeholder prioritization is recognized in the literature (Huml and Cintron 2021; Perrault 2017; Turbide 2005). Some authors even suggest creating a hierarchy of demands and requirements while still addressing all stakeholders in a holistic view (Crane 2020). Holistic or not, prioritization has been studied and is considered as a process which creates value for the organization (Valackiene and Miceviciene 2011). Stakeholder prioritization is to consider that their interests should be prioritized and that the organization's response will follow the order of this hierarchy.

Prioritizing stakeholders is now considered as a governance necessity (Andersson and Renz 2021). There are indeed several reasons why NPOs need to prioritize their stakeholders: limited access to resources (Modi and Sahi 2021), which makes it impossible to respond to all requirements; the often-contradictory demands of stakeholders with different interests; and the growing number of stakeholders' requests. The need to prioritize is especially pressing as the organization grows and has more and more stakeholders to manage. However, other factors favor prioritization: the culture of the stakeholders and the organization (Jiao et al. 2020), the leaders' perceptions and strategies (Schubert and Willems 2020), or the pressure of the environment, including crises (Gonzalez-Perez et al. 2021). To prioritize, various criteria can be used. The best known are those related to influence, in line with Freeman's definition of stakeholders.

Influence can be defined as the "ability of one player to change the state of another player's organism" (Zerbib and Springuel 2015, p. 10), while Rey García (2008) emphasizes changes in the "patterns of thought and/or behavior" of the targeted stakeholder. Stakeholder influence and its management are used to prioritize stakeholders (Brajer-Marczak et al. 2021; Hall et al. 2015; Hyndman and McConville 2016) through the attributes defined by Mitchell et al. (1997), which include power, urgency and legitimacy. Based on these criteria, determining which ones to listen to and respond to first is then possible.

However, as already noted, the power and influence of stakeholders produces a bias. Organizations look primarily to the most powerful and may neglect those without these attributes, even if they are fundamental to mission success (Schubert and Willems 2020). Consequently, funders find themselves privileged, unlike beneficiaries, for example (Yasmin et al. 2018). Finally, unions, as eminently political actors, are by definition at the heart of power and influence games. Making this a criterion therefore seems relevant but insufficient in this case.

2.3 | Towards other criteria for prioritizing stakeholders

NPOs need to focus on the stakeholders who bring the most value to their organization and therefore participate in the organization's value creation (MacMillan et al. 2005; Sargeant and Stephenson 1997; Wymer et al. 2021). It is then necessary to return to the concept of governance. Meier and Schier (2008, p. 181) recall that its objective is "primarily to understand the architecture and distribution of power as well as the links between governance mechanisms and value creation/distribution mechanisms within these organizations".

Following this line of thinking, it seems possible to couple the concept of influence (in which power is included) with other governance mechanisms to understand value creation. The authors have adapted these mechanisms to the case of *associations* (French grassroots volunteer organizations) and insist on the importance of the so-called specific and spontaneous mechanisms because "control and incentive mechanisms are less relevant" (Meier and Schier 2008, p. 192). Specific and spontaneous mechanisms govern relations with stakeholders (Busson-Villa and Gallopel-Morvan 2012; Chatelain-Ponroy et al. 2012) and include their trust, engagement and satisfaction.

In other words, the value creation of an NPO also depends on the relationships maintained with the stakeholders. This is also the proposal of Rey García et al. (2013) who emphasize that effective relationships with them determine the performance and impact of NPOs. The authors rely on the same three governance mechanisms and they propose a definition in the form of questions, repeated in the following paragraph.

They first emphasize stakeholder satisfaction as the improvement of the situation of all stakeholders: "to which extent relevant stakeholders (i.e. beneficiaries/customers, donors and partners) in the relationship are better-off after the nonprofit has accomplished its mission?" (Rey García et al. 2013, p. 96). They then focus on stakeholder trust, as the "the level of confidence" they have "in another's competence" and in its "willingness to act in a fair, ethical, and predictable manner" (Nyhan and Marlowe 1997, p. 616). It takes on a specific meaning in NPOs: "to which extent relevant stakeholders (i.e. beneficiaries/customers, donors and partners) perceive that their relationship with the NPO translates into social value maximization over time?" (Rey García et al. 2013, p. 96). Finally, the authors reiterate the critical nature of stakeholder engagement (Kujala et al. 2022) as a willingness to partner and build a stable relationship that produces mutual outcomes: "the extent to which the nonprofit has influenced the patterns of thought and/or behavior of relevant stakeholders (i.e. beneficiaries/customers, donors, partners) in the direction of its mission, through cooperation and/or by inspiring the development of third-party public benefit initiatives coherent with its mission and societal values, so that social impact is amplified and sustained over time?" (Rey García et al. 2013 p. 96).

Thus, a NPO's value creation is linked to four stakeholder attributes: influence (which defines them) as well as trust, satisfaction and engagement. The participation of stakeholders in value creation can be a prioritization criterion according to the literature already cited. Thus, these four attributes can become prioritization criteria if they actually participate in the creation of value.

In particular, the proposal of Rey García et al. (2013) is based on the stakeholder theory and the orientation of the same name. However, this approach can be enriched. First, the authors have constructed a marketing framework for evaluation purposes. Here, this framework is mobilized to address issues of strategy and governance. It is for this reason that the concept of influence must be added, in order to take into account power dynamics with stakeholders. The introduction of this concept permits the inclusion of the organization-public relationships theory. Thus, satisfaction, trust, engagement and influence are not only attributes for stakeholders but now both components

of relationship quality and governance mechanisms. Finally, Rey García et al. (2013)'s framework is enriched by the contribution of stakeholders.

2.4 | Theoretical framework: a combination of stakeholder-oriented theories

Rey García et al. (2013)'s NPO evaluation marketing framework incorporates the market orientation that places customers (if they exist), beneficiaries, and members at the heart of the strategy (Hersberger-Langloh 2020b; Hyder 2016). The authors also highlight the relevance of a "philosophical perspective" which emphasizes the need for both external stakeholder orientation and internal orientation. The importance of relationships with all stakeholders and this perspective allow to argue that the authors are working on the broader concept of stakeholder orientation. Defined as "the organizational culture and behaviors that induce organizational members to be continuously aware of and proactively act on a variety of stakeholder issues" (Ferrell et al. 2010, p. 93), stakeholder orientation seeks, like marketing orientation, to improve organizational success (Hsieh 2010; Ivašković 2021). It allows this success to be defined from the creation of value and its distribution.

This orientation is naturally embedded in the Stakeholder Theory (ST) (Hersberger-Langloh 2020a), which analyzes the relationships between an organization and its stakeholders as well as the outcomes of these relationships. It thus explains that "[the organization]'s survival depends on its successful management of relationships with stakeholders" (Silvestri et al. 2017, p. 680). In this article, the instrumental view (Sachs and Kujala 2021) is chosen, as it is the one that studies the effects of stakeholder relationships on the success of the organization (Tashman and Raelin 2013).

Finally, stakeholder relations can be analyzed through the filter of the organization-public relationships (OPR) theory (Iannacone 2021). They are defined as "the state which exists between an organization and its key publics, in which the actions of either can impact the economic, social, cultural or political well being of the other" (Ledingham and Bruning 1998, p. 62). This theory is in line with ST due to the importance of well-being already emphasized by Langtry. In particular, this theory draws on the four attributes already discussed to define the quality of the stakeholder relationship: trust, engagement, satisfaction, and influence (Waters and Bortree 2012).

2.5 | Research questions and hypotheses development

The literature so far reviewed allows to emerge new reading grids in order to prioritize stakeholders, around four attributes that are found within the proposal of Rey García et al. (2013) as well as with the OPR theory. Therefore, the aim is to understand within this study how they can be used for this purpose.

RQ₁ : To what extent does the relationship with stakeholders help prioritize stakeholders?

This research question will seek to establish whether stakeholder relationship quality is in itself a criterion for prioritizing stakeholders or whether it is necessary to focus on the four attributes that comprise the concept of relationship quality. Furthermore, the attributes are only captures of the state of a relationship at a given time. The differences in state would only allow to learn

more about the stakeholders, in a rather descriptive vision of the stakeholder theory. However, the literature insists on making stakeholder participation in value creation a criterion for prioritization. Thus, the contribution of the relationships quality to value creation must be studied.

In the case of NPOs, and in particular for trade unions, creating value is about having a positive organizational impact on society, the sector and specific stakeholders (Harrison and Wicks 2013). For Rey García et al. (2013), organizational impact also materializes value creation. Impact is indeed a “measurement of the progress toward specific goals” (Lecy et al. 2012, p. 440). Defined as the “outcomes resulting from prosocial behavior that are enjoyed by the intended targets of that behavior and/or by the broader community of individuals, organizations, and/or environments” (Rawhouser et al. 2019, p. 83), organizational impact is often equated with “the total impact that a NPO has on all its stakeholders” (Polonsky et al. 2016, p. 81). As such, value creation will be examined in this article through the filter of organizational impact.

RQ₂ : To what extent do relationship quality and its components affect organizational impact?

The answer to RQ₂ will also be a contribution to RQ₁, since if the relationships with the studied stakeholders do not have the same effects on organizational impact, then the relationship quality (and possibly its components) can be used to prioritize the stakeholders.

The literature is unanimous on the four attributes selected (see Appendix A): all would contribute to value creation and/or performance, regardless of the stakeholders studied. The originality of the approach proposed here is to verify this assertion and, potentially, to show that not all stakeholders react in the same way. In particular, the hypotheses below are based on Plaisance (2021 2022), which are an adaptation of Rey García et al. (2013)'s framework to French NPOs, and thus seek to test the different links that these frameworks suggested.

As already seen, trust, satisfaction, engagement and influence are both governance mechanisms and components of the concept of relationship quality (Conaty and Robbins 2021). Moreover, by definition, stakeholder theory advocates a relational approach to governance. Finally, the development of governance in organizations improves the relationship with stakeholders (Schnackenberg and Tomlinson 2016). Thus, in light of Appendix A, which also emphasizes that governance contributes to the development of each of the four components of relationship quality, an empirical link should be found:

Hypothesis 1 : Governance is a (positive) determinant of the relationship quality and its components.

Furthermore, the link between governance and nonprofit performance has already been studied by the literature (An 2021; Berglund and Sterin 2021; Blevins et al. 2020; Hideto Dato et al., 2020). Following the stakeholder theory, a successful NPO is increasing its positive impact or reducing its negative impact on its stakeholders (Lecy et al. 2012; Rawhouser et al. 2019; Rey García 2008). In this, studies linking governance and performance are applicable to organizational impact:

Hypothesis 2: Governance is a (positive) determinant of organizational impact.

The previous two hypotheses allow to verify that the reflection carried out is indeed embedded in the organizational governance (in other words, governance will be a control variable).

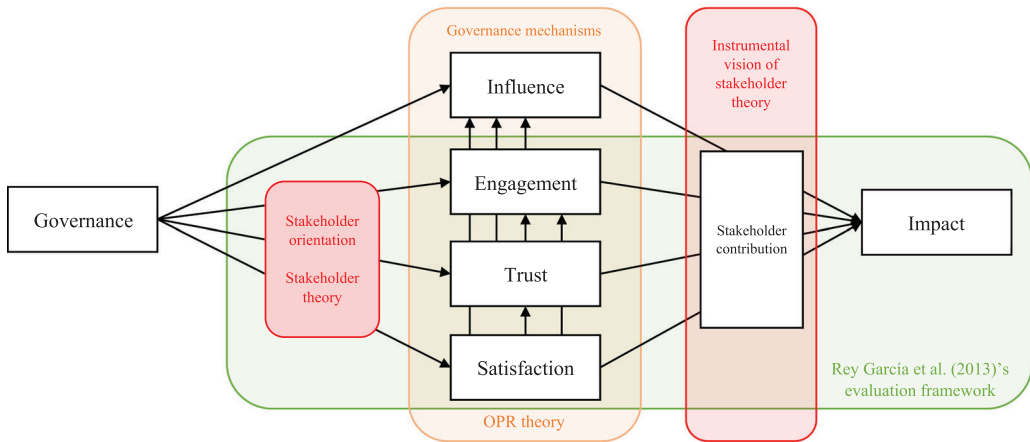


FIGURE 1 Presentation of the tested theoretical framework adapted and extended from Plaisance (2021) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

As seen in the Introduction, the framework of Rey García et al. (2013) relies on stakeholder theory and specifies that good stakeholder relations improve the impact of NPOs (also see Ferreira et al. 2022). Recent research has also shown that social capital is related to the performance of NPOs (Dell et al. 2022). In addition, this hypothesis could also be developed from the four components of relationship quality: Appendix A reviews the literature on the subject. Thus (following Ospina et al. 2002),

Hypothesis 3: The relationship quality and its components are (positive) determinants of organizational impact.

In light of the study conducted and the importance of stakeholder participation in the theoretical framework, stakeholder evaluation of their contribution has to be added. First of all, in line with the stakeholder theory, which recalls that organizations depend on their stakeholders to have access to strategic resources, the relationship quality with the NPO favors stakeholder contribution. In addition, a recent study points to the role of subjectivity on contribution (Amin and Harris 2022). Appendix A further details the link between each component of relationship quality and stakeholder contribution. Finally, “stakeholder capital” affects the performance of NPOs (Dorobantu et al. 2012) because it improves their organizational capacity. Thus,

Hypothesis 4: The link between relationship quality (and its components) and organizational impact is mediated by stakeholder contribution.

Figure 1 presents the different concepts and their articulation according to the three theoretical frameworks mobilized.

3 | METHODS AND DATA

The organization chosen is a union dedicated to agriculture whose external stakeholders were surveyed by questionnaire.

3.1 | The case of the Young Farmers (“Jeunes Agriculteurs”)

The *Jeunes Agriculteurs* (JA, Young Farmers) is a union which, as its name indicates, defends the interests of agriculture as a whole and of farmers under 35 years of age in particular. Created in 1957 and with 50,000 members, JA do not belong to any political current and are independent. They are represented in the chambers of agriculture but also in the Economic, Social and Environmental Council. Their missions are multiple and include representing and defending the interests of (young) farmers in dedicated citizen bodies, reflection and advocacy on changes in the agricultural sector, support for farmers starting up, animation of rural communities and promotion of French agriculture.

JA, like most nonprofit organizations in France, are therefore subject to two movements that create tensions. The first is related to their weight in union and social lives. Consequently, their stakeholders are numerous and have multiple, sometimes opposing, demands, especially externally. The external stakeholders identified by the JA are indeed numerous: other agricultural unions (AUs); professional agricultural organizations (PAOs); territorial elected officials (and collaborators); elected officials and collaborators of the public administration, the State and public organizations; parliamentarians (and collaborators); economic organizations, agricultural, agri-food and distribution industries (EOs); non-governmental organizations and *associations* (NGOs); representatives of agricultural education (AEs); the media; holders of agricultural installation projects (AIPs); non-member farmers; agricultural students; agricultural employees.

The case of JA illustrates the analysis of Schubert and Willems (2020): powerful stakeholders (at the beginning of the list, up to economic organizations) cannot be avoided while less powerful ones (the end of the list) are nevertheless at the heart of the JA's missions and project.

The second movement concerns the context of scarce resources and disengagement in mid-level bodies. Stakeholder demands are increasing but volunteer and financial engagement is decreasing. Meeting all demands and focusing on the low-powered stakeholders seen above is thus difficult. In this context, JA decided to redesign its stakeholder management as part of a more global reflection on the union's identity. The following study is part of their decision-making process to prioritize stakeholders.

3.2 | Survey and sample

The desire to re-prioritize the JA stakeholders allowed for the research question and associated hypotheses to be tested. After nearly a year of upstream work with the JA board (but also within the governance bodies to ensure transparency of the process and subsequently promote dissemination of the survey), the questionnaire detailed by Appendices B and C was sent to the current JA external stakeholders (according to the list established above) during the second half of 2019. The questionnaire was sent digitally by all levels of JA: departmental, regional and national. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the size of the target population, but 350 returns were obtained: 119 from PAOs, 53 from EOs, 46 from AUs, 41 administrative and political actors, 37 AEs, 17 from NGOs, 10 non-member farmers, 8 AIPs, 6 from media, 6 farm employees and 7 others (banks or services providers).

Structural equation models were used to analyze the data (Figure 2). Elected representatives and administrative stakeholders in agriculture were grouped together under the same category to reach the threshold of the PLS-PM method, used here in particular because it allows the use of

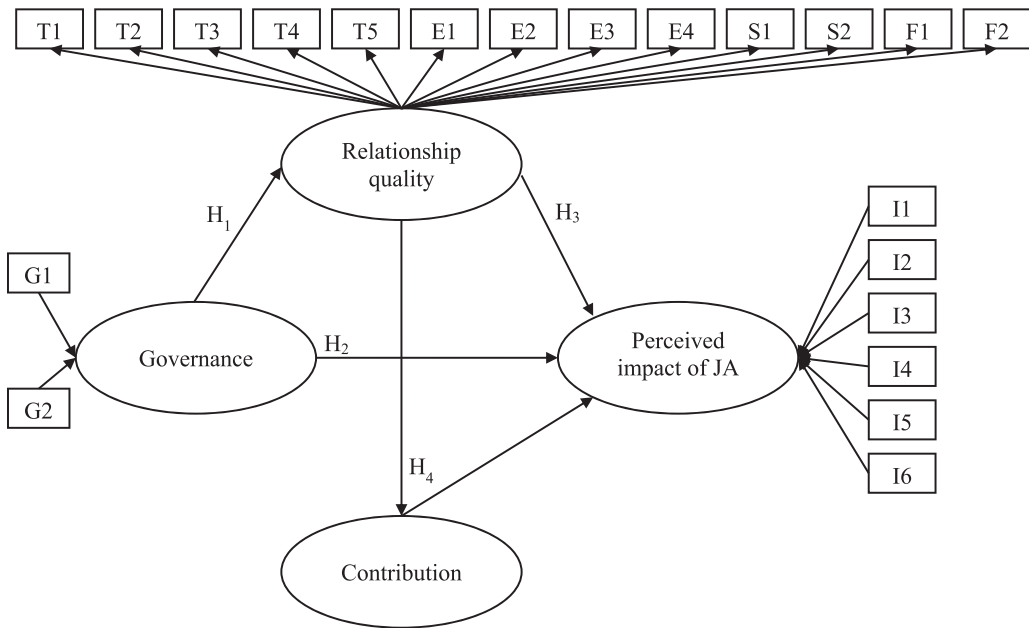


FIGURE 2 Graphical representation of the model 1

formative and reflective variables and because of its predictive role. Governance is assessed by the stakeholders (in line with Radbourne 2003) as much as impact, since some issues directly concern them and, in this context, perception takes precedence over actual behavior (Collis et al. 2003; Paulus and Lejeune 2013). It is therefore an evaluation that mixes direct assessment (on oneself) and perception (in the tradition of Voss and Voss 2000). The impact is defined as the effects that the organization produces on the different people or groups mentioned and the scale is explained (see Appendix B). Therefore, this method proposes to leave the managerial perception (Tashman and Raelin 2013) and turn to the perception of those affected by the organization.

3.3 | Control of structural equation models

Three structural equation models were selected. The first consists of three latent variables (governance, relationship quality and impact) and the contribution variable. The second splits relationship quality into its four components, which in turn become latent variables: trust, engagement, influence and satisfaction, while maintaining independence between the four concepts. The third model proposes to link these four concepts in line with Rey García et al. (2013) and Plaisance (2021).

All three models are robust according to traditional control indicators. The Cronbach's alphas and Dillon-Goldstein's rhos are very satisfactory (Tables 1a and 1b). The factors loadings are well distributed (Appendix B). The discriminant validity tests are shown by Tables 1c and 1d and the average variance extracted are above their thresholds (Tables 1a and 1b). The goodness of fit (GoFs) are all above 0.68 and especially those of the external model exceed 0.92 (Tables 3 and 4). The variance inflation factors are they are all below 3.3, which excludes the risk of multicollinearity.

TABLE 1 A–D Evaluation of structural equation models

TABLE 1A	Model 1
LV (G)	2 manifest variables—Mode A (Reflective)
LV (RQ)	13 manifest variables—Mode B (Formative)
LV (I)	6 manifest variables—Mode A (Reflective)
α (G)	0.88
ρ (G)	0.94
AVE (G)	0.89
α (RQ)	0.93
ρ (RQ)	<i>n.a.</i>
AVE (RQ)	0.57
α (I)	0.91
ρ (I)	0.93
AVE (I)	0.68
TABLE 1B	Models 2 and 3
LV (G)	2 manifest variables—Mode A (Reflective)
LV (E)	4 manifest variables—Mode A (Reflective)
LV (S)	2 manifest variables—Mode A (Reflective)
LV (F)	2 manifest variables—Mode A (Reflective)
LV (T)	5 manifest variables—Mode A (Reflective)
LV (I)	6 manifest variables—Mode A (Reflective)
α (G)	0.88
ρ (G)	0.94
AVE (G)	0.89
α (T)	0.95
ρ (T)	0.96
AVE (T)	0.84
α (S)	0.95
ρ (S)	0.98
AVE (S)	0.95
α (E)	0.90
ρ (E)	0.93
AVE (E)	0.76
α (F)	<i>n.a.</i>
ρ (F)	0.65
AVE (F)	0.48
α (I)	0.91
ρ (I)	0.93
AVE (I)	0.68

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

TABLE 1C Model 1	Governance	Relationship quality	Contribution	Impact	AVE			
Governance	1				0.89			
Relationship quality	0.42	1			0.57			
Contribution	0.02	0.11	1					
Impact	0.36	0.40	0.11	1	0.68			
TABLE 1D Models 2 and 3								
	Governance	Trust	Satisfaction	Engagement	Influence	Contribution	Impact	AVE
Governance	1							0.89
Trust	0.45	1						0.84
Satisfaction	0.37	0.65	1					0.95
Engagement	0.29	0.56	0.56	1				0.76
Influence	0.08	0.18	0.11	0.21	1			0.48
Contribution	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.11	0.09	1		
Impact	0.36	0.34	0.27	0.34	0.14	0.11	1	0.68

Note: LV: latent variable; α : Cronbach's alphas; ρ : Dillon–Goldstein's rhos; AVE: average variance extracted; G: governance; RQ: relationship quality; I: impact; E: engagement; S: satisfaction; F: influence; T: trust.

Finally, thanks to the Harman's single-factor test, the common method bias is prevented, since the first factor of the principal component analysis almost reaches the 50% threshold.

4 | RESULTS

This section presents the results of the three structural equation models preceded by a commentary on the descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix.

4.1 | Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

The analysis of descriptive statistics (Table 2) highlights the engagement of external stakeholders with respect to JA. Trust is then particularly developed. Their satisfaction is also noteworthy, while their influence is mediocre. They believe they contribute to about a quarter of the JA's success and welcome their positive impact in general, especially on the agricultural sector and local life, in line with their mission. The evaluation of their governance is also quite good.

The correlation matrix (Appendix D) confirms the relevance of the proposed constructs but also the links between the concepts (and thus the interest of their study). However, there is no correlation between influence and impact on public agriculture.

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics

		Scale	Mean	Median	Standard deviation
1	Trust A	1–7	5.25	5	1.30
2	Trust B		5.16	5	1.24
3	Trust C		5.30	5	1.32
4	Trust D		5.21	5	1.32
5	Trust E		5.37	6	1.29
6	Satisfaction A	1–7	5.12	5	1.42
7	Satisfaction B		5.20	5	1.40
8	Engagement A	1–7	5.53	6	1.36
9	Engagement B		5.64	6	1.34
10	Engagement C		5.47	6	1.34
11	Engagement D		4.90	5	1.37
12	Influence A	1–7	4.70	5	1.66
13	Influence B		3.66	4	1.34
14	Contribution	0–100	27.93	20	26.41
15	Impact on stakeholders	From – 5 to + 5	1.71	2	1.93
16	Local impact		2.17	2	1.45
17	Impact on society		1.77	2	1.62
18	Impact on private agriculture		2.25	2	1.68
19	Impact on public agriculture		2.64	3	1.57
20	Global impact		2.19	2	1.35
21	Good governance	0–10	6.13	6	1.78
22	Compared governance	1–6	4.22	4	1.01

4.2 | Results from model 1

Model 1 (Figure 3 and Table 3) highlights the positive effect of relationship quality ($\beta = 0.36$; $p < 0.001$) but also governance ($\beta = 0.35$; $p < 0.001$) on impact. Governance also explained relationship quality ($\beta = 0.65$; $p < 0.001$). The latter provides an understanding of contribution ($\beta = 0.40$; $p < 0.001$), which has no major effect on impact ($\beta = 0.15$; $p < 0.05$). Among the categories of stakeholders, for administrative and political actors, governance ($\beta = 0.45$; $p < 0.01$) and contribution ($\beta = 0.31$; $p < 0.05$) are determinants of impact ($R^2 = 0.52$), without contribution being explained by the model. The same is true for agricultural education representatives (respectively, $\beta = 0.45$; $p < 0.05$ and $\beta = 0.41$; $p < 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.54$). Finally, a negative effect of governance on the contribution of economic organizations should be noted ($\beta = -0.56$; $p < 0.01$).

4.3 | Results from model 2

Model 2 focuses on the components of relationship quality. The results clearly underline that these are (spontaneous) governance mechanisms since both the R^2 and the regression coefficients are high (Figure 4 and Table 3). The positive effect of governance on impact is again found ($\beta = 0.36$; $p < 0.001$). Only two dimensions of relationship quality stand out in understanding contribution:

TABLE 3 Results of the first two structural equation models

Models	All		Administrative and political actors				PAOs				Economic organizations				Agricultural education				Unions	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2		
																			1	2
β																				
G > T	0.65***	0.67***	0.61***	0.55***	0.43***	0.44***	0.74***	0.82***	0.66***	0.72***	0.66***	0.66***	0.65***	0.59***						
G > S	0.60***	0.60***	0.62***	0.62***	0.33***	0.33***	0.73***	0.73***	0.67***	0.67***	0.67***	0.58***	0.58***							
G > E	0.54***	0.54***	0.49***	0.49***	0.26**	0.26**	0.65***	0.65***	0.54***	0.54***	0.54***	0.45***	0.45***							
G > F	0.29***	0.29***	0.33*	0.33*	0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.36*	0.36*							
G > C	-0.10	0.02	-0.20	0.02	-0.06	0.05	-0.56**	-0.37	-0.21	-0.21	0.02	-0.24	0.05							
T > C	0.40***	-0.09	0.29	0.13	0.32***	-0.25	0.75***	0.29	0.77***	0.13	0.62***	0.14	0.14							
S > C		-0.10		-0.49		0.17		-0.02		0.16		-0.49*								
E > C		0.36***		0.24		0.20		0.11		0.01		0.78***								
F > C		0.20***		0.24		0.31***		0.26		0.54		-0.14								
G > I	0.35***	0.36***	0.45***	0.46***	0.19*	0.19*	-0.02	0.06	0.45*	0.57***	0.38**	0.42***	0.42***							
T > I	0.36***	0.13	0.25	0.14	0.36***	0.22	0.72***	0.24	0.04	-0.24	0.42**	0.25	0.25							
S > I		-0.03		-0.01		-0.14		0.05		-0.03		0.20	0.20							
E > I		0.23***		0.20		0.40***		0.22		0.12		-0.22								
F > I		0.07		-0.06		0.86		0.27*		-0.04		0.13	0.13							
C > I	0.15***	0.16***	0.31*	0.33**	0.16*	0.21*	0.06	0.16	0.41*	0.50**	0.17	0.35**	0.35**							
R^2																				
T	0.42	0.45	0.38	0.30	0.18	0.20	0.55	0.67	0.51	0.44	0.42	0.35	0.35							
S		0.37		0.39		0.11		0.54		0.45		0.33	0.33							
E		0.29		0.24		0.70		0.42		0.29		0.2	0.2							
F		0.08		0.11		0.01		0.06		0.06		0.13	0.13							
C	0.12	0.14	0.05	0.09	0.09	0.18	0.25	0.12	0.41	0.44	0.25	0.36	0.36							
I	0.48	0.49	0.52	0.53	0.29	0.35	0.53	0.50	0.54	0.59	0.65	0.67	0.67							
GoF																				
relative	0.88	0.95	0.68	0.83	0.69	0.79	0.84	0.86	0.79	0.86	0.75	0.86	0.86							
(model) extern	0.99	0.99	0.94	0.94	0.97	0.99	0.95	0.97	0.92	0.98	0.94	0.99	0.99							
intern	0.90	0.96	0.72	0.88	0.72	0.79	0.88	0.89	0.85	0.88	0.80	0.87	0.87							
N	350		41		119		53		37		46									

Note: ***: $p < 0.001$; **: $p < 0.01$; *: $p < 0.05$; ^: $p < 0.10$; β : normalized coefficient; G: governance; I: impact; E: engagement; S: satisfaction; F: influence; T: trust; C: contribution.

Note: In the case of model 1, the standardized coefficients shown in rows involving trust (T) actually correspond to the concept of relationship quality. Therefore, no coefficients are shown for the satisfaction, engagement, and influence lines.

TABLE 4 Results of the third structural equation models

Stakeholders		Administrative and political actors					
		All	PAOs	Economic organizations	Agricultural education	Unions	
β	G > T	0.29 ^{***}	0.03	0.23 ^{**}	0.43 ^{***}	0.26 [^]	0.20 [^]
	G > S	0.60 ^{***}	0.62 ^{***}	0.33 ^{***}	0.73 ^{***}	0.67 ^{***}	0.58 ^{***}
	G > E	0.03	0.06	0.01	0.21	-0.11	-0.05
	G > F	0.00	-0.09	-0.03	0.14	0.22	-0.02
	G > C	0.02	0.03	0.06	-0.37	0.04	0.06
	S > T	0.64 ^{***}	0.84 ^{***}	0.63 ^{***}	0.54 ^{***}	0.60 ^{***}	0.68 ^{***}
	S > E	0.41 ^{***}	0.54 [*]	0.51 ^{***}	0.59 ^{**}	0.58 ^{***}	0.14
	S > F	-0.17 [*]	0.32	-0.22	-0.02	-0.55	0.13
	S > C	-0.10	-0.51	0.17	-0.03	0.14	-0.47 [*]
	T > E	0.40 ^{***}	0.18	0.19 [^]	0.01	0.41 [*]	0.70 ^{***}
	T > F	0.30 ^{**}	0.21	0.29 [*]	-0.25	0.22	0.12
	T > C	-0.09	0.14	-0.27 [*]	0.31	0.10	0.15
	E > F	0.36 ^{***}	0.19	0.30 [*]	0.51 [*]	0.42	0.52 ^{**}
	E > C	0.37 ^{***}	0.23	0.20 [^]	0.12	0.03	0.74 ^{**}
	F > C	0.19 ^{***}	0.26	0.31 ^{***}	0.24	0.53 ^{***}	-0.13
	G > I	0.36 ^{***}	0.46 ^{**}	0.19 [*]	0.06	0.57 ^{**}	0.42 ^{***}
	T > I	0.13 [^]	0.12	0.24 [*]	0.26	-0.23	0.26
	S > I	-0.04	-0.01	-0.15	0.03	-0.03	0.20
	E > I	0.23 ^{***}	0.21	0.40 ^{***}	0.22	0.13	-0.23
F > I	0.07	-0.06	-0.14	0.26 [*]	-0.07	0.13	
C > I	0.16 ^{***}	0.34 [*]	0.22 ^{**}	0.17	0.52 ^{**}	0.35 ^{**}	
R^2	T	0.71	0.73	0.55	0.81	0.64	0.66
	S	0.37	0.38	0.11	0.54	0.45	0.33
	E	0.62	0.55	0.43	0.58	0.73	0.62
	F	0.23	0.37	0.13	0.19	0.16	0.49
	C	0.14	0.10	0.18	0.11	0.44	0.33
	I	0.49	0.53	0.36	0.50	0.59	0.67
GoF (model)	relative	0.94	0.81	0.86	0.84	0.85	0.88
	extern	0.99	0.94	0.99	0.97	0.98	0.98
	intern	0.95	0.86	0.87	0.86	0.87	0.89
N		350	41	119	53	37	46

Note: *** : $p < 0.001$; ** : $p < 0.01$; * : $p < 0.05$; ^ : $p < 0.10$. β : normalized coefficient; G: governance; I: impact; E: engagement; S: satisfaction; F: influence; T: trust; C: contribution.

engagement ($\beta = 0.36$; $p < 0.001$) and influence ($\beta = 0.20$; $p < 0.001$). Impact was only determined by contribution ($\beta = 0.16$; $p < 0.001$) and engagement ($\beta = 0.23$; $p < 0.001$). Other notable findings include the role of economic organization influence on impact ($\beta = 0.27$; $p < 0.05$) and the negative effect of union satisfaction on impact ($\beta = -0.49$; $p < 0.05$).

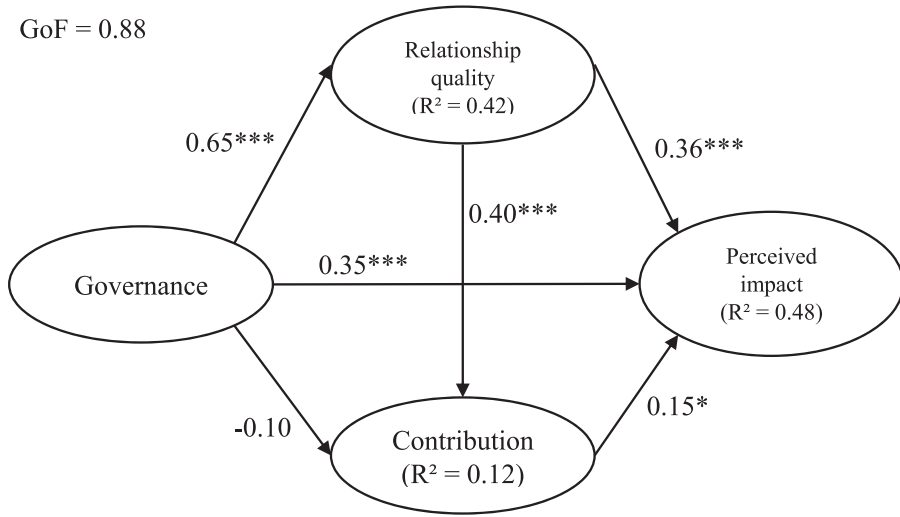


FIGURE 3 Graphical representation of the results from model 1 (***: $p < 0.001$; **: $p < 0.01$; *: $p < 0.05$)

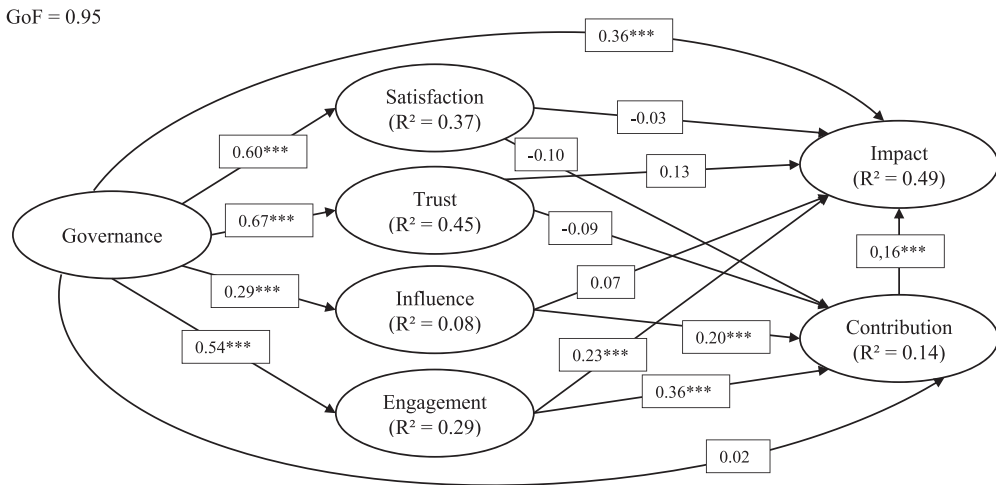


FIGURE 4 Graphical representation of the results from model 2 (***: $p < 0.001$; **: $p < 0.01$; *: $p < 0.05$)

4.4 | Results from model 3

Adding links between the different dimensions of relationship quality changes the effects of governance from being a determinant of engagement and influence. As postulated by Rey García et al. (2013) and Plaisance (2021), satisfaction and trust are precursors to engagement; while the latter two explain influence. In addition to these elements, model 3 (Table 4) refines the results of model 2. Thus, trust now has a positive effect on impact ($\beta = 0.13$; $p < 0.10$), as well as for PAOs ($\beta = 0.24$; $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, again for PAOs, it degrades their contribution ($\beta = -0.27$; $p < 0.05$), presumably replaced by engagement ($\beta = 0.20$; $p < 0.10$). Finally, for agricultural education representatives, influence is a determinant of contribution ($\beta = 0.53$; $p < 0.001$).

5 | DISCUSSION

The different models have shown contrasting effects and thus provide relevant answers to the two research questions.

5.1 | Hypotheses statement and analysis of results according to stakeholders

Hypothesis 1 is supported in all cases for relationship quality and only the influence of APOs, EOs and AEs is not determined by governance. Hypothesis 2 is supported except for EOs. Inserting stakeholder prioritization as part of governance was therefore appropriate. On the other hand, for hypotheses 3 and 4, the results are contrasted.

5.1.1 | Administrative and political actors

The public administration actors and the elected politicians stand out because of the absence of effect of the relationship quality on the contribution or the impact of JA. On the other hand, their governance and the contribution of the actors explains impact. These results lead to two lessons. First, since administrative and political actors are the main target of JA actions (in the context of interest representation, advocacy, etc.), the notion of relationship quality is less appropriate in this context. Conversely, good governance (including accountability or value-setting processes) lends credibility to the demands and requests of JA. To be able to act with these actors, JA have to be irrefragable in terms of decision-making processes and power management. The second lesson concerns the vision of these actors regarding JA: they consider that they are the source of part of the organization's impact. In short, because they listen and are sensitive to the demands of JA, the latter manage to have an impact. While this result is logical, it adds complexity to the relationship with JA who also believe in their intrinsic impact.

5.1.2 | Professional agricultural and economic organizations (PAOs and EOs)

PAOs are key partners for JA and the results reflect this. Thus, influence is an important precursor to their contribution, for reasons already discussed for all external stakeholders. Specifically, PAOs are prime resource providers for JA. Their main request in return is therefore to influence (or participate in) the strategy. It should indeed be noted that JA associate the PAOs with their actions, without co-construction for the moment. The professional organizations are fully aware of their role with JA, since their involvement promotes impact. Model 3 also highlights the positive role of trust. Their partnerships are not traditional funder-funded relationships, but rather are based on a shared vision of the agricultural world. PAOs therefore trust JA to protect and defend this ideal.

Economic organizations dissociate themselves because of the negative effect of good governance on their contribution. However, this result is questionable since it is not significant for models 2 and 3. As the economic organizations are the agri-food industries in particular, the impact of JA is linked to their influence. In fact, the power issues between these organizations and JA

are crucial. In their mind, if they manage to influence the JA's vision of the agricultural world, collaboration is facilitated and JA's reach is greatly increased.

5.1.3 | Representatives of agricultural education

The relationship between JA and agricultural education representatives is still in its infancy, which explains the lack of effect of relationship quality on impact. On the other hand, it does increase their contribution, which in turn has a strong effect on the JA's impact. Educational institutions are one of the main places for recruiting members, but also for providing information and disseminating the values and projects of JA. The ability to reach the future actors of agriculture still in training is crucial for them, but is only indirect. Consequently, the relationship quality also plays an indirect role on the impact.

5.1.4 | Other unions

The other agricultural unions contribute more when they are involved with JA. In fact, in this category the FNSEA (*Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles*, national federation of farmers' unions) is found. It is the preferred union partner of JA, which contributes to them thanks to their common engagement, notably during elections to the agricultural chambers. JA also play a disruptive and innovative role that would be contradictory to the satisfaction of the other unions. Again, contribution plays a mediating role in understanding the effect of relationship quality on impact.

5.2 | Response to research questions and contributions to JA

The answer to RQ₂ can be formulated as follows: relationship quality contributes to organizational impact as perceived by stakeholders. However, analyzing the details of the components of relationship quality is necessary to understand how the relationship works, stakeholder by stakeholder. This nuanced response, differentiated by stakeholder, enabled the use of the four proposed attributes to prioritize stakeholders in the case of JA. More specifically, the regression coefficients became metrics for prioritizing stakeholders in JA's strategic thinking. The various results provide insight into the extent to which developing trust, engagement, satisfaction, or influence improves the perceived impact of JA. In short, JA can know which relationship levers to activate to increase their impact.

JA now have a strategic prioritization of their stakeholders that places, for example, other unions, PAOs, and economic organizations at the top of the list of organizations for whom the relationship quality is crucial (both for contributing and for understanding impact). In contrast, the lack of a significant effect of relationship quality on impact and contribution for political and administrative actors leads JA to shift their focus. Their interests will be listened but the search for a better relationship will not be a priority.

Two annual meetings of local, departmental, regional and national elected representatives are held by JA. The previous results were discussed by the elected representatives present at one of these annual meetings. The debate focused on several categories of stakeholders that are crucial to JA, including administrative and political actors, PAOs and potential members. The workshop

deliberately left out other unions due to the election period and proposed avenues for action as part of a stakeholder management strategy. To achieve this, workshop members used the filter of the four attributes: trust, satisfaction, engagement and influence.

Thus, while JA considered actions to improve all dimensions of the stakeholder relationship, they focused on the priority attributes (using the regression coefficients from the present study). In addition, if a conflict arises between stakeholders requirements, the results of the study make it easier to resolve. During the annual meeting of elected representatives that followed, JA confirmed the orientation towards the PAOs but also towards the general public, given the results obtained for all external stakeholders. In sum, by determining the priority stakeholders thanks to the impact they perceive of JA and thanks to its determinants, JA were able to formalize a hierarchical stakeholder orientation strategy.

Thus, in response to RQ₁, relationship quality and its components are indeed relevant as criteria for prioritization, because they vary by stakeholder and do have an effect on organizational impact.

5.3 | Research contributions

In addition to the direct practitioner contributions that enabled JA to prioritize their external stakeholders and identify key targets, this research produces other contributions.

From a theoretical perspective, the anchoring based on stakeholder theory can be discussed. This research extends the instrumental view of the theory by emphasizing that engagement explains impact, not just performance. As the theory emphasized, the presence and action of external partners alongside a structure like JA is symbolic of organizational success, in the sense that the actions and discourse put forward attract support. However, the results invite to look at the four mechanisms at work. The stakeholder engagement is to be understood at the heart of a relational process that is based on trust and satisfaction and that reinforces influence. In short, engagement is not enough nor an aim in itself. Model 3 produces a strong confirmation of this processual vision of the relationship. The findings thus complement the OPR theory that proposes instead a separate study of the four attributes. Finally, this study extends the framework of Rey García et al. (2013) by confirming the interest of a systemic vision (thanks to structural equations) for which one dimension of relationship quality reflects on the following ones, and not only on one of them.

The definition of stakeholders is also questioned at the heart of stakeholder theory. The majority of studies retain the conceptualization of Freeman to focus on the stakeholders' influence. As a result, influence has become the key prioritization criterion. This study opens new perspectives. On the one hand, it finds that the link between influence and governance is not found for key stakeholders such as PAOs, but also that the R²s are extremely low. While stakeholder governance is a key issue (as seen in the introduction, Amis et al. 2020), defining them on the basis of an attribute over which governance has little control is based on an shareholder vision and is now insufficient. If a partnership vision of governance is adopted, an approach based on the well-being and values of stakeholders seems more appropriate.

In addition, this research thus proposes an innovative stakeholder prioritization. The priority stakeholders are those who react positively when the relationship quality improves and when governance mechanisms are put in place. Conversely, if the strategies put in place by the organization (i.e. specific orientation, particular mechanism or reinforcement of one or more components of the relationship quality) do not produce any effect on the stakeholder despite the efforts undertaken, then this means that the stakeholder is neither cooperative nor interested in improving the

situation, and therefore does not require any further attention in the stakeholder hierarchy. In sum, the effect of relationship quality (as a construct) helps determine whether or not to focus on the stakeholder, and the detail of the four attributes helps with the prioritization (as realized in JA using the regression coefficients). This prioritization may be an alternative to the hybridization and compartmentalization suggested by Beaton et al. (2021) in the case of NPOs facing the simultaneous management of their service provider and advocacy roles.

Beyond the theories and frameworks of the research, the concepts studied can also be discussed. Governance is often seen as the process of seeking stakeholder satisfaction: it also relies on trust to diffuse among stakeholders (as shown in Model 3) (Hyndman et al. 2021). The lack of direct effect of satisfaction on contribution and impact (or even its negative effect) leads to consider the concept as a relational basis but not an ultimate goal. The stakeholders' contribution, which is self-assessed, is based above all on their influence capacity. The concept is therefore rather relevant, not to rank the stakeholders alone, but to promote their contributions. Contributing resources goes hand in hand with increasing influence (because of the power that the contributor obtains) and, conversely, a capacity to influence reassures stakeholders that the resources contributed are being used properly.

Finally, organizational impact is assessed directly (when questions were asked about impact on stakeholders) and through perception and reputation. The value created by the organization is defined with the stakeholders, recognizing the contingency of the concept. By relying on relationship-related attributes and associated emotions, this study suggests that the concept of impact is a subjective construct that is difficult to measure objectively. In line with recent developments on emotions and feelings (Overman and Schillemans 2022; Silard 2018), impact measurement would benefit from being based on analysis of the emotional and subjective value created among stakeholders, much more than on quantitative measures. Evaluation here is "issues-led", as White (2010) explained.

The methodological contributions are in line with this. The impact construct is based on the notion of success for JA, i.e. maximizing the impact on stakeholders. The statistical checks carried out underline its relevance. More generally, the goodness of fit of the models and the previous checks ensure that they can be reused. Most importantly, this study is among the first methodological operationalizations of Rey García et al. (2013).

Finally, beyond the practitioner contributions already pointed out for JA, the discussion of the questionnaire results in workshops without the intervention of the researcher helped to contextualize the survey's interpretation and to respond as well as possible to the JA's needs, without interfering with the scientific analysis that derives from it. The risk of endogeneity (a good relationship would logically improve contribution and the estimated impact) is notably addressed thanks to these discussions with the practitioners who gave meaning to the statistical results obtained. Above all, the results show that this tautological vision (the link between relationship quality and impact) is simplistic: depending on the stakeholders, this link is not significant and, above all, the dimensions of relationship quality do not have the same effects depending on the context. Societal contributions actually flow from all of the above. Engagement-based organizations (and NPOs in general) have a democratic ideal of integrating all stakeholders. Nevertheless, this vision produces a survival risk in the current NPO context. This dilemma was previously highlighted by O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008) who found that holistic accountability distracted Amesty from its mission. A prioritization based on the proposed attributes allows NPOs to both focus on the stakeholders that actually contribute to their success but also to sanitize relationships with them. The environment surrounding a NPO would then be more conducive to its success, as conflicts with and between stakeholders are either neglected or addressed.

Moreover, the impact of a NPO is subjective. The growing demand from funders and public authorities to measure the (social) impact of NPOs is mostly based on an objective (even mathematical) view of the concept. NPOs often do not have the means to do this and, above all, the results show that there are devious ways to capture the reality of the impact: from the actual relationship with the stakeholders, from direct evaluation by stakeholders, etc. A reasonable and balanced assessment seems more relevant for these organizations. This study invites stakeholders to consider the organization's capacities before demanding highly accomplished evaluation methods (Ebrahim and Rangan 2014) and to adapt the evaluation to each organization (Kleszczowski and Raullet-Croset 2022). The counterpart for NPOs remains the development of their governance and the strengthening of the relationship with them.

Finally, the theoretical approach and methodological process serving the needs of the union can be adapted and replicated in other types of NPOs and in other sectors of activity. However, some of the questions would need to be adapted to the organization's activity and stakeholders (especially those dedicated to impact). In addition, while the study and theoretical underpinnings of the research focus on NPOs, the stakeholder emotion approach to governance and strategy could be applied to for-profit organizations. For example, the shareholder and stakeholder welfare approach is already being developed (e.g. Hart and Zingales 2017). In addition, the results echo the Relational Systems Evaluation, as a theoretical and professional trend that places the interactive and relational nature of evaluation at the heart of the associated process. This field of research is emerging (Trochim and Urban 2021; Urban et al. 2021) and would constitute a new relevant theoretical avenue for addressing the issues and problems encountered in the present study.

6 | CONCLUSION

The NPO environment has increased the pressure on these organizations. In order to resist this pressure, they are forced to prioritize stakeholders. The traditional methods for doing so have shown their limits in the case of NPOs, and particularly in organizations that are at the heart of power and influence games. Participation in the value creation process has emerged as an alternative. Since governance is involved in the distribution of the value created (in other words, the impact of the organization), this research suggested that the keys to distribution (or, failing that, to reflection) should be the four spontaneous mechanisms studied, which are mutual trust, engagement, satisfaction and influence. Thus, to prioritize stakeholders, the preliminary indicator can be the relationship quality. The next step is to determine, for each stakeholder category, whether or not relationship quality (and by extension, trust, satisfaction, engagement, and influence) has an effect on stakeholder contribution and perceived organizational impact. This research thus responds to several lines of research proposed by Khurram et al. (2019) concerning the links between value creation and stakeholders as well as the contact with them (analyzed here through the relationship).

There are several limitations, particularly in terms of methodology. Governance is measured using only two variables and could be broken down into other, more formative variables. Impact is subject to the same limitation, in addition to the reflective variables (even if it means splitting the concept of impact in two). The contribution variable, added to measure the perception of stakeholders, could be broken down using the same method. The results obtained also raise theoretical questions about the link between the relationship with stakeholders and impact. The theoretical frameworks on which the study is based show how the two concepts are intertwined. Does impact inherently incorporate stakeholder relationships (as the creation of social, societal and

relational capital)? Or are these relationships merely a signal? Further research can explore the nature of the relationship between the two concepts, particularly by drawing on the reputational approach for which “perception of the organization is crucial for understanding an organization’s effectiveness” (Lecy et al. 2012, p. 440). Practitioner limitations should also be noted, in that some stakeholders that are nonetheless interesting and crucial for JA were not sufficiently reached by the questionnaire. For example, it was impossible to test the different models for non-member farmers, NGOs or agricultural project holders. Further qualitative research could then be considered. All in all, these studies would benefit from being reproduced in other organizations in order to continue to test the solidity of the model and to strengthen the theoretical and practical contributions. Using different ordinal point scales also can influence the value given to the scores and, in this, the perception and responses. A harmonization of measurement scales could thus be beneficial.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE A1 Literature on the four attributes

Concept related to stakeholders	Link studied in relation to stakeholders	Examples of references
Trust	Governance → Trust	(Blouin et al. 2018; Charreaux 1998; Hasan & Siraj 2017)
	Trust → Contribution	(Bowman 2004; De Cremer et al. 2001; Pirson & Malhotra 2011)
	Trust → Relationship performance	(Krishnan et al. 2006; Morgan & Hunt 1994)
	Trust → Organizational performance	(Hyder 2016; Mohr & Puck 2013)
Engagement	Governance → Engagement	(Devinney et al. 2013; Fassin & Van Rossem 2009)
	Engagement → Contribution	(Kang 2016; Powers & Yaros 2012)
	Engagement → Organizational performance	(Gnan et al. 2013; Salciuviene et al. 2011)
Satisfaction	Governance → Satisfaction	(Rejeb & Frioui 2012; Shatnawi & Algharabat 2018)
	Satisfaction → Contribution	(Taylor & Miller-Stevens, 2019; Waters 2009)
	Satisfaction → Organizational performance	(Bughin 2004; Kushner & Poole 1996)
Influence	Governance → Influence	(Aaltonen et al. 2015)
	Influence → Contribution	(Karaye et al. 2014; Kim et al. 2018)
	Influence → Organizational performance	(Barnett 2007; Harrison et al. 2010)

APPENDIX B: AN OVERVIEW OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this survey!

As part of a doctoral thesis, we are seeking to understand the quality of relations between you and the *Jeunes Agriculteurs* network, the latter having launched a reflection on its identity. We welcome all feedback, both positive and negative.

If you represent an organization or a collective, we ask you, as much as possible, to express yourself on behalf of your organization, and not only in a personal way.

If you are answering as an individual, the questions that deal with “the organization” remain valid but for you, in your own way.

This survey takes less than 7 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your time.

Part 1

First, a few questions about you.

Are you a man ? a woman ? other ?

Can you tell me your age?

And some questions about you / your organization.

Who do you represent in relation to the Young Farmers network?

What is the exact name of this organization?

What is your status in this organization?

Can you specify at what scale your organization is located?

Part 2

If you think about the Young Farmers network...

Here, all questions dedicated to relationship quality (see Appendix C).

Part 3



Si vous deviez quantifier votre contribution au succès du réseau Jeunes Agriculteurs, vous diriez ?

Nous y contribuons à hauteur de

 %

Parlons impact !

Si vous deviez déterminer le niveau d'impact du réseau JA, vous diriez ?

	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Sur votre organisation (ou vous, si vous êtes un individu)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sur les partenaires en général	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sur la société en général	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sur les acteurs privés de l'agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sur les acteurs publics de l'agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Globalement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Par impact, nous entendons les effets que le réseau JA produit sur les différentes personnes ou collectifs cités.

De -5 à -1, l'impact est négatif ; à 0, l'organisation n'a aucun impact et de +1 à +5, l'impact est positif. Les notes intermédiaires permettent de nuancer votre analyse.

First question: about contribution (see Appendix C).

Second question: about impact (see Appendix C).

At the end it is written:

“By impact, we mean the effects that the JA network has on the various individuals or collectives listed.

From -5 to -1, the impact is negative; at 0, the organization has no impact and from +1 to +5, the impact is positive. The intermediate scores allow you to nuance your analysis.”

Part 4



Enfin, au sujet de la gouvernance du réseau Jeunes Agriculteurs...

La gouvernance, ici, correspond :

- aux modalités de prise de décisions,
- aux processus et structures qui permettent d'atteindre les objectifs et qui protègent les valeurs, et
- à la répartition des pouvoirs et responsabilités.

Pouvez-vous évaluer sur une échelle de 0 à 10 dans quelle mesure le réseau JA applique les meilleures pratiques en termes de gouvernance ?



1

Dans le cas où nous classerions toutes les organisations de « mauvaise gouvernance » (à gauche) à « bonne gouvernance » (à droite), où placeriez-vous le réseau JA ?



10

Légende :

1. Lacunes dans la manière dont le réseau JA est gouverné
2. Mauvaises pratiques, mais déjà quelques petites réalisations
3. Proche de la moyenne, mais en dessous
4. Proche de la moyenne, mais au-dessus
5. Bonnes pratiques, mais quelques possibilités d'amélioration
6. Exemple des meilleures pratiques dans le secteur



This part is about governance (see Appendix C).

Finally, about the governance of the Young Farmers network...

Governance, here, corresponds to :

- the ways in which decisions are made,
- the processes and structures that enable the achievement of objectives and protect values, and
- the distribution of powers and responsibilities.

Question 1: Can you rate on a scale of 0 to 10 the extent to which JA applies best practices in terms of governance?

Question 2: If we were to rank all organizations from “poor governance” (left) to “good governance” (right), where would you place JA?

Caption:

1. Deficiencies in the way the JA Network is governed
2. Bad practices, but already some small achievements
3. Close to average, but below average
4. Close to average, but above average
5. Good practices, but some room for improvement
6. Example of best practices in the sector

APPENDIX C: DETAILS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND INFORMATION RETAINED FOR STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Tested concepts (latent variables according to the models)		Question	Manifest variables	Factor loading	Variable nature	Source
Governance	Good governance	Can you rate on a scale of 0 to 10 the extent to which JA applies best practices in terms of governance?	G1	0.94	Ordinal (11-point scale from 0 to 10)	Willems et al. (2012, t)
	Compared governance	If we were to rank all organizations from “poor governance” (left) to “good governance” (right), where would you place JA?	G2	0.95	Ordinal (6-point scale from 1 to 6)	
Relationship quality	Trust	We can have confidence in JA at any time.	T1	0.92	Ordinal (7-point Likert scale)	Tsarenko and Simpson (2017, t)
		We can count on JA to do the right thing.	T2	0.91		
		We have confidence in JA to achieve the goals of our relationship.	T3	0.88		
		JA have great integrity.	T4	0.91	Michel and Rieunier (2008)	
		JA are trustworthy.	T5	0.95		
Engagement	We are committed to the relationship we have with JA.	We are committed to the relationship we have with JA.	E1	0.89	Ordinal (7-point Likert scale)	Sargeant and Lee (2004, t)
		We intend to maintain the relationship we have with JA indefinitely.	E2	0.88		
		The relationship we have with the JA deserves maximum effort.	E3	0.87		
		Stakeholder participation in JA is highly developed.	E4	0.85		

(Continues)

Tested concepts (latent variables according to the models)		Question	Manifest variables	Factor loading	Variable nature	Source
Satisfaction		We are pleased with the behavior of JA in our relationship.	S1	0.98	Ordinal (7-point Likert scale)	Adapted from Sundermann (2018, t) and Cheriet and Guillaumin (2013)
		Overall, we are satisfied with our partnership or relationship with the JA.	S2	0.98		
Influence		JA does not represent our opinions and views.	F1 (reverse scale)	0.72	Ordinal (7-point Likert scale)	Sargeant and Lee (2004, t)
		I feel that we can influence the decisions of JA.	F2	0.67		
Contribution to JA		Contribution to the success of JA		1.00	Metric (in percentages)	Added in consultation with the JA
Impact	Determine the level of impact of JA	Impact on your organization	I1	0.73	Ordinal (11-point scale from -5 to +5)	Small's scale (2007) Questions created in consultation with JA's leaders
		Impact on partners	I2	0.86		
		Impact on society	I3	0.78		
		Impact on private actors in agriculture	I4	0.81		
		Impact on public actors in agriculture	I5	0.80		
		Global impact	I6	0.94		

Note: The "t" indicates that the initial questions were in English. A debate exists on the use of Likert scales in structural equation models. This method indeed considers the variables as continuous. Nevertheless, there is no consensus and, in this, the use of Likert scales is considered as acceptable if they have more than four points (Hair et al. 2014; Norman 2010).

APPENDIX D: CORRELATION MATRIX

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
2	0.77																						
3	0.75	0.68																					
4	0.75	0.74	0.69																				
5	0.82	0.79	0.75	0.86																			
6	0.70	0.64	0.76	0.65	0.69																		
7	0.67	0.62	0.77	0.63	0.68	0.89																	
8	0.61	0.59	0.63	0.55	0.63	0.62	0.65																
9	0.50	0.56	0.49	0.52	0.55	0.53	0.54	0.66															
10	0.49	0.52	0.45	0.48	0.48	0.49	0.49	0.58	0.67														
11	0.56	0.55	0.54	0.53	0.54	0.62	0.64	0.67	0.53	0.59													
12	0.31	0.37	0.23	0.28	0.32	0.24	0.26	0.29	0.30	0.30	0.27												
13	0.15**	0.21	0.18	0.17**	0.21	0.14**	0.12*	0.20	0.14**	0.27	0.25	-0.03											
14	0.18	0.24	0.10	0.16**	0.20	0.15**	0.17**	0.25	0.26	0.32	0.34	0.21	0.26										
15	0.43	0.48	0.40	0.37	0.45	0.40	0.45	0.48	0.45	0.47	0.50	0.32	0.21	0.39									
16	0.34	0.37	0.35	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.34	0.41	0.21	0.14*	0.26	0.57								
17	0.30	0.31	0.29	0.31	0.30	0.33	0.34	0.27	0.28	0.31	0.34	0.16**	0.09	0.20	0.35	0.46							
18	0.28	0.33	0.26	0.33	0.29	0.34	0.33	0.29	0.29	0.33	0.35	0.15**	0.12*	0.24	0.40	0.62	0.55						
19	0.27	0.28	0.26	0.31	0.29	0.28	0.31	0.23	0.24	0.26	0.29	0.10	0.06	0.16**	0.36	0.58	0.54	0.62					
20	0.44	0.45	0.37	0.44	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.39	0.41	0.42	0.44	0.22	0.14**	0.32	0.60	0.71	0.69	0.70	0.71				
21	0.52	0.48	0.49	0.50	0.52	0.49	0.50	0.40	0.38	0.38	0.45	0.25	0.15**	0.17**	0.40	0.37	0.38	0.31	0.41	0.49			
22	0.51	0.48	0.50	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.44	0.40	0.37	0.50	0.13*	0.14*	0.15**	0.38	0.37	0.38	0.35	0.41	0.46	0.73		

Note: in bold: $p < 0.001$; ** : $p < 0.01$; * : $p < 0.05$.