Employee participation in corporate volunteering as the moderator of links between relationships at work, work meaningfulness and affective commitment

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this study is to test for a moderating role of employee participation in volunteering in links between employees’ relationships with peers and supervisors, work meaningfulness (WM) and affective commitment (AC).

Design/methodology/approach – The study is based on a survey conducted on a sample of 711 employees, both those involved and those non-involved in corporate volunteering (CV).

Findings – The results suggest that employee participation in CV strengthens the effects that employees’ perceptions of positive relationships with peers and perceived supervisor support (PSS) have on employees’ AC. Contrary to expectations, although participation in CV strengthens employees’ sense of WM, it does not affect its links with other phenomena analyzed in this study.

Originality/value – CV is a fast-growing practice in corporate social responsibility. The reasons companies implement CV include the benefits they gain from it, such as positive effects on employee attitudes and behaviors. The paper contributes to the understanding of CV effects on employee attitudes and behaviors and builds a better business case for this CSR practice.

Keywords Corporate volunteering, Relationships at work, Affective commitment, Work meaningfulness, Corporate social responsibility

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

A growing number of companies are implementing corporate volunteering (CV) in their corporate social responsibility strategies. Together with donations, strategic philanthropy and community-driven development, CV is one of the modes by which companies support the community with financial, material or human skills help (do Paço and Nave, 2013; Rodell et al., 2016; Sekar and Dyaram, 2017).

Volunteering is about freely giving one’s time and/or skills to a beneficiary or group of beneficiaries (Rodell, 2013). In CV, companies encourage and support employees’ engagement in volunteer activities that go beyond their job descriptions (do Paço and Nave, 2013). These activities usually focus on solving various social and environmental problems and different beneficiaries (e.g., children, seniors and animals) (Escher and Brzustewicz, 2020).
Contemporary CV is a key part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that responds to stakeholder expectations and pressure from various legislative organizations (Rodell et al., 2016; Dreesbach-Bundy and Scheck, 2017). However, its popularity is also growing because of companies’ awareness of the benefits related to CV (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019). These benefits include corporate legitimacy and reputation (Plewa et al., 2015); attracting and maintaining qualified employees (Grant, 2012); increased employee job satisfaction, work engagement and commitment (de Gilder et al., 2005; Pajo and Lee, 2011; Boštjančič et al., 2018; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019).

Of the various benefits of CV, those related to employees’ behaviors are of particular interest, due to researchers’ call to focus on the micro-foundations and individual perspective of CSR (Glavas and Kelley, 2014; Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2018). Studies on CV are capable of shifting the attention on CSR from the institutional to the individual, i.e., the employee level. The benefits that companies gain from CV also build a better business case for CSR, i.e., they deliver rationales supporting why a business should accept and advance its social responsibility (Glavas and Kelley, 2014; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019).

It is commonly believed that working for a socially responsible company is a source of meaning, purpose and value in employees’ lives (Rodell, 2013; Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2018). In particular, their active engagement in projects representing corporate community involvement, such as CV, is capable of enhancing employee’s sense of work meaningfulness (WM) through making a valuable social contribution (Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2018; Im and Chung, 2018), as well as strengthening employee’s relationships with others at work (Boštjančič et al., 2018; Glińska-Newes et al., 2019; Brzustewicz, 2020) and their organizational commitment (Brockner et al., 2014; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019).

The aim of our study is to test for the moderating role that employee participation in volunteering plays in links between employee’s perception of relationships with peers and supervisors, employee’s sense of WM and employee’s affective commitment (AC).

The study is grounded in the job demand-resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker et al., 2014). As an important component of this model, job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that help in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). In this study, relationships that employees build at work with supervisors (operationalized as perceived supervisor support (PSS)) and relationships with peers (operationalized as positive relationships at work (PRW)) represent social resources that reduce the potential strain caused by job demands and stimulate engagement and commitment. WM stands for a psychological resource, fostering a sense of purpose and value in one’s tasks, which can enhance motivation and commitment. Some empirical studies suggested that the aforementioned effects (i.e., relationships at work, WM and organizational commitment) are mutually related (Kahn, 2007; Bilgin and Demirer, 2012; Ellingson et al., 2016). However, to the best of our knowledge, none of these works identified how participation in CV might affect such relations between the aforementioned effects; in fact, studies comparing attitudes and behaviors of employees participating and not participating in CV are still scarce (e.g., Rodell et al., 2017; Boštjančič et al., 2018; Fu, 2022). Therefore, our study answers a significant research gap related to the contribution of CV (and corporate social involvement in general) to strengthening job resources.

The study is based on a survey conducted using an online self-administered questionnaire distributed among employees of four companies located in Poland. A total of 711 employees of these companies, both those involved and those non-involved in CV in their companies, participated in the survey. All four companies were selected from those listed in the Responsible Companies Ranking, edition XIII (Responsible Business Forum, 2019), which
have publicly declared their commitment to CV. The Responsible Companies Ranking is published annually (since 2007) and includes companies assessed as the most advanced in implementing corporate responsibility practices in Poland. The data obtained in the survey were subjected to comprehensive statistical analysis, including (1) ANOVA test to test whether respondents perceive distinctly on PSS, PRW, WM and AC if they participate in volunteering and (2) structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the potential psychological mechanisms behind these variables.

The paper enhances the understanding of the effects that CSR practices, such as CV, have on employees. While there is a growing body of literature showing CV’s influence on positive workplace attitudes and behaviors (e.g., de Gilder et al., 2005; Plewa et al., 2015), there is call for more studies on the mechanisms that underlie the processes leading to CV outcomes (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019). Specifically, the results of our study contribute to the understanding of how employee participation in CV affects the links between employee relationships at work, both with supervisors and peers and their AC. Moreover, the study sheds new light on CV’s influence on employee’s perception of WM and its impact on AC. Apart from contributing to the knowledge on CV and its links with workplace attitudes and behaviors, our study also contributes to the field of organizational behavior in more general terms, by strengthening argumentation for positive links between PSS, PRW, WM and AC.

To the best of our knowledge, the constructs of PSS, PRW, WM and AC have never been analyzed together. In addition, our study suggests a mediating role of WM in the relationships between PSS, PRW and AC.

2. Theoretical background and hypothesis development
2.1 CV and relationships at work
Volunteer activities provide employees with an opportunity for networking and relatedness (Boštjančič et al., 2018; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019). Our previous studies suggest that boosting interpersonal relationships may be the primary organizational effect of employee participation in CV. Similarly, Mazanec (2022) proved that the high frequency of participation in CV contributes to better relationships among colleagues in the workplace. The relationships strengthened this way encompass those with both peers and supervisors (Hou et al., 2020; Brzustewicz et al., 2021), but studies presenting how CV influences specific aspects of these relationships are still scarce.

Regarding relationships with supervisors, in our study, we refer to PSS, which is proposed among indicators of the quality of supervisor–subordinate relationships (Paillé et al., 2013; Ammara et al., 2018). PSS is defined as the extent to which employees believe their supervisors value their contributions, care about their well-being and offer assistance (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kossek et al., 2011). Our choice of PSS is motivated by evidence that CSR initiatives, such as CV, are perceived by employees as contributing to the fulfillment of their psychological needs (Rupp et al., 2006); therefore, CV may embody organizational and supervisor support.

Little is still known on the links between PSS (and supervisor–subordinate relationships in general) and CV; however, research on PSS and volunteering in local community sports’ events showed that volunteers’ PSS was an important factor that influenced their positive behaviors, including satisfaction, commitment and future volunteer intentions (Aisbett et al., 2015; Aisbett and Hoye, 2015; Fallon and Rice, 2015). PSS is also argued to lead to various positive effects, including the quality of relationships among employees (Baker and Dutton, 2007; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011).

In reference to relations with peers, in our study we refer to the experienced quality of peer relationships and adopt the construct of positive relationships at work. This choice was motivated by our previous studies suggesting that participation in CV strengthened...
employee experience of mutuality and positive regard from co-workers. These two effects constitute the main dimensions of the subjective experience of PRW: positive regard refers to the individual feeling of warmth and emotional attachment for one another; mutuality refers to sharing a sense of full involvement and supporting each other (Dutton and Heaphy, 2003).

In summary, there is research evidence of the influence of PSS on PRW (Baker and Dutton, 2007; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011), CV’s influence on employee-volunteers’ relationships with peers (Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan, 2009; Grant, 2012; Glińska-Neweś et al., 2019; Brzustewicz, 2020) and a little support for links between CV and PSS (Aisbett et al., 2015; Aisbett and Hoye, 2015; Fallon and Rice, 2015). However, there is still call for research on how CV moderates the relation between PSS and PRW. Development of workplace relationships is fostered by managers and their actions, including creating and maintaining a positive organizational climate based on interactional justice, fair respectful communication and socialization practices (Baker and Dutton, 2007; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011). Because CV contributes significantly to such a climate (Glińska-Neweś et al., 2019; Hou et al., 2020), we hypothesize that:

H1. Participation in CV moderates the relationship between PSS and PRW.

2.2 CV and work meaningfulness
CV contributes also to WM (Rodell, 2013; Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2018; Brzustewicz, 2020). WM can be defined as the subjective experience of how significant and intrinsically valuable individuals find their work to be (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003). It is derived from assessing the value, purposefulness and importance of one’s work and the relationship experienced with other people (May et al., 2004). Meaningful work is argued as the key factor of work behavior (Berg et al., 2010; Rosso et al., 2010) and specifically employee motivation, commitment, job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Steger et al., 2012), career development (Dik and Duffy, 2009) and overall well-being (Littman-Ovadia and Steger, 2010; Steger et al., 2012).

The rich literature on WM focuses on sources of this phenomenon (Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009; Rosso et al., 2010; Berg et al., 2013). According to the seminal work of Hackman et al. (1975), the three main dimensions contributing to the meaningfulness of work include skill variety, task identity and task significance. More recent studies emphasize the relational dimension as the source of WM (e.g., Wrzesniewski, 2003; Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009; Bailey and Madden, 2016). It encompasses supervisor–subordinate relationships, peer worker relationships, workplace friendships and customer relationships (Ragins and Dutton, 2007; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011). Interpersonal relationships between supervisors and subordinates shape employees’ sense of WM by contributing to their perception of the work environment (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Cole et al., 2006). PRW reinforce personal core identity, promote personal growth and shape and nurture the individual as a whole, which may make work more meaningful (Colbert et al., 2016). At the same time, the perception of WM depends on whether close relationships between employees create opportunities for employees to express valued identities at work (Kahn, 2007; Rosso et al., 2010).

CV provides employees the opportunity for relatedness (Boštjančič et al., 2018; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019) and helps them to find more meaning in their work (Rodell, 2013). Relatedness is a vital part of employee engagement in CV. It refers to a sense of belonging among employees and building relationships that are meaningful. Working together in CV projects makes employees feel more connected to others and meaningfully involved in making a valuable social contribution. A sense of relatedness makes employees more satisfied with work, and satisfied employees are more engaged. Addressing calls for further investigations into how relations with others influence employees’ sense of WM (Grant, 2007; Rosso et al., 2010), we argue that, through CV, employees build closer relationships with supervisors and peers, with whom they are doing work that they deem to have a “higher” purpose. Therefore, we hypothesize that:
2.3 CV and affective commitment

Some empirical studies show that employee engagement in volunteering is positively associated with AC (Lubinsky et al., 2011; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019). More specifically, employee engagement in CV may enhance an individual’s shared values and identification with the organization, strengthening their AC (Lubinsky et al., 2011). AC reflects employees’ emotional bond to their organization and is among the most significant predictor of employee performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Meyer et al., 2002). Affectively committed employees have a sense of belonging and identification that increases their involvement and willingness to pursue the organization’s goals and their desire to remain within the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Rhoades et al., 2001).

Links between CV and organizational commitment may be explained by reference to employee perceptions of their company’s socially responsible performance (Brammer et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2021). Specifically, employee perceptions of corporate community involvement contribute to organizational commitment and decrease turnover intentions. On the other hand, Haski-Leventhal et al. (2019) suggest that employee participation in CV has a positive effect on their AC, because CV is capable of satisfying employee needs for relatedness. This need pertains to the desire to feel connected with others and to have meaningful relationships (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019).

A meta-analytic review of the literature on PSS (which in our study represents the experienced quality of supervisor–subordinate relationships) conducted by Boyer and Edmondson (2015) shows that PSS is positively related to AC. Also, positive relationships at work, due to their power to energize the work environment, affect employee vitality, well-being and organizational commitment (Carmeli, 2009; Halbesleben, 2012; Di Fabio, 2016). Therefore, taking into account the capability of CV in strengthening employee relationships with supervisors and peers, we propose:

- **H3a.** Participation in CV moderates the relationship between PSS and AC.
- **H3b.** Participation in CV moderates the relationship between PRW and AC.
- **H3c.** Participation in CV moderates the relationship between PSS and AC via PRW.

Many studies show that, next to relationships with others at work, AC is affected by WM (Steger et al., 2012; Jung and Yoon, 2016; Allan et al., 2019). There are various conditions of this link, including positive work reflection, i.e., recalling positive work experiences, events and aspects during non-work hours (Jiang and Johnson, 2018). Participation in CV provides employees with events delivering a positive experience of relations with others, including supervisors and peers, which may create the aforementioned positive work reflection. A review of the literature suggests that PSS and positive relationships with peers enhance both the sense of WM (Ragins and Dutton, 2007; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011) and AC (Halbesleben, 2012; Boyer and Edmondson, 2015). Therefore, we hypothesize:

- **H4.** Participation in CV moderates the relationship between PSS and AC via WM.
- **H5.** Participation in CV moderates the relationship between PRW and AC via WM.

Figure 1 presents our overall conceptual model.
3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and data collection

We collected data from April to June 2020 using an online self-administered questionnaire among employees of companies located in Poland that offer CV programs. The selection of companies was purposive and resulted directly from the research aim. We sent an invitation to participate in the study to 18 companies among those listed in the Responsible Companies Ranking, edition XIII (Responsible Business Forum, 2019), that publicly declare their involvement in CV. Four of these companies agreed to participate in the study, and thus, our invitation was sent to their employees. Two of the companies were banks, while the other two were leading producers of alcoholic beverages in Poland. The selection of individual employees within each company was non-random and based on their agreement to participate in the study. Involvement in volunteer activities organized in their respective companies, either in the past or at the time of the study, was not a prerequisite for their inclusion in the study. In total, we received 711 correctly completed questionnaires. All of the respondents held non-managerial positions in their companies but reflected diverse demographic characteristics and varied experiences with volunteering (see Table 1).

The timing of our survey, which commenced at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, precluded the possibility of conducting a longitudinal study. This limitation stemmed from the widespread suspension of volunteer programs in the majority of companies during the pandemic.

3.2 Measures

*WM* was measured with the ten-item “Work as meaning inventory” (WAMI) scale by Steger et al. (2012) with a sample item: “I understand how my work contributes to my life’s meaning”.

*PSS* was measured with the eight-item scale by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) with a sample item: “The supervisor really cares about my well-being.”

*PRW* were measured with the seven-item scale by Carmeli (2009) with a sample item: “I feel that my co-workers like me”.

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**Figure 1.** Conceptual model

**Source(s):** Authors' work
AC was measured based on the scale created by Meyer and Allen (1997). The Polish six-item version of this scale was proposed and validated by Barța et al. (2002) with a sample item: “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me”.

Based on previous research on CV, showing that employees often volunteer both within CV and outside their company (Glisnka-Noweś et al., 2019; Brzustewicz et al., 2021), in order to capture moderating role of employee participation in volunteering, we proposed a nominal scale, which is a solution used also in other studies on CV (e.g., Rodell et al., 2017). Our scale of employee participation in volunteering (PV) included:

1. employee participates in volunteering organized in the company he/she works in now (“PV in company”);
2. employee participates in volunteering organized outside the company he/she works in now (“PV outside company”);
3. employee does not participate in any kind of volunteering (“No PV”);
4. employee participates in volunteering organized both in and outside the company he/she works in now (“PV in and outside company”).

The questionnaire containing all the scales was presented to the respondents in Polish. Excluding The Polish six-item version of the scale for AC, the preparation of the Polish version of the other scales was based on a back translation procedure.
3.3 Data analysis
ANOVA test was conducted preliminarily in SPSS 26 to examine the effects of respondents’ participation in volunteering (PV) on PSS, PRW, WM and AC. Then, SEM was used in Mplus 8 via: confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), mediations with 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrapping (Preacher and Hayes, 2008) and moderations [multi-group analysis (MGA)] (Memon et al., 2019). The bootstrapping method is selected because it offers increased power and reasonable control over the type I error rate, especially when multivariate normality cannot be assumed (Mausbach et al., 2012). Parameters in this study were estimated using maximum likelihood estimation, and missing data were handled using full information maximum likelihood, in order to decrease bias (Enders, 2001). In addition, due to considering the potential bias caused by the cross-sectional study and the absence of a relevant ex ante design in this study, we also tested the common method variance (CMV) using the unmeasured latent marker construct (ULMC) technique (Richardson et al., 2009).

4. Results
4.1 Analysis of variances (ANOVA)
The purpose of the ANOVA test was to check whether PSS, PRW, WM and AC each had a significant relationship with PV (Table 2). ANOVA results were all significant, which means the significant effects of subgroups of PV on all variables in this study. The post-hoc test adjusted to the multiple testing was used to test the difference in means among “PV in company”, “PV outside company”, “No PV” and “PV in and outside company” groups. The results showed that the difference in means of PSS for “PV in and outside company” (M = 5.1584) was significantly higher than for “PV in company” (M = 4.3159, p < 0.001), “PV outside company” (M = 4.4765, p = 0.011) and “No PV” (M = 4.3230, p < 0.001), respectively. For PRW, the difference in means for “PV in and outside company” (M = 4.0297) was significantly higher than “No PV” (M = 3.7220, p = 0.015). For WM, the difference in means of WM for “PV in and outside company” (M = 4.2574) was significantly higher than “No PV” (M = 3.6667, p < 0.001). Finally, the difference in means of AC for “PV in and outside company” (M = 5.0297) is significantly different and higher than “PV in company” (M = 4.4857, p = 0.048) and “No PV” (M = 4.2228, p < 0.001).

4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis
Fit indices showed the model fitted the data well, that the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) were above 0.90 (0.976 and 0.971, respectively) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) were below 0.08 (0.048 and 0.029, respectively) (Iacobucci, 2010).

Tables 3 and 4 showed the detailed results of the convergent and discriminant validity and reliability of measurement models in this study. Convergent validity was satisfactory, as standardized factor loadings were all significant and above 0.60 (Cunningham et al., 2001), and the results of average variance extracted (AVE) were all above 0.50 (Hair et al., 1998). The reliability in this study was examined by Cronbach’s Alpha(α) and composite reliability (CR), which all exceed 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978) and 0.60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), respectively (see Table 3). Discriminant validity also passed, as Table 4 reported the correlations between any two latent variables were less than the square root of AVE (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

On the other hand, as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003), CMV was also examined in this study using Harman single factor test and unmeasured latent method construct (ULMC). The result of Harman single factor test was 46.363%, which was less than 50%. ULMC test followed the procedures outlined by Williams et al. (1989). Table 5 showed the
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Sum of square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Post-hoc analysis (Scheffe)</th>
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<td>Within groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>10.795</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.598</td>
<td>4.945</td>
<td>0.002**</td>
<td>1 = 3.868</td>
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<td>Within groups</td>
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**Note(s):** *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001; 1 = PV in company; 2 = PV outside company; 3 = No PV; 4 = PV in and outside company. See text for abbreviations.

**Source(s):** Authors' work
4.3 Multiple mediation and moderated mediation analysis (SEM model)

Recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008), mediation and moderation were all examined in 5,000 times bias-corrected bootstrapping. Table 6 is the mediation results. Model fit indices
were satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 250.178, \chi^2/df = 2.553, CFI = 0.976, TLI = 0.971, RMSEA = 0.048$) (Iacobucci, 2010). All direct and indirect relationships were supported well. Figure 2 presents the specific standardized path coefficients.

MGA was utilized as an appropriate analytical technique to test moderation effects, especially on the entire model (Memon et al., 2019). The moderating effect of “Participation in volunteering” (PV) was analyzed in 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrapping. The moderations were built on six comparisons: (1) “PV in company” vs. “No PV”; (2) “PV in company” vs. “No PV”; (3) “PV in company” vs. “PV in and outside company”; (4) “PV outside company” vs. “No PV”; (5) “PV outside company” vs. “PV in and outside company”; (6) “No PV” vs. “PV in and outside company”.

Fit indices were satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 947.537, \chi^2/df = 2.042, CFI = 0.926, TLI = 0.923, RMSEA = 0.08$) (Iacobucci, 2010). However, only hypotheses H2a, H3b and H3c were partially supported (see Table 7).

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### Table 6.

Direct and indirect effect (mediation) without moderator

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Estimate (unstd.)</th>
<th>Product of coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Coefficient</th>
<th>Bootstrap 5000 times (95% confidence interval)</th>
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<td>Percentile 95% Lower Upper Bias-corrected</td>
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<td>0.048</td>
<td>4.288</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
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<td>Direct effect (PRW → AC)</td>
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<td>0.074</td>
<td>3.655</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct effect (PSS → AC)</td>
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<td>Bootstrap 5000 times (95% confidence interval)</td>
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<td>Percentile 95% Lower Upper Bias-corrected</td>
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**Note(s):** Unstandardized coefficients. *$p < 0.05;$ **$p < 0.01;$ ***$p < 0.001.$ See text for abbreviations

**Source(s):** Authors’ work

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**Figure 2.**

Empirical model

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**Note(s):** *, **, *** indicate that the coefficient is statistically significant, respectively, at $p < 0.05; p < 0.01, p < 0.001$

**Source(s):** Authors work
### Relationship Estimate

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<th>SE</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>5000 bootstrapping 95% bias-corrected CI</th>
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<th>Upper</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0.527</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSS → PRW → AC</td>
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<td>0.129</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>−0.289</td>
<td>0.229</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSS → WM → AC</td>
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<td>0.139</td>
<td>−0.393</td>
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<td>−0.092</td>
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<td>PSS → WM</td>
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<td>0.182</td>
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<td>0.071</td>
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<td>−0.278</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.049*</td>
<td>−1.629</td>
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<td>−0.504</td>
<td>0.058</td>
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<td>0.436</td>
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<td>PRW → WM → AC</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSS → PRW</td>
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<td>0.772</td>
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<td>0.196</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSS → WM</td>
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<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>−0.130</td>
<td>0.199</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.978</td>
<td>−0.223</td>
<td>0.217</td>
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<td>0.819</td>
<td>−0.234</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Conditional direct and indirect effect (moderation)
Regarding hypothesis H2a, the relationship between PSS and WM was only moderated in the comparison between “PV outside company” and “No PV” (B = -0.177, p = 0.045). That is, compared to employees’ participation in volunteering outside company, the PSS-WM relationship is stronger if employees do not participate in any kind of volunteering.

For hypothesis H3b, the direct relationship between positive relationship (PRW) and AC was moderated when comparing:

1. “PV in company” and “No PV”, the coefficient was higher when an employee participates in volunteering in the company (B = 0.520, p = 0.013);
2. “PV outside company” and “PV in and outside company”, the coefficient was higher when an employee participates in volunteering both in and outside the company (B = -0.802, p = 0.049);
3. “No PV” and “PV in and outside company”, the coefficient was also higher when an employee participates in volunteering both in and outside the company (B = -0.621, p = 0.009).

For hypothesis H3c, the relationship between PSS and AC mediated by positive relationship at work (PRW) was moderated when comparing:

1. “PV in company” and “No CV”, the coefficient was higher when an employee participates in volunteering in the company (B = 0.150, p = 0.035);
2. “No PV” and “PV in and outside company”, the coefficient was higher when an employee participates in volunteering both in and outside the company (B = -0.146, p = 0.034).

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical contribution

Our study sheds new light on the moderated effects that CV has on employee attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, our results contribute to understanding of influences that CV has on links between employees’ perception of relationships with supervisors and peers, employee’s sense of WM and their AC.

We show that participation in CV moderates: (1) the link between experienced positive relationships with peers and employee AC and (2) the relationship between PSS and AC mediated by experienced positive relationship with peers. It is in line with previous studies arguing for the effects that CV has on intraorganizational relations (Boštjančič et al., 2018; Glińska-Noweś et al., 2019; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019; Brzustewicz, 2020) and AC (Brockner et al., 2014; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019). We add to this literature by showing that employees’
participation in CV strengthens the effect that PSS and positive relationships with peers have on AC.

It is argued that supervisor and co-worker support represents a social dimension of organizational support that influences organizational commitment (Miedaner et al., 2018). CV provides employees with the opportunity for networking and relatedness, which strengthens their workplace relationships (Boštjančič et al., 2018; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019; Brzustewicz, 2020; Brzustewicz et al., 2021). What is more, volunteers describe relationships built by participating in CV as providing them with support in daily duties (Glińska-Neweś et al., 2019), which may explain why, according to our study, participation in CV strengthens the effect that relationships with supervisors and co-workers have on AC.

At the same time, in our study, the aforementioned links are stronger for employees who do volunteer work both within CV and independently of it. Also, single studied phenomena (PSS, PRW, WM and AC) have received the highest mean score in the group of employees volunteering both in and outside their companies. This suggests that the effects that volunteering work has on employees are more complex and should be explained with reference also to other phenomena than those studied in this paper. They may include the personal characteristics of volunteers, such as their motivation, which according to Muthuri et al. (2009) encompasses trusting, cooperating and networking with others; these motivations may affect the way volunteers perceive relationships with co-workers (PRW, PSS) and with an organization (AC), regardless of their shared engagement in volunteering. It is also argued that volunteer work (of any kind) contributes to individual positive mental health referred to as “flourishing” (Keyes, 2009; Glavas, 2012; Glińska-Neweś et al., 2021), which may affect attitudes and behaviors in many spheres of life. As a result, even volunteering independently of CV may contribute to positive attitudes and behaviors towards the organization and its members.

Contrary to our expectations, participation in CV did not moderate relationships between employees’ perception of WM and other analyzed phenomena. Such relationships are suggested by studies investigating the influence of company social responsibility on WM. It is commonly believed that working for a socially responsible company is a source of meaning, purpose and value in employees’ lives that leads to their personal growth (Rodell, 2013; Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2018). In particular, active engagement in projects related to CSR, such as CV, can enhance the WM that employees experience by making a valuable social contribution (Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2018). Exploring different aspects of meaningfulness, Schnell and Hoof (2012) supported the hypothesis that volunteers experience higher degrees of meaningfulness than the general population. On the other hand, recalling positive work experiences and events during non-work hours (and CV fits this category) has been argued to mediate the relationship between meaningful work and AC (Jiang and Johnson, 2018). Dwyer et al. (2013) suggested that volunteering predicted greater volunteer satisfaction, and this link was mediated by enhanced WM.

In our study, employees participating in volunteering did indeed report a higher level of WM, and this related particularly to those participating in volunteering both in and outside their company. However, participation in volunteering had no moderation on relationships between employees’ perception of WM and other constructs (PSS, PRW and AC). The reasons for these contradictions may be twofold.

Firstly, the sample’s specificity could affect the results. In other words, there may be a specificity of CV effects in Polish companies caused by local context. Additionally, the results could be affected by the sample’s structure, which was dominated by female respondents. Studying the influence of gender on differences in the perception of the meaning of work, Burbano et al. (2020) determined that while meaning derived from job design is valued by both male and female employees, a gender-based difference was confirmed in meaning triggered by job mission, and this difference may be related to CV and perceived corporate social
responsibility. Moreover, these differences grew with the educational level of respondents and the economic development of economies, which may also be of importance in our study.

Secondly, the explanation of our results may be that WM and particularly its relations with other phenomena, are generated simply by the fact that the company organizes CV and it does not matter if an employee participates in it or not. This would confirm the general effect that working for a socially responsible company has on WM (Rodell, 2013; Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2018). On the other hand, the links between employee participation in CV and employees’ perception of WM may be more complicated. This is confirmed by the study of Rodell (2013), who used the concept of compensation mechanisms to check whether a lack of meaningfulness at work caused employees to look for it in voluntary work. The hypothesis that WM has a negative indirect effect on volunteering through wanderlust was not supported. On the other hand, the hypothesis that WM has a positive indirect relationship with volunteering through voracity (i.e., appreciating the job so much that one looks for additional activities) turned out to be supported.

Apart from contributing to the knowledge on CV and its links with workplace attitudes and behaviors, this paper contributes in more general terms to the fields of organizational behavior, confirming the links between variables included in our conceptual model. To the best of our knowledge, the constructs of PSS, PRW, WM and AC have never been analyzed together. In addition, our study suggests a mediating role of WM in the relationships between PSS, PRW and AC.

5.2 Practical implications

Our study shows that employee participation in CV is capable of enhancing work relationships and AC of employees, which are argued to be beneficial for companies. Knowing the relationships between CV and the aforementioned work outcomes, companies can more effectively influence the attitudes and behaviors of employees by supporting CV programs. Supervisors should encourage employees to participate in CV because positive relationships that emerge as a result contribute to employees’ overall well-being by reducing stress and improving health (Nappo, 2020). In turn, when employees are affectively committed, they are more loyal, engaged and more focused on the organization’s goals (Lubinsky et al., 2011). CV programs should then be supported and promoted by companies because they provide important benefits for companies. Companies can facilitate CV programs, for example, by offering paid time off to their employees, which they utilize to engage in charity work. The results presented in our study can be valuable for managers in shaping HR policies, especially since companies that are socially responsible are more likely to attract new and retain existing employees (Klimkiewicz and Oltra, 2017). While the relationships between WM, relationships at work and AC are already known to managers thanks to previous publications (e.g., Bilgin and Demirer, 2012; Ellingson et al., 2016), our study enriches the knowledge of these mechanisms by adding the effect of CV on employee behavior. The practical implication of the study relates also to the building of a better business case for CSR, notably, delivering rationales supporting why businesses should implement practices of social responsibility such as CV.

5.3 Limitations and avenues for future research

Among the limitations of the study, we should mention its cross-sectional and self-reported nature. Although CMV has not affected our results, they should be treated with caution. Moreover, the sample of companies was randomly selected. It consisted of four specific companies – all located in Poland, representing only two sectors and listed in the Responsible Companies Ranking as among the most advanced in implementing corporate responsibility practices in Poland. Also, the self-selection sampling used to reach employees in these
companies could lead to certain limitations and biases in the results obtained. All respondents held non-managerial positions in their companies; the majority were women, up to 40 years old and from households with children. Such characteristics of the respondents may have determined both their involvement in volunteer activities inside and outside the company and their willingness to participate in the survey. Our study thus calls for further investigation, including using a random sampling technique for both the selection of companies and their employees, as well as the investigation of the impact of diverse employee characteristics, among them gender, age, education level, having children, position in the company, self-oriented versus other-oriented social motivation, on the relationships between the concepts analyzed. Due to our rather unexpected results, future research should also explore further links between CV and WM and, specifically, their other mediators and moderators. In addition, conducting studies in other countries could provide an interesting basis for comparative analysis. For example, it would be worthwhile to explore how different geographical and cultural contexts might affect the role of CV in influencing employee attitudes and behaviors in organizational settings.

6. Conclusion
In this study, we delved into the role of CV in influencing employee attitudes and behaviors within organizational settings. Our findings underscore the significance of CV in moderating the relationships between employees’ perceptions of relationships with supervisors and peers, their sense of WM and their AC. Specifically, the study illuminated the strengthened effects of PSS and positive work relationships on AC when employees participate in CV. Despite certain unexpected results regarding WM, the research brings to the forefront the compelling interplay of corporate social responsibility initiatives and intrapersonal dynamics in the workplace. As organizations grapple with the challenges of fostering a cohesive and committed workforce, our study accentuates the potential of CV as a pivotal tool in cultivating a more engaged and interconnected work environment.

References


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