

What makes employees participate in volunteering programs? The role of organizational support

Role of
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support

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to identify some of the critical organizational support factors and efforts that facilitate better employee participation in corporate volunteering (CV) programs. There is a growing interest to understand the role of organization in enhancing better employee participation in volunteering programs.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors conducted an empirical investigation with ($n = 461$) employee volunteers, who participated in company sponsored volunteering programs. The authors tested the hypothesized relationship using structural equation modelling (SEM).

Findings – The SEM results indicate that cultural fit, organizational CV communication and implementation of CV programmes facilitate better employee participation.

Research limitations/implications – This study provides insights for organizations in terms of increased internal communication and alignment of organizational values with CV programmes to attract better employee participation in volunteering programmes.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the literature on the phenomenon of employee volunteering by examining various organizational efforts that facilitate better employee participation in volunteering programmes.

Keywords Employee volunteering, Organizational support, Communication, Cultural fit, Employee participation

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In recent years, employee volunteering (EV) has become a most discussed corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity both by academicians and practitioners (Afkhami *et al.*, 2019; Breitsohl and Ehrig, 2016; Haski-Leventhal *et al.*, 2019; Rodell and Lynch, 2016; Rodell *et al.*, 2016; Schie *et al.*, 2018; Štumberger and Pauly, 2018). Employee volunteering is an act of giving employee's time, knowledge, and skills as part of community service, outreach, or on socially responsible activities often sponsored by companies, without any additional compensation or direct personal remuneration (Bussell and Forbes, 2008; Rodell, 2013). Employee volunteering is also referred as corporate volunteering (CV) (Gómez and Fernández, 2017a, 2017b; Sekar and Dyaram, 2018), employer-supported volunteering



(Afkhami *et al.*, 2019), corporate-sponsored volunteering (Caliguri *et al.*, 2013; Pajo and Lee, 2011). More than 90% of the Fortune Global 500 companies actively engage in CV programmes (Boccalandro, 2009). CV programmes provide a multitude of benefits to organizations. It enhances brand image and reputation (Loosemore and Bridgeman, 2017; Plewa *et al.*, 2015), improves job performance (Rodell, 2013; Rodell and Lynch, 2016) and enhances employee attitudes (Breitsohl and Ehrig, 2016; Haski-Leventhal *et al.*, 2019; Im and Chung, 2018; Sekar and Dyaram, 2018).

The payback of employee volunteering is extensive for multiple stakeholders. However, the extant literature indicates that the rate of employee participation in employee volunteering is low (Grant, 2012; Gómez and Fernández, 2017a, 2017b; Rog *et al.*, 2004; Willems and Dury, 2017). Studies highlight that identification of factors that facilitate employee participation in volunteering programmes can help the organization to realize the potential of volunteering activities. Past studies have examined the relevant factors that account for employee participation in volunteering programmes (Brockner *et al.*, 2014; Hu *et al.*, 2016; Pajo and Lee, 2011; Pelozo and Hassay, 2006; Pelozo *et al.*, 2009; Sekar and Dyaram, 2017; Zappalà and McLaren, 2004). Most often these studies primarily focused on the influence of individual motives (Haski-Leventhal *et al.*, 2019; Schie *et al.*, 2018; Breitsohl and Ehrig, 2016) and demographic profiles of the participants (Wilson, 2012; Peterson, 2004b, Lanero, 2017) in determining their likely participation in CV. These studies have ignored the relevance of contextual elements (Hidalgo and Moreno, 2009), specifically organizational context in determining employee participation in volunteering programmes. Johns (2006, 2017) indicates that organizational contextual elements offer potential opportunities and constraints in dynamically determining the employee's decision to participate in volunteering programmes. Thus, it is imperative to assess the influence of potential organizational contextual factors on employee participation in volunteering programmes. In specific, Afkhami *et al.* (2019) insist the relevance of management practices in determining employee's decision to participate in volunteering programmes. Though the relevance of contextual factors in determining employee participation in CV is discussed (Sekar and Dyaram, 2017), studies to that effect are either limited or not adequately explored. In the current study, we seek to understand how organizational support and efforts act as relevant contextual factors in determining the employee participation in CV. In specific, we assess the relevance of cultural fit, CV communication, planning of CV, implementation and evaluation of CV on employee participation in volunteering programmes.

2. Literature and hypothesis development

Rodell *et al.* (2016) defined employee volunteering as “employed individuals giving time during a planned activity for an external non-profit or charitable group or organization without additional remuneration” (p. 58). The definition of CV indicates that the employee's participation is the most important aspect of volunteering activities as they expend their time and skills in a planned activity that benefits others without any additional remuneration. Further, it highlights that employees are the primary resource for any volunteering program to be effective and successful (Cycyota *et al.*, 2016; Grant, 2012; Rodell, 2013; Rodell *et al.*, 2016; Schie *et al.*, 2011). While the number of organizations incorporating volunteering programmes is growing, organizations observed that the rate of employee participation in volunteering programmes is not very encouraging (Gómez and Fernández, 2017a, 2017b; Harp *et al.*, 2017; Wilson, 2012). Identification of factors that will facilitate better employee participation in volunteering programmes could become helpful for an organization to run productive and successful volunteering programmes.

Prior research on employee volunteering asserts that determinants of employee's participation in CV can be multiple. Extant literature on volunteering examines mostly individual factors such as demographic factors like age and gender (Cornwell and Warburton, 2014; do Paço and Cláudia Nave, 2013; Lanero, 2017; Musik and Wilson, 2008; Peterson, 2004b; Rodell, 2013), personality traits (Einolf and Chambré, 2011; Erez *et al.*, 2008; Finkelstien, 2009) and motives (Breitsohl and Ehrig, 2016; Clary *et al.*, 1998; Gaignon-Turnau and Mignonac, 2014; Lanero, 2017; Pelozo and Hassay, 2006; Pelozo *et al.*, 2009) to explain employee volunteering behaviour.

Afkhami *et al.* (2019) argue that individual factors determine employee's decision to participate in volunteering programmes. But it is equally important to assess the influence of organizational context on employee participation in volunteering programmes. Johns (2006, 2017) highlights that most studies ignore the indispensable importance of organizational context in influencing specific employee behaviour either by creating a constraint or providing opportunities. Specifically, the role of the organization has become inseparable in the CV programmes, as these programmes are often effectively run and monitored by the organization. Thus, it becomes a prerequisite to seek and understand whether organizational contextual factors have any role in attracting employees towards volunteering programmes. While, extant literature highlights that employee's motivation to participate in a volunteering program cannot happen without the influence of organizational contextual factors (Gómez and Fernández, 2017a, 2017b). The earlier works cite that nature of volunteering activity, volunteering program characteristics (Alfes *et al.*, 2017; Cyncota *et al.*, 2016; Fournier-savard, 2016; Grant, 2012; Sekar and Dyaram, 2017; Sekar and Dyaram, 2018) and task design (Rodell *et al.*, 2016; Willems and Walk, 2013) impact the increase the involvement and engagement of employees in volunteering programmes.

When it comes to organizational contextual factors, it is noted that organizational support and effort around the overall management of CV programmes will impact employee attraction (Opoku-Dakwa *et al.*, 2018; Afkhami *et al.*, 2019). There are several organizational efforts for volunteering activities that influence the perception of employees on CV programmes and it can act as a potential source to facilitate employee's participation in volunteering activities. Opoku-Dakwa *et al.* (2018) proposed that organization support for volunteering activities concerning human support, informational support, material support and psychosocial support can influence the employee's decision to participate in volunteering program. Drawing insights from the Opoku-Dakwa *et al.* (2018) classification of organization support and Lee *et al.* (2013) organization of CSR capability, the present study conceptualized organizational support as

the level of congruence of CV programs with organizational culture, levels of awareness created within the organization through internal communication channels, effective planning and organization of the CV programs, effective program implementation and evaluation and feedback on the CV programs.

This study examines how these organizational efforts and support influence employee participation in volunteering programmes.

2.1 Fit between organization culture and volunteering programmes and employee participation

Organization culture is understood as a system of shared values and norms (Schein, 1983). It is often perceived as a resource through which employees learn to manage external challenges and facilitate internal integration. Employees internalize the organizational culture and embed their values system with that of the organization. Employees exhibit positive response

to activities that are aligned with the value system of the organization. [Li et al. \(2015\)](#) argued that value congruence is likely to increase employee engagement. Similarly, [Lee et al. \(2013\)](#) argue that the extent to which employees see there is a congruence between organizational culture and volunteering activities, it is more likely for employees to get attracted towards volunteering programmes. It accelerates their interest and enables them to participate in volunteering programmes. [Chong \(2009\)](#) also highlights that alignment of CSR activities with organization culture is crucial for better employee involvement in volunteering programmes. [Afkhami et al. \(2019\)](#) observed that volunteering culture of organization creates positive attitudes among its employees towards volunteering activities. Likewise, inferring from employee engagement perspectives ([Li et al., 2015](#)), compatibility of organization culture and volunteering activity facilitate better employee participation in volunteering. On the contrary, when employees perceive that volunteering activities is not congruent with organizational culture, this could lead to disinterest and could lower their participation in volunteering programmes. Thus, we hypothesize that fit between organization culture and volunteering activities will positively influence employee participation in volunteering programmes.

H1. Fit between organizational culture and volunteering activities positively relates to employee participation in volunteering programmes.

2.2 Organization corporate volunteering communication and employee participation

The internal communication on volunteering programmes increases employees' awareness on various aspects of volunteering programmes that include the type of activities, goals, beneficiaries and the role of employees. The increased awareness level through communication could bring attention of employees towards volunteering programmes. The organizations' communication on their CSR agenda and activities ([Bhattacharya et al., 2008](#); [Maignan and Ferrell, 2004](#); [Mallum, 2016](#)) and the information on organization's volunteering activities ([Presti, 2013](#)) showed greater influence on employee's attraction towards volunteering and the intention to repeat their participation in volunteering. [Malouf et al. \(2016\)](#) state that there is a strong association between internal communication and active employee participation in volunteering programmes. [Opoku-Dakwa et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Afkhami et al. \(2019\)](#) argue that information support in the form of providing communication broadens the awareness level of employees. It is imperative to note that communication activity of an organization plays a crucial role in enhancing the level of awareness on the various volunteering activities. At the same time, communication can also act as an organizational control activity. For instance, inferring from organizational control theory ([Gossett, 2009](#)), it asserts that it is a process by which organization attempts to influence the behaviours of employees within the organizational system. It highlights that organizational control is often a communicative activity by which organizations exercise their power to influence the behaviour of employees. Thus, it is significant to examine the role of organization communication on CV in the employees' decisions to participate in volunteering. Without sufficient communication, it is highly likely that employees may lack awareness of volunteering activities and consequently to reduce participation in volunteering activities. Thus, the organization's communication on CV becomes a pivotal effort from the organization in terms of stimulating and attracting employees towards volunteering programmes.

H2. Organization's CV communication positively relates to employee participation in volunteering programmes.

2.3 Planning of corporate volunteering activities and employee participation

Besides providing information on volunteering programmes, proper planning of volunteering programmes (Afkhami *et al.*, 2019) is essential to have better employee participation. Planning of volunteering programmes decides the type of volunteering activity, target group, volunteers' interests and reflects the culture of the organization (Sekar and Dyaram, 2017, 2018). Integrating employee's interest and engaging them in the process of conceptualizing the volunteering programmes will increase employee affinity towards volunteering programmes. Consistent with employee engagement theory (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004), organization's efforts on planning and conceptualization of volunteering program are likely to enhance employee involvement in volunteering programmes. Lee *et al.* (2013) argue that well planned and executed volunteering programmes help create better impression amongst its employees on its efficacy. It also builds trust among its employees to get involved in volunteering programmes. Employees assess the organizational orientation/purpose and check before they invest their time in these activities. When employees do not find efforts by an organization towards the design and planning of volunteering activities, they are less likely to participate in volunteering programmes.

H3. Planning of CV activities positively relates to employee participation in volunteering programmes.

2.4 Implementation of corporate volunteering activities and employee participation

Most often organizational resources and its capability facilitate employee's attraction towards the task. This becomes most applicable to volunteering programmes as well. Employees develop an interest in volunteering programmes assessing the organization's capability in effectively carrying out the volunteering programmes. Organization's capability and resource availability towards volunteering programmes are likely to influence employee's commitment to volunteering programmes (Opoku-Dakwa *et al.*, 2018). The Effort-Recovery Model (Meijman and Mulder, 1998) argues that organizations which offer ample resources foster employees' willingness to dedicate their efforts towards the organization task. Drawing from this, it is imperative to note that employees assess the resource availability and organization capability while making their decision to participate in volunteering programmes. Empirical investigations (Galbreath, 2010; Lee *et al.*, 2013) demonstrate that the organization's capabilities regarding its ability to implement and provide adequate resources to execute volunteering programmes motivate its employees. They will provide support for helping the organization in achieving the firm's goals. Most employees prefer to engage inefficiently executed projects with precise inputs and effective task assignments (Meijs and Ten Hoorn, 2008). Employees continue to assess organizational abilities to carry out their volunteering programmes successfully. Thus, these employee assessments can influence their choice of participation in corporate-sponsored volunteering (Feldman and Ng, 2008). It is likely that employees show positive engagement on volunteering activities if they perceive that the organization possesses adequate resources and implementation effectiveness.

H4. Implementation of CV activities positively relates to employee participation in volunteering programmes.

2.5 Evaluation of corporate volunteering programmes and employee participation

Often employees make efforts to understand the organizational capability and commitment in evaluating the success of volunteering programmes in terms of seeking their reports on outcome of volunteering programmes, beneficiary responses, etc. (Afkhami *et al.*, 2019; Lee *et al.*, 2013; Sekar and Dyaram, 2017). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) argue that proper feedbacks and reports are likely to influence heightened involvement in the successful completion of the task. As most employees prefer to engage on efficiently run volunteering projects that impact the lives of the beneficiaries (Meijs and Ten Hoorn, 2008). From the evidences of Effort-Recovery Model (Meijman and Mulder, 1998), it is likely that employees will assess whether the organization has built a system to evaluate the effectiveness of volunteering programmes. Employees will also seek “does the organization report the outcome of the volunteering programmes to the stakeholders?”. If an employee sees this happen, they are likely to get engaged in volunteering programmes.

H5. Evaluation of CV programmes positively relates to employee participation in CV programmes.

3. Method

3.1 Sample and procedure

The contextual base for data collection was organizations that run CV programmes as a part of their corporate social responsibility activities. The respondents were corporate volunteers who were involved and participated in CV programmes. Organizations across sectors, which practice CV programmes, were contacted to access the target employee volunteers. The organizations that participated in the study represent multiple industries across IT/ITES, manufacturing, banking/finance, construction and service sectors. These organizations have been carrying out several employee volunteering programmes throughout the year. The majority of their programmes are focused on education, environment and health and community development. Some of the key volunteering activities are setting up of library in the schools, conducting career guidance programmes for the higher secondary school children, beach cleaning activity, tree plantation, traffic awareness campaign, organizing medical camps in the villages, capacity building for government school teachers, conducting sports events in the community and environmental awareness programmes. We adopted purposive and snowball sampling method to identify the participants for the study. We visited the multiple volunteering activity sites and invited the employees to take part in the study by filling the questionnaire on a voluntary basis, post completion of their volunteering project. Participants were informed through a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their participation at their free will.

Further, to keep the anonymity, participants were requested not to provide their name, contact details and any other personal identifiable information. In total, $n = 461$ employees participated in the study. As organizations keep the volunteer information at the project level (not at an individual level), our ability to report the response rate is minimal. Among respondents, 60% were male volunteers; the average age of the respondents was 28 from a range distributed between 21 and 50 years. About two-thirds of the respondents held non-managerial positions. The participants of the study were mostly from the Southern region/states of India. The geographical location within this region did not show a significant relationship with employee participation in volunteering programmes.

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Employee participation in corporate volunteering. Employee participation in volunteering programmes was measured using employee volunteering scale by [Rodell \(2013\)](#) that uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). A sample item includes “I will be active during volunteering hours”. Cronbach’s α for employee participation in CV for the current study was 0.84.

3.2.2 Fit between organization culture and volunteering activities. [Cable and DeRue \(2002\)](#) scale on person-organizational fit was adapted to measure fit between organization culture and volunteering activities. Statements were responded to using a five-point Likert scale from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Sample item includes “Our CSR/CV activities are in alignment with our organizational culture”. Cronbach’s α for fit between organization culture and volunteering activities was 0.70.

3.2.3 Communication of corporate volunteering. [Lee et al. \(2013\)](#) scale on CSR capability was adapted to measure internal communication about volunteering programmes on a five-point frequency scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Sample item includes “Our company publishes the performance of volunteering activities.” The Cronbach’s α for communication was 0.77.

3.2.4 Planning of corporate volunteering. CSR capability scale ([Lee et al., 2013](#)) was adapted to measure planning of CV activities on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Sample item included “Our organization tries to understand our stakeholder’s needs to plan volunteering activities.” Cronbach’s α for planning of CV activities was 0.79.

3.2.5 Implementation of corporate volunteering. Implementation of volunteering activities scale was adapted from CSR capability scale of [Lee et al. \(2013\)](#). It is measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Sample item included “Our organization has the ability to manage the execution of CSR activities” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.74$).

3.2.6 Evaluation of corporate volunteering. Evaluation of CV activities measure was adapted from [Lee et al. \(2013\)](#) CSR capability scale. It is measured on a five-point scale of 1 being Strongly Disagree to 5 being Strongly Agree. Sample item: “Our organization has a clear process to evaluate CSR activity performance” (Cronbach’s α was 0.84).

4. Results

4.1 Preliminary analysis

Convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs were tested following [Fornell and Larcker \(1981\)](#). Convergent validity has been tested on three criteria, as suggested by [Fornell and Larcker \(1981\)](#). First, factor loadings of all items tested for its significance. All factor loadings were found significant, thus indicating convergent validity ([Anderson and Gerbing, 1988](#)). Further, the average variance extracted for all constructs at least equaled or exceeded 0.50 ([Table 1](#)), which indicate that all constructs were able to adequately capture variance of the defined constructs. Third, internal consistency between each item of the construct checked with Cronbach’s alpha score. Each construct reliability score is at least equal or exceeds 0.70, indicating internal consistency among the items of the construct. Thus, all three criteria showed that data exhibited convergent validity.

[Fornell and Larcker \(1981\)](#) method was followed to check discriminant validity. The square root of the average variance extracted (i.e. maximum variance extracted, shown in bold on the diagonal of [Table 1](#)) is larger than all correlations in the row and column, thus establishing discriminant validity. Also, checks were done for common method bias (CMB) before carrying out hypothesis testing to ensure data is free from CMB. We employed

multiple preventive measures suggested by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) such as randomizing the item order and ensuring respondents' anonymity. Further, we used a common latent factor (CLF) method to assess the common method bias, and the result indicated that difference between model with CLF and without CLF is less than 0.20. Thus, it is established that data was free from CMB. We tested our data for multicollinearity with variance inflation factors (VIF). The estimates were less than three, indicating that variables were not multicollinear with each other.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics – mean, standard deviations, average variance extracted, maximum variance extracted and inter-correlation between the constructs of the study. We note employee volunteering shows significant correlation with communication ($r = 0.60, p < 0.01$), fit between organization culture and CV ($r = 0.43, p < 0.01$), implementation ($r = 0.45, p < 0.01$). All the constructs of the study show positive correlation with employee participation in volunteering programmes, indicating further analysis would offer more insights on the relationship between the key organizational efforts on volunteering programmes and employee volunteering behaviour.

4.3 Structural equation modelling

We carried out structural equation modelling (SEM) using AMOS 22 to test the hypothesized model. SEM is the most preferred analysis method as it incorporates both unobserved (latent) and observed variables in the same model and also accounts for measurement errors in the model (Gefen *et al.*, 2000). Following the two-step analysis procedure, we examined the measurement model followed by a structural model. Measurement model helps us to infer the appropriateness and strength of the relationships between observed variables and latent variables. We conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the measurement model.

The theoretical six-factor model (fit between organization culture and volunteering programmes, CV communication, planning, implementation, evaluation and employee participation in CV) shows a good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 797.960, df = 309, p < 0.001, CFI = 0.91, SRMR = 0.04, RMSEA = 0.05$). We carried out the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships. The fit indices were initially checked to assess how well the hypothesized model fits the data set. The fit indices of the structural model were ($\chi^2 = 609.859, df = 260, CFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.04$) ensuring good fit (Table 2). The structural model analysis results with path

Table 1.
Means, standard deviations, AVE, correlation and maximum variance extracted^a

Variables	Mean	S.D	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Fit between org. culture and CV	3.77	0.71	0.52	<i>0.64</i>					
2 Communication	3.80	0.75	0.56	0.55**	<i>0.63</i>				
3 Planning of CV	3.68	0.71	0.54	0.63**	0.55**	<i>0.69</i>			
4 Implementation	3.94	0.74	0.56	0.63**	0.50**	0.53*	<i>0.69</i>		
5 Evaluation	3.73	0.72	0.59	0.60**	0.60**	0.67**	0.66**	<i>0.71</i>	
6 Employee participation	3.79	0.76	0.51	0.43**	0.60**	0.36**	0.45**	0.43**	<i>0.71</i>

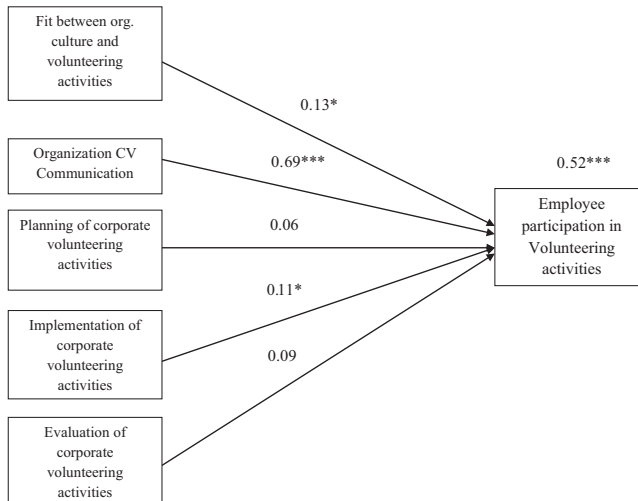
Notes: ^a $n = 461$; S.D = Standard Deviation, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); values in italic on the diagonal is the square root of average variance extracted (i.e. maximum variance extracted); *Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

coefficients are presented in Figure 1. *H1* posits that congruence between organization and volunteering activities influence employee participation. The significantly positive path coefficient for congruence between organization culture and volunteering activities on employee participation ($\beta = 0.13, p < 0.05$) provides support for *H1*. Likewise, the positively significant path coefficient for CV communication on employee participation ($\beta = 0.69, p < 0.001$) lends support for *H2*. However, the path coefficient of planning of volunteering activities on employee participation ($\beta = 0.06, p > 0.05$) did not provide support for *H3*. *H4* posits that implementation of CV programmes influences employee participation in volunteering programmes. The significantly positive path coefficient for implementation of CV programmes on employee participation ($\beta = 0.11, p < 0.05$) supports *H4*. Whereas, the path coefficient of evaluation of CV activities ($\beta = 0.09, p > 0.05$) did not provide support for *H5*. The results have been summarized in Table 3.

Models	χ^2 (df)	χ^2 /df	CFI	GFI	IFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Measurement model	797.960 (309)	2.485	0.911	0.887	0.911	0.05	0.04
Structural	609.859 (260)	2.346	0.928	0.900	0.928	0.05	0.04

Notes: df = degrees of freedom, CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; IFI = Incremental Fit Index; SRMR =Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Table 2.
Model fit



Note: ----- The coefficients reported were standardized; *** $P \leq 0.001$. * $P \leq 0.05$. R square of employee volunteering was 0.52 (s.e. = 0.04, $P < 0.001$)

Figure 1.
Path coefficients of model

5. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the influence of organizational support and efforts on determining employee participation in volunteering programmes. Based on the existing literature, we hypothesized that fit between organization culture and volunteering activities, CV communication, planning, implementation and evaluation of CV programmes will have a positive influence on employee participation in CV programmes. The result of R square of employee participation in volunteering programmes is 0.52 (S.E = 0.023, $p < 0.001$), and suggests that organizational support and efforts on volunteering programmes significantly influence employee's participation in volunteering programmes.

Employee's decision to participate in a CV program is often an individual's choice. However, employee's involvement in volunteering program can be better facilitated through organizational support and efforts. The study results highlight that organization's CV communication influences employee participation in volunteering program. It is in line with earlier studies by [Duthler and Dhanesh \(2018\)](#), [Opoku-Dakwa et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Schie et al. \(2018\)](#) in terms of communication attracting increased employee involvement in volunteering programmes. Similarly, [Malouf et al. \(2016\)](#) and [Chong \(2009\)](#) argued that there is a strong association between internal communication and active employee participation in volunteering programmes. The internal communication on volunteering programmes increases employees' awareness on various aspects of volunteering programmes that include the type of activities, goals, beneficiaries, among others. The increased awareness level through communication brings the attention of employees towards volunteering programmes. It will enable employees to get acquainted with the volunteering programmes and create interest among employees to be part of the volunteering activities. Most importantly, communication helps in building trust among the employees ([Afkhami et al., 2019](#)), as it influences their decision to participate in volunteering programmes.

Further, the study results indicate that fit between organization culture and volunteering activities significantly predicts employee participation in volunteering programmes. It is often understood that employees identify their values through organizational culture. When they find a congruence between organizational culture and volunteering activities, it is likely that employee will experience a value congruence that will enhance their engagement in such activities. This is consistent with [Li et al.'s \(2015\)](#) study which states that value congruence enhances employee engagement. [Lee et al. \(2013\)](#) argued that the alignment of organizational culture with its volunteering activities are likely to influence employees to accept, involve and institutionalize such initiatives effectively. The present study results support the latter argument, and it suggests that similar cultural values will interest the employees to consider participating in such volunteering activities. Further, [Afkhami et al. \(2019\)](#) state that continued support for volunteering activities by the organization sends a signal to its employees that volunteering is also part of their culture. This signaling draws the attention of its employees and sensitizes the employees that participation in volunteering activities also helps the organization in realizing its core values.

Hypotheses	B	SE	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value
<i>H1</i>	0.13	0.07	2.583	0.010
<i>H2</i>	0.69	0.08	8.854	0.001
<i>H3</i>	0.06	0.05	1.314	0.062
<i>H4</i>	0.11	0.06	2.195	0.028
<i>H5</i>	0.09	0.05	1.861	0.063

Table 3.
Results summary

More interestingly, beyond communication and cultural fit, our findings suggest that the implementation of volunteering activities have a significant influence on employee's participation in volunteering programmes. Consistent with Effort-Recovery Model (Meijman and Mulder, 1998), when employees identify that their organization provides adequate resources and possess the necessary capability, they are likely to show their commitment by way of participation in the volunteering events. It highlights that employees assess the organization's capability in terms of their ability to carry out the planned volunteering activities, availability of resources and facilities. Sekar and Dyaram (2017, 2018) argued that organizational capability is an essential factor in determining the employee's engagement and involvement in volunteering programmes. Gómez and Fernández (2017a, 2017b) and Lee *et al.* (2013) also argued that employees do not choose to participate in the volunteering activities unless they see that the organization possesses the required capacity and capability to perform such activities. It asserts that employee will show due diligence to assess and sense the efforts made by the organization and its commitment to implementing the volunteering programmes. Thus, our study results reaffirm that unless the organization shows its commitment with required resources to carry out the volunteering activities, it is more unlikely that employees will show interest and engage in such volunteering activities.

Though, we anticipated that planning of CV activities and evaluation of CV activities would significantly predict employee's participation in volunteering programmes, the study results did not support the hypothesis. Employees often receive the communication on CV-related activities post its conceptualization, which indicate that employees have very limited scope to participate in the planning of CV activities. However, if an organization can effectively engage employees during the conceptualization of volunteering programmes, it will further strengthen the ties of employees with the volunteering programmes. Further, it is noted that evaluation of CV activities did not show significant relationship on employee's participation in volunteering programmes. Drawing from functional theory of motivation (Clary *et al.*, 1998), employee's volunteering experience might fulfil some of the psychological function that facilitates their participation rather than feedback from the organization on the volunteering programmes. However, effort-recovery model affirms that feedback will be an important component of organizational activity that will facilitate better employee engagement in work tasks. The findings of the study highlight that although an employee's decision to participate in volunteering activities is free from organizational pressure, better management practices and organizational efforts around volunteering activities can guarantee enhanced employee participation.

6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical implication

The study aimed at discovering the relevance of organizational support and efforts on the employee's participation in volunteering programmes. This study is one of its kind that attempted to go beyond the individual psychological variables and considered the relevance of contextual elements in determining employee participation in volunteering programmes. Johns (2006, 2017) and Hidalgo and Moreno (2009) highlight that most studies ignore the indispensable influence of organizational context in influencing individual employee behaviour either by creating constraints or providing opportunities. Most often, studies consider the employee-related psychological variables alone and largely ignore the fact that

volunteering activities take place within the organizational context. This study results add significant value towards establishing that organizational support and efforts such as fit between organizational culture and volunteering activities, communication on CV activities and implementation of CV activities are critical to employees' decisions to participate in volunteering programmes. [Opoku-Dakwa et al. \(2018\)](#) argued that organizational support is a potential antecedent to employee volunteering. In the present study, we have considered some of the organizational support and efforts that will potentially facilitate better employee participation. We proposed a conceptual framework and we tested empirically to check the relevance of organizational support and efforts in determining better employee participation. The results reaffirm that volunteering literature should expand to consider the contextual elements in assessing the employee volunteering behaviour.

6.2 Implication for practice

There is a growing concern over the rate of employee participation in volunteering programmes. [Gómez and Fernández \(2017a, 2017b\)](#) highlighted the low rate of employee participation in volunteering programmes. Identifying factors that could facilitate better employee participation will form the knowledge repository for organizations to integrate it as part of their CV program design. The study has made a significant contribution in addressing the concern on the rate of employee participation by identifying some of the key organizational efforts that could make a difference towards employee participation in volunteering programmes. The findings suggest CV communication as an indispensable practice that an organization cannot ignore. It creates awareness and interest among employees, and it forms the foundation to attract employees towards volunteering programmes. Similarly, the organization cannot discount the congruence of organizational culture with volunteering activities. Cultural fit sends a signal to employees that volunteering activities is also a reflection of their organizational values, and they deem to support the activities. Further, the study findings suggest that employees do not participate in volunteering activities unless the organization shows that they have adequate resources and facilities for the successful implementation of volunteering activities. Thus, organizations can indeed accelerate the employee participation rate through their visible support and efforts around volunteering activities.

6.3 Limitations and future research

This study contributes toward volunteering literature. As with any study, there are some limitations and demands for future studies to confirm our findings and further the knowledge on employee volunteering literature. This study has examined the relevance of organizational support and efforts with specific reference to CV communication, cultural fit, implementation, planning and evaluation on employee participation in volunteering programs. However, [Opoku-Dakwa et al. \(2018\)](#) highlight that organizational support can be categorized into human support (i.e. manager support), informational support, material support and psychosocial support. Future studies could consider these categories to expand the existing literature. While, this study limited its scope only to relevant organizational contextual factors, considering both individual factors and contextual element could provide more interesting results. Furthermore, a longitudinal study of volunteering behaviour may reveal and establish a casual relationship against the cross-sectional study. In addition, it is noted that some of the study constructs have shown moderate

reliability coefficients owing to sampling design methods. Replication of study is required to reaffirm the validation of this study results. Finally, the generalizability of the study findings may be limited to the regional context in which the research has been conducted.

7. Conclusions

CV has become a growing phenomenon across the globe, with the organizations' increased commitment towards sustainability. Employees' role has become indispensable to any volunteering programmes to be effective and successful. There is a growing debate on how to facilitate better employee participation in volunteering programmes. This study adds significant value in uncovering potential organizational support and efforts that could account and facilitate better employee involvement in volunteering programmes. The findings suggest that organizations can focus on establishing congruence between organizational culture and volunteering programmes, enhance their CV communication to employees and build their implementation capability, for enhanced employee participation in volunteering programmes.

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